

Mayo Clinic News Network

Title: Mayo Clinic Minute: Play safer hockey / Date: Dec 6, 2017

Intro: From pee-wees to the pros, and every level in between, hockey seasons are in full swing. Although it's often considered a risky sport for injuries, Dr. Michael Stuart, a Mayo Clinic orthopedic surgeon, says smart play and top-notch training can lower the odds of getting hurt.

Dr. Stuart knows the game and its athletes' health better than most. He's the USA Men's Olympic Team physician and the chief medical and safety officer for USA Hockey, an organization with more than a half million amateur players of all ages.

For the Mayo Clinic News Network, Dennis Douda shares some top tips for avoiding injuries.

Video	Audio
Total running time [0:59]	/// VIDEO
TITLE: Dr. Michael Stuart Sports Medicine Center Mayo Clinic	“Well, there’s risk of injury in any sport. USA Hockey and Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center have come up with strategies to make the sport of ice hockey safer, and it really is a multifaceted approach.”
Dennis Douda speaking	Whether in the gym or in a game, make stretching part of your warmup, says orthopedic surgeon Dr. Michael Stuart. Good mechanics help, too, so pay attention to proper knee position and hip alignment – even during routine conditioning. Performance specialist Shawn Vinz adds that strengthening key muscles improves stability.
Shawn Vinz speaking	“For a skater, it’s really important to have strong hips, glutes, quadriceps and hamstrings. And, so, we’ll do a lot of unilateral work.”
Dennis Douda speaking	Proper safety gear, like helmets and mouth guards, are a must. Just as important, according to Dr. Stuart, is to encourage sportsmanship and good behavior.
Dr. Michael Stuart speaking	“We teach them to never deliver a blow to the head, never check from behind, never charge or board an opponent.”
Dennis Douda speaking	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Dennis Douda.

Anchor tag: Another important USA Hockey safety tool is the [Heads Up, Don't Duck](#) program. It teaches players to lift their heads – not duck – when headed for a collision to reduce the risk of potentially paralyzing spine or neck injuries.