



# READY FOR THE SEASON YOUR ULTIMATE PRE-TRYOUT PLAYBOOK

---

Confidence, Clarity, and Game-Day Grit for  
Hockey Players

SDR ACADEMY





Welcome to your comprehensive pre-season guide! This resource will help you prepare for hockey tryouts and the upcoming season with confidence. We'll cover everything from tryout tips and goal-setting to mental prep, nutrition, and daily routines.

***Let's get you ready to hit the ice at your best!***





# 01

---

## GOAL SETTING

Setting goals is one of the most powerful ways to stay focused, motivated, and driven during the hockey season. Whether it's improving your shot, making a specific team, or becoming a better teammate, the right goals can help guide your growth and unlock your potential.



# GOAL SETTING

---

Start with your “why.” Think about what excites you about hockey and what kind of player you want to become. Is it becoming faster? More confident with the puck? A better leader? Your goals should reflect what matters to you, not just what coaches or parents expect. When your goals come from your own drive, you’ll naturally work harder toward them.

Make your goals clear and specific. A great method is the S.M.A.R.T. goal system:

- **Specific:** What exactly do you want to improve?
- **Measurable:** How will you track progress?
- **Attainable:** Is it realistic for your current level?
- **Relevant:** Does it help your overall development?
- **Time-bound:** What’s your deadline?

*For example, “Improve edge control” becomes, “Practice edgework drills for 10 minutes after each practice for the next 3 weeks.”*

Don’t just focus on the outcome. Sure, everyone wants to make the top team or win a tournament, but the truth is, those results are influenced by many things you can’t control. What you can control are your actions. These are called process goals. These are small habits and routines that build skills and lead to success. Instead of “Make the AA team,” try “Work on my shot for 15 minutes, 4 days a week.” Those daily actions are what push you closer to the big dream

Break big goals into smaller steps. If your goal is to become a better puck handler, your sub-goals might include improving hand speed, working on coordination, or learning 3 new dekes. Each of those can be built into your weekly plan.

Write your goals down. Keep them in your hockey journal, post them on your bedroom wall, or add them to your phone’s home screen. Seeing your goals daily keeps them top of mind and reminds you why you’re putting in the work.



Stay positive and growth-focused. Goals aren't just about performance stats, they can also be about effort, mindset, and character. Try setting goals like "Support my teammates every game," "Bounce back quickly after mistakes," or "Ask for feedback once a week." These types of goals build you up as a complete athlete, not just a better player, but a better teammate and person too.

Check in often. Every couple of weeks, reflect on how things are going. Have you been consistent? Are you seeing progress? If something's not working, that's okay, just adjust your plan. Goals aren't meant to be perfect; they're meant to help you grow. Celebrate small wins, like improving your shot accuracy or getting more confident on breakouts. Progress is progress.

Goal setting is one of the easiest ways to stay motivated and make each practice, skate, and off-ice session more meaningful. It gives your hard work a purpose and helps you see how far you've come.







# Goal Tracker

THE GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

---

SPECIFIC: DESCRIBE YOUR GOAL IN DETAIL

MEASURABLE: LIST THE MEASURES YOU WILL USE TO TRACK YOUR GOAL

ATTAINABLE: LIST THE ACTIONS YOU NEED TO TAKE TO REACH YOUR GOAL

RELEVANT: DESCRIBE WHY THIS GOAL IS WORTH ACHIEVING FOR YOU

TIMED: WRITE THE DATE YOU WILL ACHIEVE THIS GOAL BY





P A R T

# 02

---

## MASTER YOUR MINDSET

Hockey is more than just skating, passing, and shooting.

What's going on between your ears can have just as much impact on your performance as what you do with your stick and skates. The players who rise to the occasion, stay focused under pressure, and bounce back from mistakes are the ones who put time into building their mental game and so can you.

# MASTER YOUR MINDSET



The first step is learning how to calm your nerves and centre yourself. Everyone feels anxious before tryouts or big games, even elite athletes. That nervous energy just means you care. Instead of trying to avoid it, learn how to manage it. One of the best tools for this is deep breathing. Take five slow breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Picture your breath slowing your heart rate and helping you feel more in control. You can use this in the locker room, on the bench, or even during a water break if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Another powerful tool is visualisation. This means closing your eyes and imagining yourself playing with confidence, energy, and focus. Picture yourself making smart plays, handling the puck cleanly, backchecking hard, and celebrating with your teammates.

The more clearly you can see it in your mind, the more your brain and body start to believe it's possible. Athletes who use visualisation regularly often feel more prepared and perform better under pressure.

Positive self-talk is another game-changer. What you say to yourself matters. If your inner voice is always saying things like "Don't mess up" or "I'm not good enough," it's going to hold you back. But if you flip the script and tell yourself things like "I've trained for this" or "Let's go, I'm ready," you give your confidence a boost. Try using a phrase before stepping on the ice. This should be something short and powerful, like "Fast and focused" or "Strong and steady." Repeat it to yourself until it sticks.



# MASTER YOUR MINDSET

During the season, learn to stay in the moment. Your brain will want to jump ahead — What if I mess up? What if I don't make the team? — or rewind to something that went wrong earlier in the game. But the best players know how to stay focused on the play that's happening right now. You can't change the last shift or control the scoreboard. What you can control is your effort, your body language, and your next decision. Focus on winning the next puck battle, making the next smart pass, or getting to the right spot.

One way to stay present is to use a reset routine when something goes wrong. If you make a mistake, take a deep breath, tap your stick on the ice, and move on. Create a quick signal that helps your brain say: "Next play." This helps you avoid getting stuck in frustration and brings your focus back to the game.

Lastly, remember that confidence comes from preparation. When you've been working on your game — training, practising, eating right, and sleeping well — you've earned the right to feel confident. You don't need to be perfect. You just need to trust that you're ready. That belief builds over time, every time you show up and give your best.

Mental preparation isn't about having no fear or nerves; it's about knowing what to do with those feelings so they don't stop you from playing your best. And like anything in hockey, it takes practice. Try building these strategies into your routine so that when the puck drops, your mind is just as ready as your body.





P A R T

# 03

---

## FUEL TO PERFORM

The food you eat is your fuel. Just like a car needs gas to run, your body needs the right nutrients to skate fast, stay strong, and recover quickly. Eating well doesn't mean being perfect. It means making smart choices that help your body and brain perform their best, especially during tryouts and throughout the season.



## BUILD BALANCED MEALS

Your meals should include a mix of three things: carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats.

Carbohydrates give you energy. These are your power foods. Think whole grain bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, fruits, and vegetables. They give your body the quick energy it needs for bursts of speed and long shifts on the ice.

Protein helps your muscles grow and recover. Good sources include lean meats like chicken or turkey, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, nuts, dairy, and Greek yogurt. After a tough skate or tryout, protein is what helps your body repair and get stronger.

Healthy fats support long-lasting energy and brain function. Foods like avocado, nuts, seeds, and olive oil are great options. They also help with vitamin absorption and overall health.

Make your plate colourful. The more colours from fruits and vegetables, the more nutrients you're getting. Think red peppers, spinach, blueberries, oranges, carrots. They all help your body stay strong, focused, and healthy.



## EAT FOR THE DAY AHEAD

Timing matters. What you eat and when you eat can affect how you feel and perform.

If you have an early morning skate or tryout, try to eat a good dinner the night before. A mix of carbs and protein will keep your energy up for the next day. Something like grilled chicken with rice and veggies or pasta with meat sauce is a great option.

In the morning, eat something light but powerful. Even if you're not super hungry, try a banana with peanut butter, a smoothie, or a piece of toast with some eggs. Don't go to the rink on an empty stomach. Your body needs something to burn as fuel.

If your tryout or game is later in the day, eat a solid breakfast and then a smaller snack or light lunch a few hours before. A turkey sandwich, pasta with veggies, or rice with grilled chicken are great options. If it's just a snack, try a granola bar, some trail mix, or fruit with yoghurt.

After you play, don't forget to refuel. Your muscles are tired and need nutrients to recover. Chocolate milk, a protein smoothie, or a peanut butter sandwich are all great recovery snacks. Then, later on, have a proper meal to refill your energy and support recovery.



## HYDRATION = ENERGY

Water is just as important as food. Even being slightly dehydrated can affect your focus, speed, and strength on the ice. Try to sip water throughout the day, not just at practice. Keep a water bottle at school and drink between classes.

On practice or game days, drink water in the two hours before you play. Keep sipping during breaks and keep hydrating afterwards. You don't need sports drinks unless it's a long, intense tournament or back-to-back games. For most players, water is all you need.


If plain water is tough to drink, try adding slices of lemon, berries, or cucumber to make it more interesting.

Avoid energy drinks, soda, and sugary juices. These might give you a short boost, but will leave you crashing hard. Save those for a treat now and then, not before you play.

## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Nutrition is not one-size-fits-all. Some players love big breakfasts, while others feel better with something light. Pay attention to what foods give you energy and help you feel strong on the ice. Avoid meals that leave you feeling sluggish or too full. Use the pre-season to test and learn what works for your body.

Just like practice improves your skating, eating well improves your energy, focus, and performance. Treat your body like the high-performance machine it is. Fuel it right, and it'll carry you far.



## SAMPLE GAME-DAY MEAL TIMING

### Game at 9:00 AM?

Eat a small breakfast by 7:30 AM. Try toast with peanut butter and banana, or a small bowl of oatmeal with berries.

### Game at 1:00 PM?

Eat a full breakfast around 8:00 AM, like eggs, toast, and fruit. Then have a light snack around 11:30 AM, such as yoghurt and granola or a smoothie.

### Game at 6:00 PM?

Eat lunch around noon or 1:00 PM with carbs and protein. Around 4:00 PM, have a lighter pre-game meal like a wrap, pasta with grilled chicken, or a sandwich.

Post-game, always eat something within an hour, even if it's late. Your body will thank you.





P A R T

# 04

---

## TRYOUT PREPARATION TIPS

Tryouts can be exciting but also nerve-wracking. The key is preparation – both mind and body. Here are essential tips to help you shine during tryouts:

# TRYOUT PREPARATION TIPS

---

01

## **Maintain a Positive Mindset**

A positive attitude can make a huge difference in how you play. Focus on what you do well, and remind yourself that mistakes are part of the process. Every great player has missed passes or flubbed drills, it's how you bounce back that matters. If you make a mistake, shake it off and move to the next rep. Coaches love to see resilience.

03

## **Physical conditioning is key**

Hockey demands stamina, power, and mobility. Set up a regular routine that includes cardio workouts for endurance, strength training for power, and flexibility exercises to reduce injury risk. When your body is in shape, it's easier to focus on the game instead of fatigue.

02

## **Now's the time to sharpen your on-ice skills**

Work on your skating, shooting, stickhandling, and passing. If there's an area you're less confident in, dedicate a few extra sessions to improving it. Repetition builds confidence. If possible, join a summer clinic or create a routine at home that includes dryland drills. The more comfortable you are with your fundamentals, the better you'll perform under pressure.

04

## **Hockey IQ also matters**

Watch games and observe different roles, systems, and decisions players make. Ask questions, study positioning, and get curious about the game. Understanding the strategy side of hockey helps you react faster and smarter on the ice....and coaches notice that.



# TRYOUT PREPARATION TIPS

---

**05**

## **Control the controllables**

You can't decide who else shows up to tryouts or what team the coach picks. But you can control how hard you work, how you listen, how you treat others, and the effort you bring every shift. Focus on showing hustle, being coachable, and staying positive. These qualities stand out just as much as goals and assists.

**06**

## **Get organised ahead of time**

Check your gear well before tryouts. Make sure everything fits and is in good condition. Sharpen your skates, tape your sticks, and pack your hockey bag the night before. Arrive early on the day of your tryout so you have time to settle in and mentally prepare.

**07**

## **Prioritise sleep and rest**

Being well-rested means quicker reactions, sharper focus, and better performance. Aim for at least eight hours of sleep every night in the lead-up to tryouts. Also build in recovery days if you're training hard. It helps your body recharge and prevents burnout.

**08**

## **Finally, enjoy the moment**

Tryouts are a chance to play the sport you love. Stay relaxed, breathe deeply, and have fun. When you're having fun, you're more likely to play freely, confidently, and show your true potential. No matter the outcome, each tryout is part of your journey as a player.





P A R T

# 05

---

## DAILY ROUTINES FOR HOCKEY SUCCESS

Every great player has a routine. From NHL stars to rising youth athletes, a consistent daily rhythm helps you show up ready to perform — physically, mentally, and emotionally. When your routine becomes second nature, it frees your brain to focus on the game, not the chaos around it.

A background image of ice hockey players on the ice. On the left, a player in a black jersey with green and white accents is visible. On the right, a player in a black jersey with the number 8 and the word 'ROCK' is visible. The players are wearing CCM helmets and skates. The ice surface is visible at the bottom.

# WHY ROUTINE MATTERS

Routines help athletes build trust in their preparation. Instead of reacting to the day, you're creating a plan that sets you up for success. Whether it's packing your gear the night before or eating the same game-day meal, these small habits give you confidence and control.

And remember, every athlete is different. What works for one player might not work for another. These routines are templates. Try them out, make changes, and build a routine that fits you and your lifestyle.



# TRAINING & PRACTICE DAY

This is your chance to build habits and stack small wins. On training days, the goal is to fuel properly, train hard, and recover smart.

## MORNING

---

- Wake up at a consistent time (aim for 7–8 hours of sleep minimum)
- Eat a balanced breakfast (e.g. eggs and toast, oatmeal with fruit, or yoghurt with granola)
- Fill your water bottle and sip throughout the morning at school

## AFTERNOON

---

- Eat a solid lunch with carbs and protein (e.g. chicken wrap, pasta, rice and beans)
- 1–2 hours before practice: have a light snack (banana, granola bar, trail mix)

## PRE-PRACTICE

---

- Get to the rink early (15–30 minutes before)
- Warm up: light jogging, jumping jacks, dynamic stretches, stickhandling

## POST-PRACTICE

---

- Cool down with light jogging and stretching
- Refuel with a recovery snack (chocolate milk, protein smoothie, or sandwich)
- Eat dinner with protein, carbs, and veggies (e.g. salmon, rice, and broccoli)

## EVENING

---

- Do homework and relax (read, draw, stretch, or play video games in moderation)
- Get to bed early — sleep is when your body recovers and grows stronger

# RECOVERY OR OFF DAY

Rest days are just as important as training days. Use them to recharge your body, mind, and energy.

## MORNING

---

- Sleep in a bit if needed
- Eat a healthy breakfast (e.g. smoothie, whole grain toast with peanut butter)
- Go for a short walk or do a light mobility session or yoga

## MID-DAY

---

- Do something fun: play another sport casually, hang out with friends, or enjoy a hobby
- Eat a nutritious lunch (keep it balanced and clean)

## AFTERNOON

---

- Stay lightly active: go outside, stretch, rollerblade, do stickhandling drills in the garage
- Drink water consistently — hydration helps with recovery

## EVENING

---

- Foam roll or stretch for 10–15 minutes (focus on hips, groins, hamstrings, shoulders)
- Reflect: journal about the week or talk with a parent/coach about how you're feeling
- Go to bed at your usual time to stay in rhythm

# GAME DAY OR TRYOUT DAY

Game days are where your preparation shows. The key is to stay calm, energised, and focused.

## NIGHT BEFORE

---

- Eat a solid dinner and hydrate
- Pack your gear the night before so you're not rushing in the morning
- Visualize yourself playing well
- Get 8+ hours of sleep

## MORNING

---

- Wake up early enough to avoid rushing
- Eat a balanced breakfast with carbs and protein (e.g. oatmeal with berries, toast with eggs)
- Move lightly: go for a short walk, stretch, or play with a ball

## 2-3 HOURS BEFORE THE GAME

---

- Eat a meal with slow carbs and lean protein (e.g. pasta with chicken, rice and veggies)
- Keep sipping water steadily — don't wait until you're thirsty

## AT THE RINK

---

- Arrive early and get settled
- Do your dynamic warm-up routine
- Focus your mind: listen to music, repeat your focus phrase, or do breathing/visualization
- Check your gear (tape sticks, tighten skates, stay calm)

## POST-GAME

---

- Cool down and stretch
- Rehydrate and eat a recovery snack
- Reflect: What went well? What can improve?
- No matter the outcome — be proud of your effort



# DAILY ROUTINE

# TRAINING

[illegible]

# GAME-DAY

[illegible]

## RECOVERY

[illegible]

# NOTES

[illegible]



P A R T

# 06

---

## **POST-GAME REFLECTION & MINDSET RESET**

What you do after a game matters just as much as what happens during it. Win or lose, good game or tough game — how you reflect, reset, and move forward is what helps you grow as a hockey player and person. Here's how to build a powerful post-game routine that supports confidence, learning, and long-term success.

# POST-GAME REFLECTION ROUTINE

(5-10 MINUTES)

**01**

## Cool Down Physically

Take a few minutes to skate slowly or stretch after your game or tryout. Help your body shift into recovery mode. Rehydrate and eat a light snack with protein and carbs to kickstart muscle repair.

**03**

## Ask Yourself These Questions

Use a journal, a note on your phone, or talk it through with someone you trust (parent, coach, teammate). These questions are powerful for learning:

- What went well today?
- What did I work hard at?
- What challenged me the most?
- Was I focused and positive, even during tough moments?
- What is one thing I can improve next time?
- What am I proud of, no matter the outcome?

**02**

## Take a Mental Pause

Before diving into your thoughts or judgments, breathe. Inhale deeply for 4 seconds, hold for 4, and exhale for 6. Do this 3–5 times. This calms your nervous system and helps you reflect with a clear mind.

**04**

## Write It Down

A journal entry doesn't have to be long. Just 2–3 sentences after each game can help you see your progress. You'll start to notice patterns — strengths that keep showing up and habits that might need adjusting.

**05**

## Reset Your Mindset

Remind yourself: one game doesn't define you. Reflect, learn, and let it go. Hockey careers are built shift by shift, not just on scoresheets. Whether you had a highlight-reel performance or a game full of mistakes, tomorrow is a new opportunity.



## Questions to Ask Yourself

How did I feel before the game?  
What went well?  
What challenged me today?  
What was my attitude like?  
What did I learn?  
One thing I want to improve:  
One thing I'm proud of:  
How will I prepare better next time?



## Phrases to Keep You Grounded

Here are some quick mindset phrases players can use to move forward positively after a game:

- “Effort over outcome.”
- “Mistakes mean I’m learning.”
- “Every shift is a chance to grow.”
- “I can’t control everything, but I can always control my attitude.”
- “Next time, I’ll bring more focus to \_\_\_\_.”

Put your favorite one in your locker, phone wallpaper, or notebook.

# Daily Reflection

---

Today I am grateful for these three things...

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- 

**Today,** this good thing happened to me and I appreciate it because:

---

---

---

---

**Today,** this not so good thing happened to me and this is how I handled it:

---

---

---

---

**Today,** this thing made me happy:

---

---

---

---

**Today,** I discovered this about myself:

---

---

---

---





**EVERY TIME YOU STEP ON THE ICE, YOU'RE ADDING A NEW CHAPTER TO YOUR HOCKEY STORY. SOME DAYS WILL FEEL LIKE WINS. SOME WILL FEEL LIKE SETBACKS. BUT EVERY GAME TEACHES YOU SOMETHING — IF YOU TAKE THE TIME TO REFLECT, RESET, AND REFOCUS. KEEP GOING. KEEP LEARNING. THE BEST PLAYERS NEVER STOP GROWING.**