

## The Basics of Goaltender Specific Movement

Goaltending success is always dependant on a number of factors but before anything else a goaltender must have strong visual skills and be adept at goaltender specific skating/movement. There are a number of basic skating skills such as sculls(c-cuts), shuffles(short lateral), and swoops(modified t-push). With a wide array of goalie specific skating there are some basics for all movements that we stress at Mind The Net. There may be some disagreements with some of this but we have found ours goalies gain a lot of confidence and get dramatically better with their movements by following what you will read below.

### General Guidelines for Goaltender Specific Movement

1. All goalie specific movement needs to begin with visual inputs. Goaltenders must be able to see and follow the puck from one position to another. Make sure all movements are done with a purpose and have a set destination. Goaltenders should not just move for the sake of moving. Perform all net orientation drills with a target in mind. Set up pucks to move to or pick a divot in the ice, anything, and look before moving onto the next position. By doing this goalies will be more likely to be on-angle and not have to make extra adjustments.
2. In order to gain strong visual habits one must remember; THE EYES LEAD THE HEAD, THE HEAD LEADS THE SHOULDERS AND THE SHOULDERS LEAD THE REST OF THE BODY. Goaltenders need to follow the puck at all times if the puck is moving. If the goalie is working on net orientation with stationary pucks then the goalie must turn the eyes and head toward the next destination before squaring the shoulders and moving into the new position. Amazingly if you follow the eyes, head, shoulders theory the body will follow suit on its own.
3. Look to the next puck before you move. Why? In goaltending the eyes lead the head, the head leads the shoulders(causing the body to rotate at the hips) and then the rest of body will follow. \*\*TIP: When doing movement drills in crease or outside you should always pick a spot to move to. Use pucks to move to for all movement drills which gives you a purpose and forces you to be precise. Plus, we move to be on angle with the puck during games so why not focus on moving to a puck in practice. \*\* By looking to the next puck you also learn how to track an imaginary pass.
4. The goaltender needs to make sure that the hands and stick are quiet. This means that the hands are not used to aid with movement/momentum. The stick must be in contact with the ice, covering the five-hole for all movements when up or down. Sloppy hands and stick will result in goals on quick plays.
5. The goalie should keep their skates in contact with the ice with all movements. By keeping the skates on the ice movements are more fluid/smooth and open less holes, especially for quick plays around the net. MTN has seen many goalies shuffle with the back leg coming off the ice and making chopping noises. A skate off the ice means there is an opening that may be exploited. Smooth movements, both skates on the ice, make for easier and more efficient movement.
6. The shoulders should stay level through all movement, while up and most while down. There should be minimal to no vertical movement of the head and shoulders while moving. By keeping the head and shoulders steady, your vision, which is one of the most important assets for any goaltender, will be better. In the fall of 2007 there was a study done on steady eyes and goaltending, it was featured in a goalieNEWS article. Very interesting article.
7. Goaltenders need to be able to move the upper body independent of the lower body. Remember, our action figures as kids? A lot of those toys rotated at the hips (i.e. G.I. Joe and He-man). Goaltenders do most of their movement through the horizontal rotation of the core. Usually the head then hands and stick will square up to the puck before the rest of the body. Again eyes, head, shoulder and then the core.

8. Move with POWER. Power trumps speed. If you can move to the top of your crease with one powerful, controlled scull (c-cut) that is better than having to make 2, 3, or 4 sculls to get into the same position. By focusing on power you can be set before the shot is taken. Quick feet are used to stop and start movements quickly and for save movements.
9. Stop with precision and power. Being on angle as much as humanly possible requires precision with stops as well. Goalies that continue to glide into saves are vulnerable to a quick pass, deke, or a poorly controlled rebound.
10. Goaltenders must be equal in their ability to move in every direction. If it takes you 5 sculls, with the right leg only, to move forwards from the blue to the red line it should take the same number backwards. If one side takes more movements than another then there is a weakness.

Over those the years MTN have seen many videos posted on youtube and elsewhere that shows some fantastic goaltender movement drills with goalies that can move very well. The only thing MTN has found missing over and over from these videos was the lack of purpose, the lack of a target to move to. As goaltenders we should know that all of our positioning begins and ends with our vision and response to the puck and the situations at hand so it makes sense that all goaltenders should strive to move to a target; the most logical being pucks. Even if there is only one puck or several pucks to move on angle to the goalie is establishing excellent puck tracking skills which will result in better in-game habits. Basically, set the purpose for practice.

Goaltenders need to realize the importance of visual habits and that they are the base for positioning, situational reads, reading the release of the puck, save selection, rebound control and puck handling. One of the ways to improve these skills is to work on vision skills everytime a goaltender hits the ice. So whenever you are working on net orientation make sure to set up some pucks to move to as a reference and make sure to be precise. Do not move to a new position until you are completely on angle with each puck. At the start, exaggerate the eyes and head movements before moving from one puck to the other. Make sure to turn your head and look at the next destination before moving then let the eyes lead the head, the head lead the shoulders and the shoulders lead the rest of the body.