

Mayo Clinic Medical Edge

Heads Up Hockey

Intro: More than a half million kids play hockey in the United States and there’s a renewed push to keep them from getting hurt. The national governing body for the sport, USA Hockey just released a new video demonstrating better ways for heads-up play on the ice - that could keep some athletes from ending up in a wheelchair. Here’s Dennis Douda for the Mayo Clinic News Network.

Video

Audio

TRT 2:02	
Voice of Dennis Douda	Hockey is a fast, powerful and physical game. Experts say there’s no reason those very elements that make it fun to watch should also make it more risky to play than other sports.
Michael Stuart, MD Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon	“The bottom line is, changing behavior is probably the most effective strategy of all.”
Voice of Dennis Douda	Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Michael Stuart is also co-director of Mayo’s Sports Medicine Center. And, as chief medical officer for USA Hockey, he helped design a new video and training program to prevent the most feared of all hockey injuries, a broken neck or permanent spinal cord damage.
Michael Stuart, MD Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon	“So the premise of this program is, if a player is going to collide with the boards, try to hit the boards with any part of your body other than your head.”
Voice of Dennis Douda	Called Heads up, Don’t Duck - the program promotes drills that condition players to <i>automatically</i> choose the safest posture for impact.
Michael Stuart, MD Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon	“When your head is up, the normal curvature called the lordosis of the spine protects it because it has more shock absorbing ability.”
Voice of Dennis Douda	It also illustrates how hitting the boards with the head down could be catastrophic.
Michael Stuart, MD Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon	“Then you get that accordion effect, and those vertebrae are much more susceptible to fracture or dislocation which can then damage the spinal cord.”
Michael Stuart, MD Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon	“But we also teach on-ice awareness, be aware of your surroundings, be prepared to

	take a check so you're in a safe position.”
Voice of Dennis Douda	Dr. Stuart believes neck flexibility and strengthening exercises may further protect players.
Michael Stuart, MD Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon	“So that maybe you can better absorb forces, protect the neck, and possibly even protect the brain from concussion.”
Voice of Dennis Douda	Heads up, Don't Duck, four words to keep a player in the game. For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Dennis Douda.

Anchor tag: Heads Up, Don't Duck was first launched after 7 players suffered severe neck injuries in 1995, 5-of which involved spinal cord damage. To see USA Hockey's video just click this link: <http://www.usahockey.com/News/HeadsUpDontDuck.aspx>

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