

## How do I prevent shoulder and elbow injury?

This is a frequently asked question by parents and athletes and becomes more of an issue with athletes playing year round and at times in multiple leagues. Many youth league players are playing over 100 games over a 6+ month period; comparable to a professional season. New research indicates arm pain among young athletes is on the rise, with one study showing a five-fold increase in serious shoulder and elbow injuries among youth baseball and softball players since 2000. Early specialization may contribute to the problem by reducing overall recovery from fatigued shoulders and arms. Not only does participating in other sports enable the athlete to recover but helps develop overall athleticism that may ultimately enhance performance in baseball. The American Sports Medicine Institute provided the following recommendations on pitch count and pitch selection:

### Pitches/game

Age	Max. Pitches Per Game	Max. Games Per Week
8-10	52	2
11-12	68	2
13-14	76	2
15-16	91	2
17-18	106	2

### Recovery Times

Age	1 Day Rest	2 Day Rest	3 Day Rest	4 Day Rest
8-10	21	34	43	51
11-12	27	35	55	58
13-14	30	36	56	70
15-16	25	38	62	77
17-18	27	45	62	89

### Survey – Age Recommendation for Learning Various Pitches

Pitch	Age
Fastball	8 – 10
Change-Up	10 – 13
Curve ball	14 – 16
Knuckle ball	15 – 18
Slider	16 – 18
Fork ball	16 – 18
Screw ball	17 – 19

### MST has developed a shoulder and elbow injury prevention and performance program:

- Proper technique is a major factor in preventing injury.
- A well designed rotator cuff and total body strengthening program will reduce a young pitcher's risk of injury.
- At MST a progressive program for shoulder strength, stability and velocity is followed.
- Players should gradually increase arm strength with a combination of long toss and intermittent mound work several weeks prior to the start of the season.
- Arm soreness is common early in the season as athletes condition their arm. This program should be followed 2-3 times per week to have athletes prepared for the season. 1-2 times per week in season. If pain, altered mechanics or reduced velocity occurs more rest or medical evaluation may be warranted.

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