



This article was written by Planet Hockey, Inc.  
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[info@planethockey.com](mailto:info@planethockey.com)  
[www.planethockey.com](http://www.planethockey.com)

## Basic Workout Tips

*7 things you need to know to get lean and gain muscle quickly. The key is to GET STARTED. Begin slowly and ease into your workout routine. Listen to your body and target the areas specific to your needs.*

- 1. Stretch before you train, and warm up before you stretch.** Don't jump right into your training session. First, do about 10 minutes of low-intensity exercise on a stationary bike or a treadmill. To decrease the chance of injury, you need to elevate your body temperature before you do anything intense. Once your tissues are warm, stretch them for another five to 10 minutes, focusing your effort on those body parts you plan to train. It is also good to stretch the body part, or parts, being trained for 15 to 20 seconds after every set. Lastly, follow with a brief cool-down in which you basically just keep moving for five minutes or so, with another five to 10 minutes of stretching.
- 2. Make workouts FUN.** Many beginners train strenuously under the assumption that more is better, and that it must hurt and be dreadful. However, you're much better off setting up a fun and challenging training program that eases into the process. At first, your muscles aren't ready to do much more than they were doing before your workouts began. You will increase your chances of success by initially moderating your activity, setting and targeting specific training goals and by varying training and making training fun.
- 3. The two most important times to eat are when you wake up and after you train.** You need fuel to train hard, and without a proper breakfast, you will be running on fumes throughout the day. Make sure the majority of your breakfast consists of carbs, with some protein... low-fat yogurt, or milk and cereal, is a good choice. It is equally critical to refuel immediately after you train, when your body's cells are most receptive to replenishing the energy they just spent. A sports drink/shake containing both carbs and protein will satisfy most immediate post-workout needs in the short run. A more substantial meal, however, consisting of complex carbs and complete protein (chicken breast contains a better amino-acid profile than egg whites, for example) should be consumed within 90 minutes of a workout.
- 4. Challenging exercises are good for you, so resist the temptation to avoid them.** Exercises that involve full range of motion for that muscle group are ideal for hockey players. As your fitness level increases, seek (and learn to love) exercises that get results...especially those you love to hate!
- 5. Recovery is just as important as training.** When you force a muscle to work through resistance, you are actually tearing down muscle fibers. After you've completed your workout, your muscle tissues begin the rebuilding process. To allow that process to unfold properly, give your body adequate downtime in between workouts. As a beginner, don't lift more than three or four times a week, never work the same muscle group on consecutive days, and never train a muscle group that's still sore from a prior workout. For optimal results, you also need to maintain a proper nutrition program. Finally, you need to get enough sleep, at least eight hours per night. Adequate sleep keeps you mentally and physically sharp for your workouts, and the act of sleep itself promotes the release of growth-inducing hormones.
- 6. Avoid Burnout.** Don't do the same workout over and over. Your body only changes when you force it to, and your body is remarkably quick to adapt to new stimuli. If you repeat the same workout every training session even for a month, your body can probably handle it without producing an adaptive response. If you feel like your progress has reached a plateau, that's probably what's happening. The best way to avoid plateaus is by arranging your workout according to discrete phases designed to achieve different and sometimes related goals.
- 7. Caloric intake.** It takes an additional 2,500 to 3,500 calories to gain one pound and a disciplined workout plan to turn it to muscle. You can pump iron until you're blue in the face, but if you don't augment your training efforts with enough food and fluid, the laws of human biology and simple mathematics won't allow you to get stronger. When it comes to gaining muscle, the most important thing is eating enough calories to fuel both your exercise and the metabolic processes needed to build muscle. Most people who have trouble gaining weight and strength simply aren't eating enough.