

10 Tips For The Elite Lacrosse Player



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Many new and veteran lacrosse players find themselves at a standstill. They ask themselves the age old question, something every dedicated athlete has asked themselves, “how can I get better, and how can I improve my game?”

When a beginner starts lacrosse for the first time it can be overwhelming, they are often wide eyed, and ready to dive into the fast paced, physical, and intricate game of lacrosse. Although lacrosse is a fairly old sport, it is just now becoming rapidly popular, slowly but steadily breaking into the realm of “mainstream sports”. Lacrosse doesn’t have as many references available to new players like football, baseball, or basketball does. Jumping into lacrosse without any prior knowledge can be intimidating due to the relative unfamiliarity of the game.

Once players become accustomed to the basic nature of the game, and acquire stick skills; they often wonder what they can do to take their game to the next level. How can they transform into a skilled player. Beaver LAX has come up with the Top 10 Tips every ELITE lacrosse player needs to improve their game.

1. Stick Skills

Having advanced and accurate stick skills is a trait elite lacrosse players have. It is by far the most essential part of an exceptional player’s arsenal of weapons. Stick skills are categorized as: **throwing, catching, and scooping**. Without these skills a player cannot effectively play the game.

How To Improve Stick Skills

- **Wall Ball**

Wall ball improves two vital skills, **throwing and catching**. To play wall ball you need your stick, a lacrosse ball, and a solid wall. (Preferably brick or hard material to ensure no damage is done to the wall.) Throw the ball at the wall, as if you were passing it to a teammate. The ball will hit the wall, and bounce back. Then catch the ball off the rebound, as if you were receiving a pass from a teammate. For this drill, to be the most effective, stand 15 feet from the wall. The ball should make contact about nine feet above the ground. This will ensure the ball rebounds about shoulder height. An Elite lacrosse player plays wall ball every day. An effective number of reps is around 50 passes with your right arm, and 50 passes with your left arm.

- **Scooping**

Scooping is an easy skill to practice and master. Scooping is the action of sliding your lacrosse head underneath a lacrosse ball and picking it up from off the ground. The best

way to practice this skill is to repetitively practice the motion. All you need is your stick, a ball, and some grass. Take the ball and roll it about five feet in front of you. Jog to the ball, bend over, and scoop it off the ground. After scooping the ball, jog approximately 10 more feet and roll it on the ground again, roughly the same distance. You repeat this process to instill the motion in your muscle memory, making it almost second nature. Elite lacrosse players practice scooping 3 times a week. Do this drill for about 10-15 minutes.

2. Endurance

Endurance is a very important part of the game. Lacrosse is played on a field that is generally the size of a football field. Although, the difference between lacrosse and football is that a football play on average lasts about 4 to 6 seconds. Whereas the flow of a lacrosse game is much like that of a basketball game, the ball is continuously in play, but you have to run up and down a much bigger field. Endurance and stamina play a big role when you're running on such a large field.

How To Improve Your Endurance

- **Running**

Running may be painful, but it is the most effective way to improve your stamina.

Running 2-3 miles, 3 times a week, is the perfect distance when training to become an elite lacrosse player.

3. Shooting

In the game's simplest form, the team who puts the most goals in the other team's net is the winner. The act of putting the ball in the net is called shooting (of course you already knew that). Therefore, if you are an offensive player, you are a very valuable part of your team if you are an elite shooter.

How To Improve Your Shooting

- **Accuracy**

Accuracy refers to the placement of your shot. It is important to be accurate so you can get the ball in the parts of the goal where the goalie is most vulnerable. A lacrosse goal is 6 feet tall and 6 feet wide. It is impossible for a goalie to cover that much space. Although it is a lot of space and a small ball, goalies in the higher levels of the game make it hard to get easy goals. That is why it is important to put the ball exactly where you want it. A good way to improve your accuracy is standing about 14 yards away from a lacrosse net, (various angles) with a pile of about 10 balls. Pick a corner in the net and shoot all ten balls at that same spot you selected. Go retrieve the balls you shot, pick a new place to shoot from and repeat the process. Repeat the process five



times, then do it five more times with your off-hand. This is a quick stick exercise, if you're a shooter you should do this every day.

- **Velocity**

Having a fast shot is important, but not quite as important as accuracy, but still important. If your shooting is only a little faster than your passing then goalies are going to eat up your shot. One way to improve the speed of your shot is working on the torque you apply in your shot process. This may sound difficult, but it is very easy. Whenever you practice shooting make sure your arms are extended to their full length. In essence this creates a longer lever, making your shot more powerful.

4. Speed

It can be argued having speed and quickness is valuable in ANY sport or for any athlete. That is definitely true in lacrosse. Speed and quickness can be utilized in many ways, for example: burning a defender while dodging, beating another player to a ground ball, or chasing down an unexpected player and stealing the ball.

How To Improve Your Speed

- **Sprints**

As mentioned earlier running, in many people's opinion, is no fun. Although it isn't easy, being in-shape/being fast is an integral component of being an elite lacrosse player. The best way to improve your speed is to run sprints. You should run 40 to 60 yard sprints (this is the average distance you run in a real lacrosse game). Run this distance at your TOP speed 10 times. If you aren't running long distance you should do this exercise every day. If you plan on running long distance as well you should alternate exercises each day.

5. Dodging

Dodging in lacrosse is very important. You dodge for one of three reasons; you dodge to create separation between you and a defender to get your hands free to either shoot or pass, or you dodge to create a slide and free up a teammate. In essence dodging creates offense, elite lacrosse players are always excellent dodgers. Therefore it is important to practice dodging.

How To Improve Your Dodging

- **Literally Dodging**

There isn't a glamorous drill or exercise to practice this skill. All you need is a stick, ball, and an object to dodge on/around. You can use a tree, bush, a teammate, or maybe



even your net. Really, all you need is something that won't move or run away while you're training. It is important to have this so you can visualize yourself dodging on a player and use the object as a landmark. Line up 15 yards away from your landmark and run at it and do whatever dodge you prefer (spin, face dodge, split dodge, etc.). Then you walk back and repeat the process. Make sure you change up the dodge you use to diversify your arsenal of attacks. (You don't want to be predictable) Repeat this process for about 15 minutes.

6. Strength

Much like speed and endurance, strength is a trait valuable in any sport. Strength can be utilized in every aspect of the game; from backing down a defender or having a hard shot, to playing physical defense or dominating the face-off; strength plays a huge role in lacrosse.

- **Upper Body (Chest and Arms)**
Developing and strengthening your upper body can benefit your shooting and help defenders play physical with their stick. The best lift to gain muscle in your upper body is the bench press.
- **Lower Body (Legs)**
Developing and strengthening your lower body will improve your speed and make you a tougher object to move on the field. The best lift to gain muscle in your lower body is squatting.
- **Core**
Having a strong core makes you a better athlete and benefits you literally every second you're on the field. The best way to improve your core strength is doing sit ups and planks.

7. Offhand

Having a good offhand doesn't allow your defender to favor a side, it ensures they will play honest. This means they cannot strategically attack your weaker side because you are skilled with your stick in either hand. Every elite lacrosse player has an elite offhand.

How To Improve Your Offhand

- **Offhand Stick Work**
A good rule of thumb: Whenever you are training your shot or playing wall ball, if you train with your right... train with your left, or vice versa. Meaning; always practice with both hands. This will ensure each hand is getting the same amount of work.

- **Offhand For Beginners**

For many beginners using your non-dominant hand is extremely difficult. Just the motion of the action is foreign. Therefore to get accustomed to using your non-dominant hand, do things around the house like eat cereal or brush your teeth with the hand you normally wouldn't use.

8. Agility

Agility helps you be a better dodger and a better defender. Agile players have the advantage, they're harder to defend and on the flip side they defend the best. Being able to move laterally and forward and back quickly definitely poses some advantages. Elite lacrosse players are often very agile.

How To Improve Your Agility

- **Zig Zag Cone Drill**

Set up 10 cones five yards apart, offset and at 45 degree angles. Run to each cone, focus on increasing speed after breaking down and changing direction at each cone. This will help improve your agility and speed. Do this twice a week for 10 minutes a workout.

9. Lacrosse IQ

Lacrosse IQ is a term used to describe the players instinctual knowledge of the game. For example, being able to diagnose a slide package or knowing when to dodge. This is a trait only seasoned players have. Elite lacrosse players eventually develop this skill.

How To Improve Your Lacrosse IQ

- **Playing the Game**

There is only one way to develop Lacrosse IQ... playing the game. Getting out on the field playing games, pick-up game anything! Just go out there and learn from your mistakes. As time goes on you learn from mistakes you've made and you become a better, more instinctual player. Watching film is another great way to see how you can improve and diagnose what you can do better next time.

10. Emphasize Position

Let's be honest, you won't be able to physically do every exercise and drill mentioned in this list... that's ok. Shooting drills aren't going to benefit a goalie. Focus on the areas you know you need to work on. If you stay dedicated and follow our guidelines you will become an elite lacrosse player. Remember train hard! Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.



Thank you for being an elite customer!

We want every one of OUR customers to be an ELITE player! Hopefully this guide helps you dominate on and off the field.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

You should consult your physician or other health care professional before starting this or any other fitness program to determine if it is right for your needs. This is particularly true if you (or your family) have a history of high blood pressure or heart disease, or if you have ever experienced chest pain when exercising or have experienced chest pain in the past month when not engaged in physical activity, smoke, have high cholesterol, are obese, or have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in physical activity. Do not start this fitness program if your physician or health care provider advises against it. If you experience faintness, dizziness, pain or shortness of breath at any time while exercising you should stop immediately.