

Golden Rules of Goaltenders

1. Stay Alert at all times no matter where the puck is on the ice. Of course, that does not mean you have to be in a crouch all the time, but it does mean that the eyes and mind have to always follow the play.
2. Learn the basic moves and techniques as soon as possible and work to excel at them. The basic moves and techniques are skate saves, pad saves, V drops, stick and pad saves with puck control, blocker saves, catcher saves, covering the puck, puck movement with the stick (shooting and clearing), slides and glides and, by all means not last, skating.
3. Understand and work on angles and distances. This is knowing distance and angle from the goal to take the maximum goal opening away from the shooter. This is a matter of constant practice and monitoring.
4. Learn to analyze each situation - especially when being attacked - then act accordingly. There are innumerable possibilities for situations, by analysis involves understanding the options of the player with the puck as well as attackers without the puck, plus the level of support available from teammates. I once heard Joe Bertagna, a well known goaltender coach with the Boston Bruins simply describe the activity as: "looking, thinking, executing."
5. Work on all major segments of the goaltenders arsenal: feet, gloves, pads, stick. Work must be more than just taking shots, it must often be specific to isolated segments. Don't let any segment be dominant because another is weak.
6. Just like other hockey positions, master the skating skills and major "arsenal" segments so that the thinking portion of the goaltender position can be concentrated on. If you don't have good mechanical skills, the critical mental portion of the game will not develop.
7. Work, work, work on skating skills. Invariably the best goaltenders skate very well and have great ability and balance.
8. Learn what it takes for you to prepare yourself to play a good game. Find the appropriate process that gets you focused.
9. Learn to control the puck whenever possible. That means controlling shoot-in pucks behind the net, freezing the puck whenever it's loose around the net, deflecting shots or loose pucks to the corner, getting the puck to teammates and controlling rebounds.
10. Play with confidence and shake off goals allowed - to maintain focus on upcoming action. Non-emotional clear thinking is one of the basis of good goaltending.
11. Strive for consistency. The best way to do that is to control emotions and have a good grasp of physical skills.
12. Be aggressive and force the attacker with the puck to shoot when and where you want; challenge the play anytime possible.
13. When you are not involved in a team drill during practice, work on individual skills, such as shooting, handling the puck, skating skills, techniques. Good shooting skills are especially important because they allow you to become part of moving the puck out of your zone.
14. Ask for help from coaches or goaltender teammates if you are having problems.
15. Don't retaliate from contact around the net whether legal or not. Retaliation often results in penalties to you and teammates that feel obliged to defend their goaltender.
16. Communicate with your teammates, especially those defending around the net. It is a crucial aspect of successful goaltending. Don't ever communicate with opposing players - it seldom is of value and exposes your emotions.