So you want to try **Goalball** - Best Tips for Beginners

Goalball is a fast-moving game for blind and visually impaired athletes. Here are some tips for beginners, from experts in the game.

**Goalball Tips & Tricks**

1. After blocking a shot, back up to the net so you can line yourself up with the direction you want to throw the ball.

2. Tactile markings made with a line of string and tape on the floor of help to orient players on the court. Feel around on the floor to avoid getting lost.

3. Getting into a low lunge position when you release the ball will help prevent throwing a high ball.

4. When blocking a shot, make sure tuck your face under your upper arm to prevent the ball from hitting your face.

5. Tapping your hand on the floor or snapping your fingers will let your teammates know where you are and can avoid a collision.

6. When passing the ball, communication with your teammate is key! Call their name and wait for their sound indication before firmly bouncing the ball on the floor so they can hear where it is coming from.

7. You only have 10 seconds from the time the ball hits a player on your team until the moment the ball crosses half-court. Take your time to get oriented, but don’t be too slow on your return.

8. Making sounds can be effective for communication amongst teammates or used as a distraction for the other team, but when the ball is released from the hand of your team, the noises must be finished. Otherwise, your team will receive a noise penalty.

9. When gripping the ball, extend your fingers as wide as they’ll go and grasp the ball in the crease of your wrist.

10. Rotating your shoulders and hips will generate more power when you throw the ball.

11. In the blocking position, tilting your extended body slightly forward will deflect the ball down to the floor after making contact with the player. If the top hip is tilted backwards towards the net, your body will act like a ramp, deflecting the ball up and into the net.
12. Mixing up where your shots are going is a good strategy for tricking the other team and finding holes in their defense.

**How to Get Started**

**Where to play:**

Goalball is played on a volleyball-sized court, preferably on a multisports surface or hardwood flooring. String and tape should be applied to the floor to create the tactile markings. The ideal string to use is 3mm in diameter and you will need roughly 80 meters of it to line the court. Tape should be about 5cm wide and something that will not damage the gym floor.

Below is a diagram of how to set up a goalball court:

![Diagram of a goalball court]

**What you will need:**
- Blindfolds
- Hip pads (lacrosse shorts or inline hockey pads work well)
- Protective cup
- Elbow and knee pads (volleyball knee pads work well, and hockey elbow pads or honeycomb compression pad)
- Running shoes
- Goalball (if not available, wrap a plastic bag around a basketball. A beach ball with rice inside works as well).
- Nets (goalball nets are 9m across and 1.3m high. Five hockey nets lined in a row measure approximately 9.15m. You might have to get creative with what to use as a net. The important thing is because the net is used for orientation on the court, having physical goal posts and crossbar is helpful. If not feasible, tape markings on the wall can indicate the edge of the net.)
- Gym tape (roughly 80m)
- String (ideally 3mm)

*If hip, elbow and knee pads are not available, a long sleeved shirt and pants will prevent floor burn.

Before you get started:
- Ensure everyone has warmed up and stretched to avoid injury.
- Teammates should know the names of the people on their team as well as the position they are playing to facilitate communication during the game.
- Allow players to get a feel for the court and the distance between the goal and the highball line, etc.
- Practicing throwing and blocking without eyeshades on first can help people get the hang of the sport before they lose their eyesight.
- You will need some helpers who are not playing to fetch the ball when it goes out of bounds. Also, someone will need to act as the referee to let players know when the ball goes out of bounds, in the net, or when someone throws a high ball.
Fun Facts

• Goalball is the only sport currently in the Paralympic Games designed specifically for athletes who are blind or visually impaired. The sport was created in 1946 by a German and an Austrian and was developed to assist in the rehabilitation of World War II veterans who had lost their vision.
• The Canadian Women’s goalball team won back to back gold medals at the 2000 and 2004 Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia and Athens, Greece.
• Goalball is played competitively in over 100 countries around the world.
• At the highest level of play, shots can exceed 60 kilometers per hour.
• Goalball players all wear eyeshades so that athletes with different levels of vision can compete without an advantage or disadvantage based on their sight.
• The ball must hit the floor before the highball line (6 meters in front of the goal line). If the ball lands over this line, it is a “highball” which results in the other team being awarded a penalty shot.
• A “longball” penalty is called if the ball does not touch the floor between the two highball lines.
• A penalty shot results in one player having to defend the entire 9 meters of net by themselves while a player from the other team shoots the ball.
• Goalball has seen a drastic evolution over the years. The sport was once played on grass, then it was played on carpet, and now it is played on multisport, hardwood, or plastic flooring.
• Goalball players often used to stand upright in their ready position, while now players sit or kneel on the ground for their defensive stance. This is as a result of a change in the size of the ball which has caused the game to increase in pace. Being closer to the ground allows for more effective defense with this increase speed of play.
• The first Paralympic Games to include athletes who are blind was in Toronto in 1976. This was also the first time Goalball was introduced to the Paralympic Games.

Social Media

Facebook: facebook.com/canadianblindsports
Twitter: @CDNBlindSports
Website: www.canadianblindsports.ca
Photos

Throwing:

Blocking:

Passing:
Videos

Canadian Blind Sports - Goalball Promo Video (ENGLISH)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-h2D-IJuB4

Canadian Blind Sports - Goalball Promo Video (FRENCH)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwkoeTfBlow