

STEP 7 – SUMMARY



There are three types of practice; sometimes players get trapped and limited by how they view and approach training and practice. It is valuable for us to know the differences in types of practice so that we can get better as quickly as possible.

The three types of practice: Naive, Purposeful, Deliberate

1. Naive Practice

- doing something repeatedly and expecting that repetition alone will improve your performance. If your mind is wandering or you're relaxed or just having fun (or just getting through it) – you probably won't improve.
- For example, I drive every day, but I don't get any better at it. You are not a better walker just because you walk every day. Going through the motions does not get you better.

2. Purposeful practice

- Has well-defined goals. Daily goals lead to weekly goals that lead to monthly goals and so on. It all starts with a target.
- Is Focused. We need to focus intensely (one of the laws of mastering something is you have to be uncomfortable)
- Involves Feedback. Immediate feedback to help you identify what you are doing wrong and what you need to improve is essential.
- Out of your comfort zone. You need to stretch beyond your comfort zone but not so far that you snap. You need to force your mind and body to adapt.

3. Deliberate Practice

- Same as purposeful (well defined goals; focused; feedback; out of comfort zone – forces you to adapt) AND...having a great teacher/clear training program with models at higher levels.

Purposeful and deliberate practice are hard work!

We adapt and get better by pushing through homeostasis – a system (the body's) tendency to do what it needs to, in order to maintain stability. If we push ourselves our body responds by overcompensating and creates a new, higher state of homeostasis. Get comfortable being uncomfortable. With deliberate practice the goal is not just to reach your potential but to build on it. Make things possible now that were not possible before.

With deliberate practice you can create specialized mental representations. What does that mean? Pattern recognition, problem solving, etc. Again, what does that mean? HOCKEY SENSE; READ AND REACT.

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To get a sense of what deliberate practice might look like consider the following:

Shooting pucks every day is good. It is practice. Shooting 200 from the blue line and expecting an 85% accuracy level is better. Picking up a puck that was rimmed on the boards; walking the line; and getting the puck past a screen with 85% accuracy is even better. It is deliberate in what one is trying to accomplish. Your goals need to be that deliberate to separate you from every other college player and us from every other college team...because they are all training. We need to be the hardest working and most detailed/deliberate in our approach. That will make the difference. All goals should be detailed including strength and conditioning goals. We need to be able to measure improvement.

Give some thought to what it takes to consistently play to our potential. We know that at game time we want to be in the moment - read and react. We want our thoughts to be focused on what is in our control and what we want to do - one shift at a time! We want to be on our Power Channel. We know how to RELOAD and we know how to get to our numbers.

Remember, the approach most needed in practice is using it as an opportunity to stretch our skills to their outer limits, focus on details, and treat drills like they are game situations...a focus on the process.

Practice needs to be deliberate to increase skill levels. If practice is not at a pace and intensity that is higher than, or at least equivalent to, game situations we can develop bad physical and mental habits that are revealed at game time.

The purpose of the endless hours of repetition in practice is “over learning” in order to make the skills “automatic”. Over-learned or automatic responses tend to withstand higher and long periods of stress without breakdown in technique.

By maintaining high levels of performance in every practice (deliberate practice) and demanding technical excellence, we are being “psychologically overloaded” in the same manner as physical overloading. If the practice conditions are game-like this results in each of us and our team being able to execute at the highest level under intense physical and mental stress. This is why we develop our mental toughness – TO PLAY OUR BEST UNDER PRESSURE, WHEN IT MATTERS MOST!

LIVE THE PRACTICE! So, when game-time comes you will be ready to go at your highest level, focused on what is in our control, executing our game plan, one shift at a time!

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Suggestions for Mental Preparation for Practice

- Look forward to practice - spend a little time during the day thinking of practice. Review the practice plan. Visualize yourself working on a part of your game that you are trying to improve or has been giving you trouble
- Pick a time when practice starts - leave your off-the-ice concerns off the ice (“Park them”)
- Review your vision, mission and “when I am at my best” power statements.
- Set a target or two for the day. Ask yourself, what do I want to say about today’s practice when it is over?
- Once practice begins, recognize the difference between quality, focused practice and just going through the motions
- **Quality practice is paying attention. It involves doing things with a purpose and in having your mind fully engaged in what you are doing right now**
- Accept that you cannot stop thoughts and when you are hooked worrying about the past or future – come back to the present.
- Use your releases and practice RELOADING and self-talk
- Use this little reminder about mentally preparing for practice; we always have our skates sharp, stick taped, get a warm-up in ...did we mentally prepare?
 - Skates
 - Stick
 - Body
 - Mind?
- Make sure you pick a time when practice ends, and you let go of hockey. Just like off-ice concerns can distract you on the ice, carrying on-ice concerns into other parts of your life can steal enjoyment and performance in your personal and academic life.
 - A good time is right after you evaluate your practice!