

Goalkeeping

Goalkeeper is the most specialised playing position on the hockey field. As such there are a number of issues that need to be considered when coaching goalkeepers. This document attempts to cover the basics of goalkeeping. The Goalkeeping Equipment Checklist can be printed out and used by goalkeepers or coaches when checking or maintaining equipment. Please click on the links below for more information on each area.

[Goalkeeping Equipment](#)

[Goalkeeping Basics](#)

[Goalkeeping Stretches](#)

[Return to Contents Menu](#)



A suggested order for putting goalkeeping equipment on is:

1. Shoes
2. Padded shorts** & Pelvic protector (this is dependant on the style of padded shorts)
3. Kickers
4. Leg guards
5. Chest & shoulder/ arm protection
6. Smock
7. Neck collar
8. Helmet
9. Hand protectors
10. Stick

For further information on goalkeeper's equipment see the [Field Equipment and Specifications](#) section of the FIH Rules of Hockey 2005.

Goalkeeping Equipment Checklist

EQUIPMENT	AREAS TO CONSIDER	CHECKED
HELMET	Fits head size snugly with clear vision	
	Sufficient inside padding/ cushioning	
	Exterior shell free of cracks/ splits	
	Chin cup and/ or neck strap fitted firmly	
	Face guard/ grill not damaged or rusted	
	No movement of helmet when GK moving	
	All nuts/ bolts/ clips in place and tightened	
THROAT PROTECTOR*	One piece construction free of cracks/ splits	
	Attached to helmet securely	
NECK COLLAR	Fits neck size and fastens securely	
	Internal padding/ protection intact	
SHOULDER/ ARM PROTECTOR	Appropriate length in the arms	
	Protection in front shoulder area	
	Fastened securely around upper & lower arm	
	Upper body movement not restricted	
CHEST PROTECTOR	Fitted to upper body size	
	Covers collarbones, ribs, and stomach areas	
	Minimal movement of protector when GK active	
SMOCK	Correct fit for body size inc upper body protection	
	Different colour to own team and opposition	
HAND PROTECTORS/ GLOVES	Correct size and fit for hands	
	Straps for wrist/ hand/ fingers securely fastened	
	Surface area does not have any holes/ splits	
STICK	Length/ weight appropriate to GK size/ strength	
	Specialist GK (or indoor) sticks can be used	
	Does not have any cracks or sharp edges	
PADDED SHORTS**	Correct size and fit for waist/ leg size	
	Protection for front and inside of thighs	
	Minimal movement of shorts when GK active	

EQUIPMENT	AREAS TO CONSIDER	CHECKED
PELVIC PROTECTOR***	Specific male and female alternatives available	
	Correct size and fit for waist/ leg size	
	Covers hip bones and genital area	
	Securely fastened to prevent movement	
	Not damaged	
LEG GUARDS	Correct size for leg length	
	GK's movement not restricted	
	Straps correctly threaded and securely fastened	
	Surface area does not have any holes/ splits	
KICKERS	Compatible/ fits with Leg Guards	
	Correct size for feet	
	Instep area well padded/ in good condition	
	Straps in good condition and correctly threaded	
	Securely fastened to shoes to protect all of foot	
	Surface area does not have any holes/ splits	
SHOES	Strong sole tread/ grip pattern	
	Fit correctly under kickers	
	Kicker straps can be put through sole tread/ grips	

* usually a hard plastic accessory fitted to the helmet to protect the throat area

** some padded shorts require protective cover shorts to be worn over the top of the padded shorts to prevent wear, especially on artificial surfaces

*** sometimes referred to as an Abdominal Protector

Note: All goalkeeping equipment should offer sufficient protection required in relation to the standard of competition being played

[Return to Goalkeeping Menu](#)

[Return to Contents Menu](#)

Goalkeeping Basics

This document is intended as a guide to different skills involved in goalkeeping and the main coaching points that should be considered within each area. Click on a link below for more information about a skill.

1. [Warm Up & Cool Down](#)
2. [Stance & Positioning](#)
3. [Footwork, Kicking & Leg Saves](#)
4. [Aerial Saves](#)
5. [Tackling & Diving](#)
6. [Penalty Corners](#)
7. [Penalty Strokes](#)
8. [Communication & Organisation](#)

1. Warm Up & Cool Down

Key Focus – Ensuring the GK prepares for, and recovers from, training sessions &/ or games

The 4 key components of the warm up are:

- Jog – between 5 to 10 minutes at a low to medium intensity
- Stretch – see [Goalkeeping Stretches](#)
- Dress – see [Goalkeeping Equipment](#)
- Skills warm up – see [Coaching Drills](#) document for ideas

Cool down is done after a training session or game and should involve the following:

- Removing goalkeeping equipment
- Jog – between 3 to 5 minutes at a low to medium intensity
- Stretch – see [Goalkeeping Stretches](#)
- Injury management – treatment of any injuries

2. Stance & Positioning

2.1 Stance

Key Focus – GK's weight is balanced and allows for explosive movements to be made

A 'ready' or 'active' stance for goalkeeping includes:

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Weight on the balls of feet
- Knees and waist bent with chest forward
- Hands in an 'active' position – to the side and forward of the body with fingers pointing up
- Stick held midway along the grip for balance
- Head still and eyes focused on the ball

2.2 Positioning

Key Focus – GK must recognise their role in relation to the situation and ensure they are positioned in the best place to play the ball accordingly

The 'best' position to play the ball will be relative to a number of factors:

- Position of the ball on the field
- Type of shot/ pass possible by ball carrier
- Position of other opponents
- Position of team mates
- GK's individual size, physical attributes and skill level

2.3 Tracking

Key Focus – Following the build-up of play i.e. ball and player movements

The key points to effective tracking are:

- Watching ball and player movements as they come towards the defensive goal
- Reading the intended pass/ shot option
- Seeing the ball off the stick

3. Footwork, Kicking & Leg Saves

3.1 Footwork

Key Focus – Using early foot preparation to ensure the whole body is best positioned to make effective attempts to play the ball

Key elements to good footwork include:

- Foot movements are explosive to gain maximum ground
- Dynamic lateral shuffle steps to stay with play
- Weight balanced over both feet to allow for easy change of direction

3.2 Kicking

Key Focus – Using the kickers to effectively save/ clear attempts at or around the goal

a. Instep Kick

Used to save or clear low shots close to GK's left or right foot to forward space

- Open kicking foot to direction of clear/ target
- Push off plant leg
- Lead with head/ chest
- Contact ball mid-foot
- Knee and ankle in line at contact with ball and follow through after the kick

b. Instep Redirect (Wide Shots)

Used to save or clear hard low shots close to GK's left or right foot to sides

- Establish plant leg
- Drop/ open shoulder and hips of kicking foot
- Open foot to direction of clear
- Push off plant leg
- Lead with head/ chest
- Contact point with ball mid-foot

c. Instep Redirect (Straight Shots)

Used to save or clear low shots straight at GK to sides

- Push off plant leg
- Open foot to direction of clear
- Bring kicking leg across line of body and ball
- Lead with head and chest
- Contact ball mid-foot with kicking leg inside of plant leg
- Follow through to target

d. Lunge

Used to save or clear low shots wide to GK's left or right foot to forward space

- Push off plant leg
- Open kicking foot to target
- Lead with head and chest
- Contact point mid foot with knee and ankle in line

e. Redirect Lunge

Used to save or clear low shots wide to GK's left or right foot to sides

- Drop/ open shoulder and hips of kicking foot
- Open foot to direction of clear
- Push off plant leg
- Lead with head/chest
- Contact point mid-foot

f. Sweep Kick

Used to intercept and clear ball well wide of GK to sides

- Approach ball/ ball carrier
- Open shoulder and hips on kicking side
- Push off plant leg
- Contact point fore-foot
- Sweep through line of ball and follow through to change direction

3.3 Leg Saves

Key Focus: Using the Leg guard(s) to effectively save/ clear attempts on goal

a. Double Leg Stops

Used to save bouncing or up to knee-high shots straight at the GK

- Get body behind line of ball
- Knees bent ,chest forward with both legs together
- Cushion the ball and keep within playing distance, and then clear if necessary

b. Half Height Leg Saves

Used to save bouncing or up to knee-high shots wide of the GK

- Open leg and hip of saving leg
- Lift saving leg getting knee up and foot back
- Push off non-saving leg to take body to ball
- Kick through with saving leg to clear ball wide

c. Standing Block

Used to step up and block hit shots from close range

- Move quickly towards the shooter with head, chest and knees forward
- Keep legs close together and hands outside line of the body

d. Sliding Block

Used to slide and block shots hit from close range

- Move quickly towards the shooter
- Reduce step size as get closer to shooter to make slide easier
- Slide horizontally towards shooter lining up leg guard(s) with the line of the ball
- Keep Leg guards in front of body at all times for protection

4. Aerial Saves

Key Focus – Using the hand protectors and stick to save/ clear raised shots at goal

4.1 Left Hand Saves

Used to save raised shots to GK's left and close to body on the right side

- Step off right foot and get hand/ body behind or to ball
- Contact point on hand protector between thumb and forefinger
- Angle hand protector to control ball to safety i.e. over back line or into 'safe' space

4.2 Right Hand/ Stick Saves

Used to save raised shots well to GK's right

- Step off left foot to get right hand and/ or stick to ball
- Contact point mid-shaft of stick or on hand protector
- Angle hand protector/ stick to control ball to safety i.e. over back line or into 'safe' space

5. Tackling & Diving

5.1 Tackling

Key Focus – Reducing time/ space opponent has with the ball and attempting to dispossess them

a. Stick Side Slide Tackle

Used to tackle ball carrier dribbling to GK's right

- Move towards ball carrier with weight slightly forward
- Reduce step size as get closer to ball carrier to make slide easier
- Push off legs (especially left) to get full extension of body downwards and to right
- Tackle is made with stick and both hands (if possible) through the line of dribble
- Slide should take the GK through the ball

b. Reverse Stick Slide Tackle

Used to tackle ball carrier dribbling to GK's left

- Same procedure as Stick Side Slide Tackle (above) except:
 - Push off legs (especially right) to get full extension of body downwards and to left

5.2 Diving

Key Focus – Used to intercept passes or as a last resort to save shots

a. Interceptions

- Keep body position low and hold stick grip in long position
- Look to intercept as early as possible, in a direct line to the pass
- Tackle/ dive through the line of ball

b. Saving

- Stay on feet as long as possible
- As shoulders start to get outside feet, lower body position
- Push off feet to extend body and push hands/ stick to the ball

6. Penalty Corners

Key Focus – the GK must be aware of the following factors at penalty corners:

- Rules/ procedures for the penalty corner
- Roles and responsibilities of defenders – areas of coverage for 4 defenders and GK
- Identifying shot options/ variations
- Save/ clear options – dropping to ground (logging) or staying upright

7. Penalty Strokes

Key Focus – the GK must be aware of the following factors at penalty strokes:

- Rules/ procedures for the penalty stroke
- Positioning on the line
- Reacting to the ball – anticipation *not* guessing

8. Communication & Organisation

8.1 Organising Team Defence

Key Focus – Communicating with defensive players to ensure they are in the ‘best’ position in relation to the opposing teams attack

The factors that will affect this are:

- Location of ball
- Number and position of attackers
- Number and position of defenders
- Identifying most dangerous areas and opponents
- GK’s style, frequency, timing and volume of communication

8.2 Reading the Play

Key Focus – Recognising ball position in relation to where opponents and team mates are positioned and playing accordingly

The areas to consider are:

- Anticipation of opponents/ ball movements
- Outcomes of ball movement (the next play)
- Knowing where opponents are
- Knowing where the ball can be saved/ cleared to

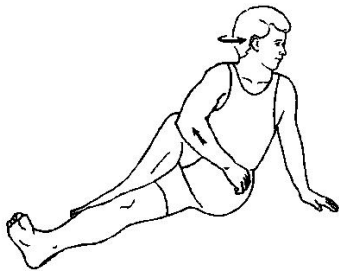
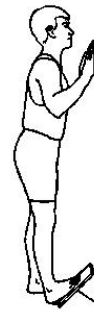
[Return to Goalkeeping Menu](#)

[Return to Contents Menu](#)

Goalkeeping Stretches

1. Calf Stretch

Place foot on incline, wall or step
Keep knee straight
Aim to keep hip and knee inline with ankle
Repeat 2 x 1min for each leg

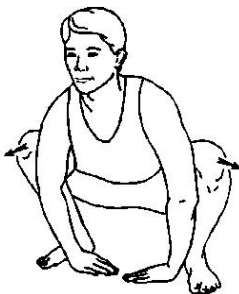
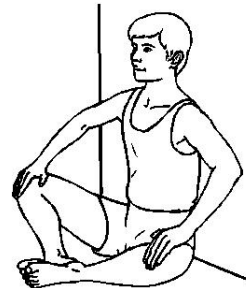


2. Piriformis Stretch

In sitting position place one hand behind body on floor
Bend knee of same side leg and place foot outside of other leg
Push elbow *gently* into outside of knee
Repeat 2-3 x 30sec for each leg

3. Groin Stretch

Sit with back against wall & soles of feet together
Shoulders back and chest pushed forward
Place hands on inside of knees and *gently* push down
Repeat 3 x 30sec

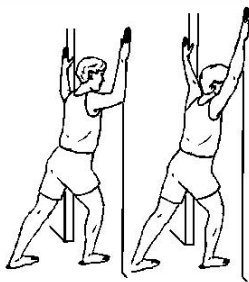


4. Frog Groin Stretch

With knees bent place hands between feet
Keep back straight & head up
Place elbows into knees and push outwards
Repeat 2 x 45sec

5. Standing Hamstring Stretch

Place one leg onto surface approx. hip height
Move chest *slowly* towards elevated leg
Keep back and both legs straight
Repeat 3 x 30sec each leg

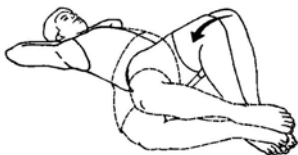
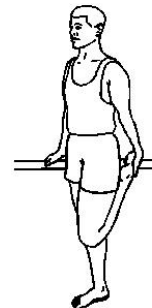


6. Pectoral Stretch

Stand in doorway with hands higher than shoulders
Step through door and;
1. keeping elbows bent or,
2. keeping elbows straight
Lean weight forwards through door frame
Repeat 2 x 45sec

7. Quadriceps Stretch

Standing with knees together, bend one knee, holding foot behind body
Bent knee should point to ground
Back and body upright
Repeat x 2 x 45sec each leg



8. Lower Back Stretch

Lying on back, place hands behind neck & knees bent
Keep ankles & knees together with feet on the floor
Keeping shoulders on the floor *slowly* rotate knees
from one side to other and back again
Repeat x 5 each side

[Return to Goalkeeping Menu](#)

[Return to Contents Menu](#)