

Is Your Smartphone Playing for the Other Team?

Every time you scroll before a game, you give your opponent an advantage. Don't let your phone be the "extra player" working against you. The reality is stark: while you're mindlessly scrolling through social media or responding to texts in the hour before puck drop, your brain is burning through the mental energy and visual acuity you desperately need on the ice. Your opponent who left their phone in the car? They're entering the game with sharper reflexes, better peripheral vision, and superior decision-making capabilities. This isn't about being old-school or anti-technology—it's about understanding the science of peak performance and making strategic choices that give you a competitive edge.

The modern hockey player faces a unique challenge that previous generations never encountered. Your smartphone is designed by billion-dollar companies with teams of psychologists working to keep you engaged, scrolling, and staring at that small screen. Every notification is engineered to trigger a dopamine response. Every scroll creates a micro-addiction loop. But here's what they don't tell you: every minute you spend in that digital world is time spent away from the mental preparation, visual readiness, and physical awareness that separates good players from elite performers. The science is clear, the results are measurable, and the choice is yours.



The Glove Box Rule

Phones Away: Put your phone away 60 minutes before puck drop—no exceptions.

The Brain Drain: Just 30 minutes of scrolling causes significant mental fatigue and slower reaction times. Your brain processes thousands of pieces of information when you scroll, depleting the glucose your neurons need for split-second decisions on the ice.

The Reward: Faster passing decisions, better reading of plays, and higher Hockey IQ. Players who follow this rule consistently report feeling more "dialed in" and making reads they normally would have missed.



The 20-20-20 Vision Reset

Staring at a screen creates "Visual Field Constriction" (Phone Vision), causing you to lose peripheral awareness—the exact skill you need to track opponents and teammates simultaneously.

To unlock your vision for the game:

- Look 20 feet away
- For 20 seconds
- Blink 20 times

This simple drill resets your focus range and restores the wide-angle vision critical for reading developing plays and seeing that open teammate in your peripheral vision.



Power Position vs. Phone Slump

The "Phone Slump" (head down, rounded shoulders) ruins your skating mechanics and makes your stride less explosive. This posture weakens your hip flexors and deactivates your core—the foundation of powerful skating.

Athletic Posture: Keep your chest up, shoulders back, and core engaged.

Eye-Level Use: If you must use your phone, bring it to eye level; never look down into your lap.

The Reward: More power in your stride, improved acceleration, and reduced injury risk to your neck and lower back.



The Digital Sunset

Elite players treat sleep as a legal performance enhancer. Blue light from screens tells your brain it's daytime, blocking the melatonin needed for recovery and suppressing the deep sleep phases where muscle repair happens.

The Rule: No screens 60 minutes before sleep.

The Goal: Aim for 8–10 hours of sleep to refill muscle glycogen tanks and consolidate the motor learning from practice.

The Reward: Dominating the 3rd period when the other team is fading, faster recovery between games, and fewer injuries.

The Challenge: No Phones in the Locker Room

Try it for one week. Watch your reaction time, focus, and team chemistry skyrocket. Document your on-ice performance metrics before and after. Most players report noticeable improvements in awareness, quicker decision-making, and better communication with linemates. The locker room becomes what it should be—a place for mental preparation, team bonding, and getting your head in the game, not a collection of individuals isolated in their digital bubbles.

"Small sacrifices off the ice lead to massive gains on the ice."

The choice is yours, but understand what's at stake. Your competition is looking for every possible advantage—from better sticks to advanced training methods to nutrition optimization. Don't hand them a free advantage by letting your phone sabotage your preparation. The 60 minutes before game time and the 60 minutes before sleep are sacred windows for peak performance. Protect them fiercely. Your phone will still be there after the game, but the opportunity to perform at your absolute best only comes once per game. Make it count. Elite performance isn't about doing one big thing differently—it's about making small, strategic choices consistently. This is one of the easiest and most impactful changes you can make. Start tonight. Your future self, skating past a defender in the third period while they're gasping for air, will thank you.