

IT TAKES A GOOD  
**head**  
AND A STRONG **neck**  
TO PLAY GREAT HOCKEY

Head and neck flexibility and strengthening exercises are an important part of your physical training for hockey. These exercises are simple, and you can do them anywhere.

**Flexibility routine**

**1.** Drop your head sideways and hold it for a slow count of six. Now do it on the other side.



**2.** Now turn your head sideways, hold and count to six. Reverse direction, and repeat the exercise four more times.



**Head & neck strengthening**



**1.** Hands together behind your head. Press against your hands for a slow count of six. Now keep pushing with your head, but tilt your head back slowly.



**2.** One arm up, hand over your ear. Try to turn your head to one side, but resist with your hand. Hold for six. Now the same on the other side.



**3.** Now let your head drop sideways against your hand's resistance. Hold for six. Reverse direction.



**4.** Both arms in front, head in your hands. Push with your head and resist with your hands for a slow count of six. Now let your head move forward against your hands.

ALL THAT  
**equipment**

MEANS YOU CAN'T  
**get hurt,  
right?**

**Well, not really.**

Even a suit of armor won't keep your head safe if you get hit head-on with your head down. Being quick and smart will lessen the risk of pain and injury more than any equipment you can get.

**Buy good equipment**

Make sure the helmet you buy is HECC-certified, and try everything on before you buy it. If it isn't comfortable or doesn't fit perfectly in the store, it won't be any better on the ice. Good equipment gives you impact protection and lets you respond quickly.



**AND**

**Keep it in good shape.**

Keeping your protective equipment in good shape is just as important as sharpening your skates or taping your stick. If your helmet gets a crack, it's toast: get another. If your straps won't stay tight, figure out why and fix or replace them. If your facemask gets scratched or bent, get a new one. And wear your mouthguard every time you're on the ice.

**your head** is YOUR  
MOST VALUABLE PIECE  
OF HOCKEY EQUIPMENT

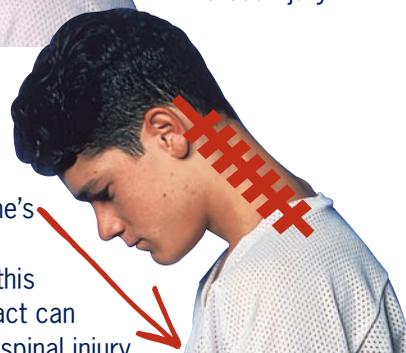
**Here's how to keep it ready for play**

Like any fast-paced sport, hockey has its share of sudden jolts: players routinely make contact with other players, with goal posts, boards, pucks, sticks... and, of course, with the ice. It's all part of the game. But head injuries are *not* part of the game of hockey. By following the *Heads Up Hockey* techniques in this flyer, you can help protect yourself from common head injuries and serious neck injuries which can happen when you make contact—even at walking speed—with the boards, with the goal posts, or with another player.

**Why you need to keep your head up**



This is the natural "Heads Up" position, which gives your neck the maximum flexibility to endure impact without injury.



When your head is down, the spine's normal curve is straightened. In this position, an impact can result in serious spinal injury.

**Play Heads Up Hockey!**



**There's more to Heads Up Hockey**

The *Heads Up Hockey* program is funded by a grant from the USA Hockey Foundation. USA Hockey's *Heads Up Hockey* program has been introduced nationally, and also includes:

- A high-interest **video** with play techniques
- A **program guide** for coaches and officials
- **Posters** for rinks and pro shops
- **Other** player and instructional materials

You can get a complete multimedia kit for \$29.95 plus S&H from USA Hockey by calling (888) 806-7337.

**Heads Up Hockey Advisor**

Alan B. Ashare, M.D.  
St. Elizabeth's Medical Center of Boston  
Chairman, Safety and Protective  
Equipment Committee, USA Hockey

**USA HOCKEY**

USA Hockey is the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey in the USA, as well as the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). USA Hockey has a proud tradition of more than 70 years of tournaments, clinics, rules administration, safety and awareness programs. For more information about *Heads Up Hockey*, contact USA Hockey at:

**USA Hockey, Inc.**  
1775 Bob Johnson Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
1-800-495-USAH  
usahockey.com



The *Heads Up Hockey* program is designed to assist players, coaches, referees, parents and administrators in maintaining a safe and injury-free environment for all hockey participants. However, participants in any recreational or competitive sport should be aware of the inherent risk of injury.

Answers to the Heads Up Hockey Challenge: 1)b 2)c 3)c 4)a 5)c 6)b



**safer  
hockey**

**smarter  
hockey**

**better  
hockey**



"HEADS UP HOCKEY  
MAKES YOU A  
**better  
player!**"



Head Coach, Team USA  
1996 World Cup Of Hockey  
Champions

National Coaching Advisor,  
*Heads Up Hockey*

**Ron Wilson**

You don't have to be *big* to play big-time hockey. But you do have to be *quick* and *smart*.

You can get quicker from practice and drills. It's a great investment of your time.

But you get smarter from experience and learning.

*Heads Up Hockey* is one of those things you need to learn. That's why we've developed this program, with the facts you need to play safer, smarter hockey every time you put on skates.

Whether your age level allows body checking or not, *Heads Up Hockey* can help your game.

It's better hockey for you and for your team.

Check it out!

*Ron Wilson*

take the  
**HEADS UP CHALLENGE**  
inside

KEEP YOUR  
HEAD UP GOING INTO THE  
**boards**  
OR **goal posts**

**Don't duck!**

It may seem natural to duck your head when you see an impact coming, but that's the *wrong* thing to do. When your head is ducked down, your head and neck are much more vulnerable to injury. Keep your head up and you'll be safer.



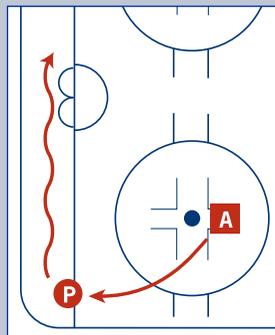
**Hit the boards with anything else first!**

The best way to hit the boards is with both hands on your stick and your arms stretched up and out in front. But whether you're off your skates and sliding into the boards or goal post, or on your skates and about to make contact, keep your head up and cushion the impact with a leg, your side, an arm...*anything* but your head!

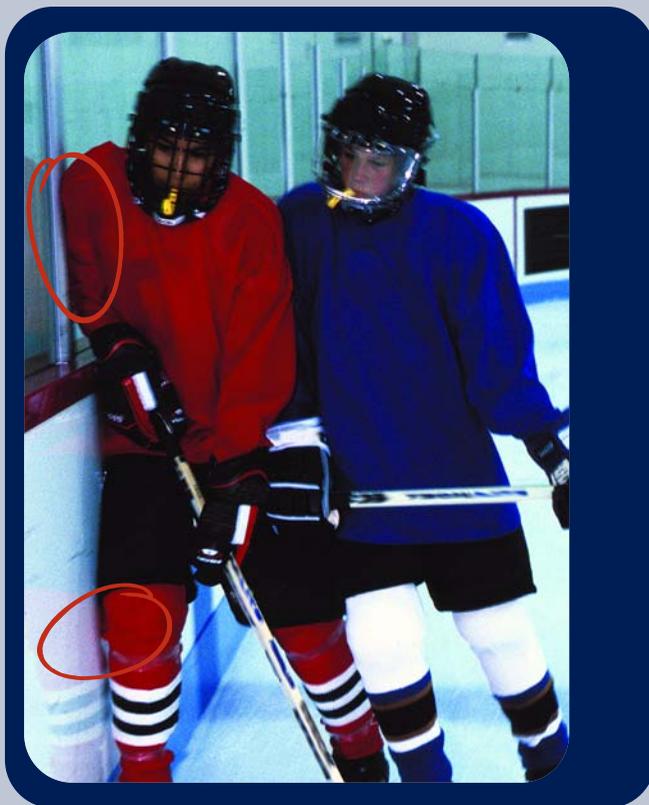
That's Rule Number One of *Heads Up Hockey*:

**Heads Up—Don't Duck!**

PLAY  
**smart**



When the puck is near the boards, go at it *on an angle* to dig it out, so you can keep skating if you hit the boards. Lean into it, knees bent, body low. Be ready for a hit – know where your opponents are, and try to "skate through" the check.



**Taking a check: keep your HEAD OUT OF IT**

If you know you're going to hit the boards, keep your head up and use your arms, your legs, your shoulder or side as a shock absorber...do what you can to take the hit with as much of your body as possible.

AND  
**win**

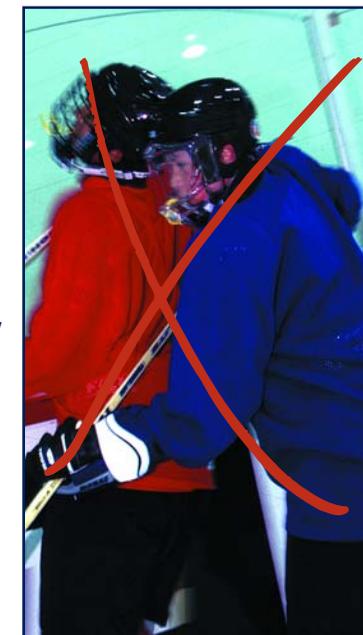


**Giving a check:**

**Don't CHECK FROM BEHIND**

Hockey can get pretty intense and physical, but remember: the purpose of body checking is to separate the opponent from the puck... *not* separate the opponent from consciousness.

There's no excuse for checking from behind. It's one of the most dangerous plays in hockey. And since it's a major penalty, it risks your team's success every time!



**reckless play**  
IS **dumb hockey**

Whoa there! No matter how psyched you are, you won't do *anybody* any good when you lose control. So never drive to the net so fast you can't stop, and don't start a drive in a play so recklessly that you can't stop or control yourself.

**HEADS UP CHALLENGE**

Answer these six questions and see whether you're ready to play *Heads Up Hockey*!

**1. What is Rule Number One of Heads Up Hockey?**

- a) Play smart—play fair
- b) Heads up—don't duck
- c) Heads up—stick first

**2. How fast do you have to be moving to get a serious head injury in hockey?**

- a) 15 mph
- b) flat out
- c) walking speed

**3. If you know you're going to hit the boards or the goal post, what should you hit with first?**

- a) your stick
- b) your skates
- c) anything but your head

**4. What's one of the most dangerous plays in hockey?**

- a) checking from behind
- b) arguing with a referee
- c) skating backwards

**5. What are the two most important things about your helmet?**

- a) loose fitting & well-worn
- b) cool looking & polished
- c) snug fitting & HECC-certified

**6. What else can your mouthguard do for you?**

- a) cure cavities
- b) help prevent other head injuries
- c) clean your teeth while you skate

The answers are on the back panel.

**Play Heads Up Hockey!**