

Off-ice training for success in the crease

Goalie workouts essential to keeping up

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No other position in hockey has seen a breakthrough in performance as that of the goaltender.

No longer are goalies the player who couldn't skate, or the out of shape athlete that, by default, was put in net to fire pucks at. Goaltenders today utilize modern goal equipment, video replay and a variety of specialized techniques to develop their on-ice game.

Off-ice training for goalies has likewise seen a dramatic change in philosophy. Players in this position need to be agile, explosive athletes, with considerable mobility and balanced flexibility.

Goaltenders can ill afford to train using methods that will tighten them up, slow them down or reduce their athleticism.

There are several key components that must be trained off-ice in order to allow a player to perform as required on the ice.

Mobility, strength and power of both the core and lower body must be emphasized in dryland training to allow a goaltender to maximize their off-ice development.

As any goaltender knows, the lower body must be able to move them about in their crease while the upper body stays square to the puck.

With that in mind, goalies need to have a core that is stable but mobile, allowing the upper and lower body to move independent of each other.

Players need to choose exercises that train them to separate the two portions of the body, increasing their effectiveness on-ice as they move about in their stance to follow the play in front of them.

Lateral mobility is another key component for goaltenders, with off-ice programs that emphasize dynamic stabil-



Jim Reeves Photo

Stability Ball Russian Twist

ity and power in a single leg position being a means to developing this aspect of their physical profile.

Too many goaltenders participate in programs that emphasize straight line training, yet most of a goalie's on-ice play is spent moving from side to side.

Goaltenders must ensure that their off-ice training has a direct link to the lateral movements required of them on the ice.

Goaltenders also need to develop their stance position, building strength and power to not only maintain, but explode out of the basic stance position to challenge a shooter.

Without the necessary strength and mobility to assume a proper stance position, goalies will stand up too high, decreasing their ability to move quickly from the basic stance as well as exposing shooting options for opposing players.

Keeping these key components in mind, goaltenders should use the two following exercises to help develop their game off the ice.

Stability Ball Russian Twist

Performing the stability ball Russian twist teaches an athlete to differentiate between movement of the upper and lower body.

This differentiation occurs as the core controls movement of the upper body while the lower body works to stabilize the position of the hips.

To perform this exercise, start from a sitting position on the stability ball. Walk your feet out from the stability ball, rolling it up your back to the level of the shoulders.

Elevate the hips up level with the shoulders and keep your feet as close together as possible throughout the exercise.

Hold a medicine ball out, with straight arms, directly above your chest.

The purpose of the exercise is to rotate the medicine ball to one side while keeping your hips up and parallel with

the ceiling above.

Rotate the contact point on the stability ball onto the outside of your shoulder, keeping both arms straight throughout the entire exercise.

Rotate as far as possible to one side of the body without any movement of the hip bones, and then perform the same rotation to the other side.

Watch closely the positioning of the hip bones, since it is easy to cheat in this exercise by either dropping your hips slightly or by rotating the hips with the shoulders.

Stabilize the hips by tightening the gluteal muscles (the muscles of the buttocks) and pushing the hips up towards the ceiling.

Activating the gluteal muscles will allow rotation of the upper body but creates stabilization of the hips and lower body.

Perform sets of the stability ball Russian twist for either specific repetitions to both sides or time.

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