



# MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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## Goaltending Quick Hit #7 – Understanding “Active Hands”

Whenever we need to learn about something in life it is important for us to look at an idea in-depth. We do this by examining what the idea truly is, what it is not and why it should be a part of our ideology. This goes for goaltending as well:

Recently there has been a tremendous focus in goaltending circles on “active hands”. In order to properly examine the ”active hands” discussions, and teaching, it is important for us to see what the physical tactic of “active hands” actually pertains to. First, the use of the word “active”(engaging in or ready to engage in physically energetic pursuits) needs to be used more accurately as the root word for “activate”. ”Active hands” in goaltending should actually be ”activating the hands and stick” since the definitions for activate are: 1. Make active or operative and 2. Convert into an active form. “Activating the hands and stick” is more accurate because it involves the understanding that it is about using the hands and stick actively for puck stopping and better rebound control purposes. Hand and stick activation is dependent on the first two parts of the Vision Sequence – reading the release of the shot, and watching/following the puck into the body - which involves strong vision habits and having the hands available to make the save (this is where the true definition of active comes in). The starting point of the glove, for example, needs to start from a static position in stance in front of the plane of the body, that allows for the hands to be available for a controlled save made possible by activating the hands. Basically, ”active hands” is more acceptable and realistic when described as “activate the hands and stick”.



On the flip side, “activating the hands” is NOT based on the height of the glove when in a static butterfly, but using the hands in a manner that is appropriate to the shot trajectory. ”Activating the Hands” is about reading and reacting properly to the release of the shot, making sure the hands and stick are available to move in a manner where they are not impeded by the

goalie's peripheral vision, a piece of equipment or locked into a static position where the hands can't move fluidly on a plane in front of the body. "Activating the hands" is also NOT about just using the glove to stop mid to high shots, but what makes a goaltender strong at activating their glove hand, for example, is being able to catch anything about 6-8 inches off the ground or higher from the belly button to the glove side, depending on the situation. In most cases the need for "activating the hands" is on low shots, just above the pads. In order to do this the goaltender must have tremendous puck tracking skills which are NOT dependent on holding the hands higher in stance or in the butterfly. Remember we want to "activate the hands/stick" not lock them into a different (higher position).



Why should we activate the hands/stick when goaltending? If done right we will make more first saves cleanly because of improved retention of the puck in our central focus. Next, by "activating the hands and stick" we are purposefully cognizant of rebound control before and during the save. Also, if we "activate the hands/stick" properly we will be able to transition more instinctually and fluidly into a rebound recovery or cover for a whistle. In the end, "activating the hands/stick" will help us to better manage games, thus helping us to "keep the puck out of the net" with more consistent frequency.