

# ASK AN EXPERT

DR. BENJAMIN DOMB, ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

## Why did you want to pioneer robotic joint replacement?

Whether they play football for a living or spend their days behind a desk, orthopaedic surgeon Benjamin Domb sees every patient as an athlete.

“My goal is to allow every patient to reach their greatest physical ability,” he said.

Domb, a partner at Hinsdale Orthopaedics and founder of the American Hip Institute in Hinsdale, is an expert in MAKOplasty, or robotic joint replacement. The minimally invasive procedure allows patients a faster, easier recovery and better results than conventional surgery, said Domb, who helped to develop the procedure and was one of the first surgeons in the country to perform it.

A lifelong athlete who played basketball at Princeton and professionally in Europe, Domb said he knew early on in his studies that he would specialize in orthopaedic surgery. It was slightly later that he zeroed in on the hip as his area of expertise.

“I noticed that in the field of

sports medicine, shoulders and knees had been attended to for many years,” Domb said. But the hip — the body’s largest and often most-used joint — didn’t get the same attention.

Several years after earning his medical degree, Domb joined a team of doctors who developed and pioneered the robotic joint replacement procedure.

“Traditional replacement uses the human eye and the human hand. It’s subject to human inaccuracy,” Domb said.

MAKOplasty uses a 3-dimensional scan to customize each replacement to the individual patient’s unique anatomy.

“We measure things to the millimeter and to the degree,” he said. “The human eye can’t do that.”

The result is a new hip that functions and feels very much like the old one, and with fewer complications and side effects. Because the procedure involves fewer and smaller incisions than traditional surgery, there is less risk of damage to surrounding tissue. And because patients can begin using the hip sooner than with traditional surgery, there is less risk of complications such as blood clots, Domb said.

Domb has served as assistant

team physician for the Lakers, Dodgers, Kings and the Galaxy soccer team in Los Angeles and for the Chicago Sky women’s basketball team. And it’s this time of year that he starts hearing from NFL players hoping to get their hips fixed in the off-season.

“It’s the rush,” Domb said.

Waiting for the off season is one thing, but Domb doesn’t recommend waiting to see a doctor about hip problems. Left untreated, painful hip problems such as a torn labrum or a hip impingement can lead to arthritis. In most cases, early intervention can prevent a future hip replacement, Domb said.

Domb said he is grateful to Hinsdale Hospital, Hinsdale Orthopaedics and the Hinsdale community for supporting his work and ongoing research. Having moved from Hinsdale to Glencoe, the husband and father of three still considers himself part of the community. He just started his 10th season as volunteer team physician for Hinsdale Central’s many sports teams.

“It’s a form of community service and a way to give back to the community,” he said.

— by Sandy Illian Bosch



**After nearly 1,000** hip replacement surgeries and 3,000 other procedures to preserve and improve the hip joint, Dr. Benjamin Domb continues to work toward improvements. His foundation, the American Hip Institute, supports research and education that will further advance his craft. (Jim Slonoff photo)