



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

www.mtngoaltending.com

Mental Training and Preparation

NOTE: Please read and follow instructions carefully. We are asking you to try this exercise immediately in the hopes that it will help your mental game.

Often a goaltender will hear that goaltending is 80% mental and 20% physical. Although MTN believes this proportion is not always correct it does demonstrate that a large portion of goaltending is mental. Goaltending has developed dramatically over the last 10 years and has become an increasingly physical game. With the increase in physical demands on a goaltender many goalie coaches believe the game is now 50% mental and 50% physical.

It is because of the increase in the physical skill requirements of goaltenders that mental training and awareness has gone to the wayside. Mind The Net is looking to change this trend in goaltender training which is why we are going to ask you to begin your mental training immediately.

The Subconscious Mind

In order to fully understand the mental aspect of goaltending you need to realize the importance the subconscious mind plays in what type of goaltender you want to become. The subconscious mind controls the thinking that is done involuntarily. Goaltenders are affected continually by their subconscious mind. Goaltenders work hard to create physical responses that come automatically, without purposely thinking about what their body is doing. Most goalies are aware of the importance of muscle memory for turning physical skills and training into something that is automatic. If the game is 50/50 then why not work on making your thoughts automatic as well?

The average person has 60,000 thoughts per day and many of them are negative.* Of those 60,000 thoughts you would be surprised at how many are automatically negative. The subconscious mind drives the body throughout the day. The amount of energy and drive required to train hard is controlled subconsciously. The subconscious mind becomes what it is fed. If you feed your subconscious mind bad thoughts, such as “I never play good in this rink”, your body will believe what the subconscious mind tells it and you will not play good. On the flip side, if you feed your subconscious mind positive/productive thoughts you will start to become the goaltender you want to become.

“The subconscious mind accepts what you feed it. The more you feed it the same thought, the more you believe it.”

Developing Positive Self-Talk

Step 1

The first step towards developing positive self talk is to become aware of how many times during a day your subconscious thoughts are negative. How many times a day you automatically say something is boring, sucks, or useless? These are negative thoughts and they are making your life harder. Since you believe something the more often it is repeated, it is up to you to take the next few days to become aware of the negative thoughts that are stealing your energy and enthusiasm. Take 2-3 days to listen to the types of thoughts you are having. Whether your subconscious thoughts are hockey related or not you need to learn about these thoughts and when they occur.*

Step 2 (You will need a pen and paper to do this step.)

After you have learned to listen to your subconscious mind and become aware of what affect those thoughts have on your life you need to move onto the next step. Now you will begin your first step towards reprogramming your subconscious thoughts into positive and productive thoughts. You will need a pen and paper to do this step. Write out all the beliefs you want to have about yourself and about your goaltending.* Write those beliefs out as 8-15 word affirmations. The shorter the affirmations the easier they will be to program them into your mind.* Your affirmations will always be written in the first person (ie. I play my best when my head is up and my mind is clear. My game is always one save at a time. I will have fun and be a warrior!).

Step 3

Upon the completion of your list of affirmations it is up to you to read each one 3 times a day in 3 different ways. The first time, you should state the affirmation with no emotion. The second time you should read it with emphasis on the object of your affirmation (say it as though the words in bold is the most important part. I will **have fun and be a warrior!**). The third time you need to say your affirmation with full confidence. Have several copies of these affirmations written out so you can post one on your bathroom mirror, keep one in your wallet and another that stays beside your bed. Make sure to read each affirmation three times per day and do this for at least three weeks. If you do this for three weeks your positive self-talk will become automatic.*

To go along with step 3 you will need to learn how to stop any persistent negative thoughts. Since you have become adept at noticing negative self-talk and know how debilitating they are you are ahead of the game. Every time you catch yourself thinking something negative you need to hit the “delete” or “cancel” button and replace that negative thought with a positive thought. Think of your mind as a TV and you control the remote.

Conclusion:

It is important to commit daily to doing these mental training exercises. Be patient, results may be slow to develop but the dividends will be well worth the time and effort. These exercises are an important step to becoming the person/goaltender you want to become. (**Reference:** Haley, J. (2004), *Training the goalies mind*. Retrieved May 2006 from www.thegoaliesmind.com)