

Avoiding Shoulder and Elbow Overuse in Young Athletes

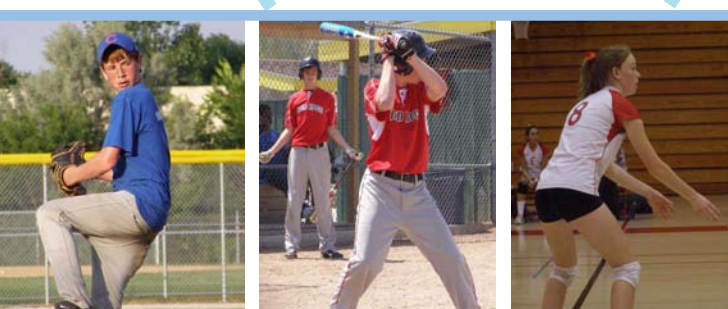
Whether young athletes are pitching, rowing or swimming, sports medicine experts are warning against focusing on one sport and one position. That's because of an increase in shoulder and elbow injuries in young athletes who use repetitive overhead movements.

Tips From Our Experts:

- > If you are experiencing shoulder or elbow pain or discomfort, communicate with your parents or coach about how you feel. Never play with pain.
- > If you have persistent pain in your shoulder or elbow that is untreatable by anti-inflammatory medications, see a board certified orthopaedic surgeon who specializes in upper extremities.
- > Always warm-up properly by stretching, running and practicing your overhead motion with gradual increase in intensity.
- > Play a variety of positions so you aren't causing stress to muscles and ligaments with repetitive motion
- > Avoid competing on more than one team or playing in overlapping leagues
- > For youth baseball, follow the pitch count guidelines established by Little League International.
- > For throwing athletes, don't pitch on consecutive days.
- > Don't play year round. If you want to stay in shape in the off season, cross train or play a different sport.
- > Concentrate on good mechanics, control and accuracy and not SPEED.
- > Master your skill before trying something new.
- > Speak with an athletic trainer if you have concerns about injuries or ways to prevent them.

A recent study by Safe Kids showed 9 of 10 parents underestimate how long children should refrain from playing one sport to protect them from overuse.

More than five million kids under the age of 18 suffer a sports-related injury each year with approximately half of these due to overuse, according to the CDC.



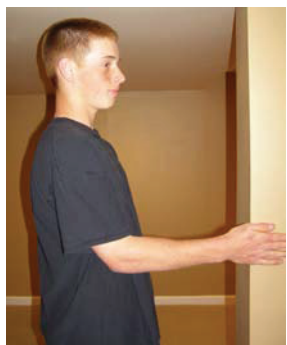
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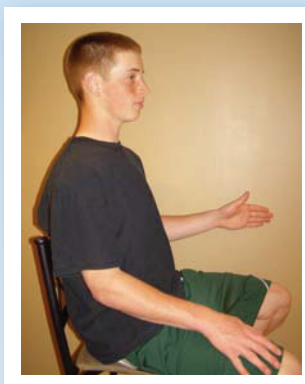
SHOULDER STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

For all overhead athletes, exercises to strengthen the shoulder and elbow can help injury prevention. If you are recovering from an overuse injury, your orthopedic surgeon and physical therapist may recommend that you do 10 to 15 minutes of strengthening exercises two or three times a day during your early recovery period. In both cases, the following exercises can help you prevent and rehab overuse injuries.



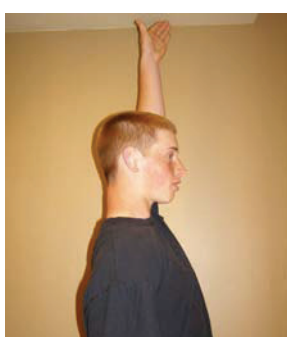
Shoulder Internal Rotation (Isometric)

- Stand at a corner of a wall or in a door frame. Place the involved arm against the wall around the corner, bending your elbow 90 degrees. Push your arm into the wall.
- Hold for 5 seconds, and then relax.
- Repeat 10 times.



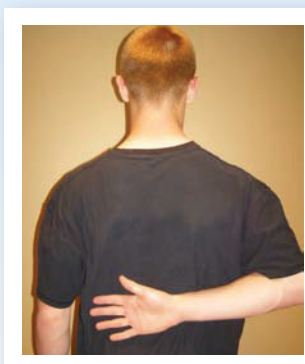
Shoulder External Rotation (Isometric)

- Stand with the involved side of your body against a wall.
- Bend your elbow 90 degrees. Push your arm into the wall.
- Hold for 5 seconds, and then relax.
- Repeat 10 times.



Shoulder Flexion (Active)

- Raise arm to point to ceiling, keeping elbows straight.
- Hold 10 seconds.
- Repeat 3 times.
- Do 3 sessions a day.



Shoulder Internal Rotation (Active)

- Bring hand behind back and across to opposite side.
- Repeat 10 times.
- Do 3 sessions a day.



Shoulder Adduction (Isometric)

- Press upper arm against a small pillow alongside your body. Hold 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 times.
- Do 3 sessions a day.

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