

Youth Overuse Injuries and Sports Burnout

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Coaches, Parents, and Volunteers:

The purpose of this text is not for you to discourage your young athletes from participating in athletics or specializing in one single sport. However, a certain level of care and caution must be followed in order to help ensure long-term durability and high-level performance. The following information is designed to help create awareness of potential dangers associated with pushing young athletes past the point of safety and enjoyment in their athletic activities.

Statistics Regarding Youth Sport Involvement and Injuries:

- According to the CDC, more than half of all sports injuries in children are preventable.
- Overuse injuries are responsible for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle and high school students.
- Approximately 50 percent of overuse injuries in children and adolescents are preventable.
- Surgeons are seeing four times as many overuse injuries in youth sports compared to five years ago.
- Since 2000 there has been a fivefold increase in the number of serious shoulder and elbow injuries among youth baseball and softball players.
- By age 13, 70 percent of kids drop out of youth sports. The top three reasons: adults, coaches and parents.

The following are the 4 stages of overuse injuries:

1. Pain in the affected area after physical activity
2. Pain during physical activity, not restricting performance
3. Pain during physical activity, restricting performance
4. Chronic, persistent pain even at rest

Play smart:

Athletes should avoid specializing in one sport before they reach puberty. Child "superstars" are often injured or burned out prior to college. Children should be encouraged to try a variety of sports.

Participation in a particular sport should be limited to 5 days per week.

Rest up:

Athletes should take at least 1 day off per week from organized activity to recover physically and mentally.

Athletes should take a combined 2 to 3 months off per year from a specific sport (may be divided throughout the year [that is, 1 out of every 6 months off]).

Youth Throwing Precautions:

Statistically speaking, throwing sports provide the most significant opportunity for overuse injuries to develop and hinder performance down the road.

"Little League elbow" (overuse injury to the medial epicondyle apophysis) is an injury to the elbow that is caused by frequent forces (such a pitching) that overload the area. A common case involves a youth baseball pitcher who is throwing in too many innings, throwing inappropriate pitches for his/her age, or trying to throw too hard. The following guidelines are recommended by the USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee.

- Pitch Count Limits:

Age	Max. Pitches/Game	Max. Pitches/Week
8 - 10	50	75
11 - 12	75	100
13 - 14	75	125
15 - 16	90	2 games / week
17 - 18	105	2 games / week

- Ages for learning types of pitches:

Fastball	8
Change-up	10
Curveball	14
Knuckleball	15
Slider	16

Benefits of Stretching in Regards to Overuse Injuries:

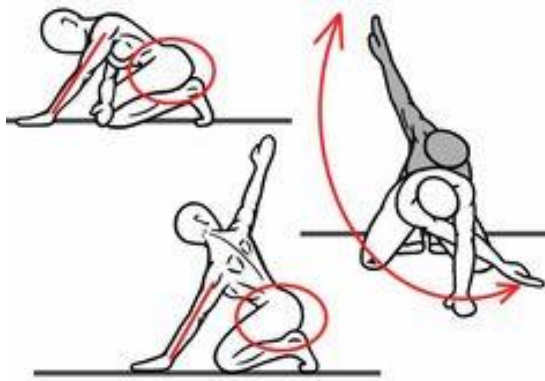
Stretching can help improve flexibility, and, consequently, range of motion in your joints. Better flexibility may improve your performance in physical activities or decrease your risk of injuries by helping your joints move through their full range of motion and enabling your muscles to work most effectively.

Stretching also increases blood flow to the muscle. This increase in blood flow to the muscle helps to stimulate proper recovery, growth, and positive adaptations.

Examples of Stretching Exercises:

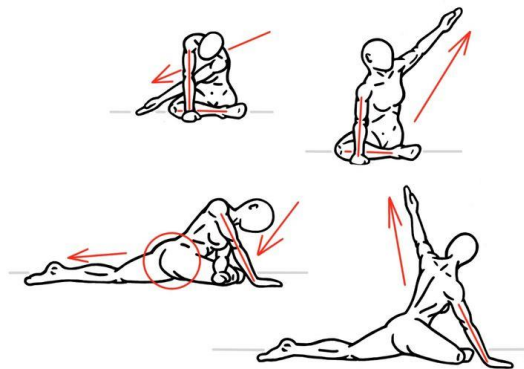
Name: **“Thread the Needle”**

Benefits: Upper Body and Torso Flexibility



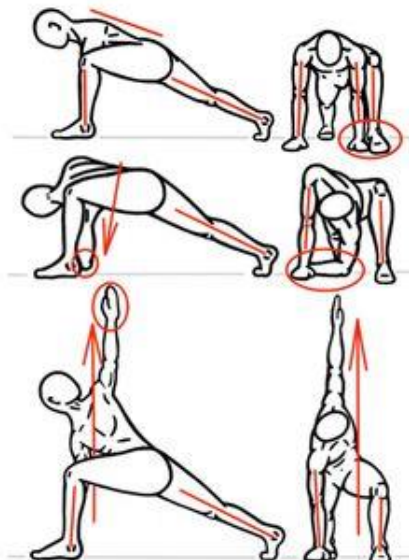
Name: **“Pigeon Thread the Needle”**

Benefits: Hips, Glutes, Torso Flexibility



Name: **“Deep Lunge Reach Back”**

Benefits: Hip Flexor, Quad, Groin, Torso Flexibility



Name: **“Lower Back/Hip Stretch”**

Benefits: Hip and Lower Back Flexibility

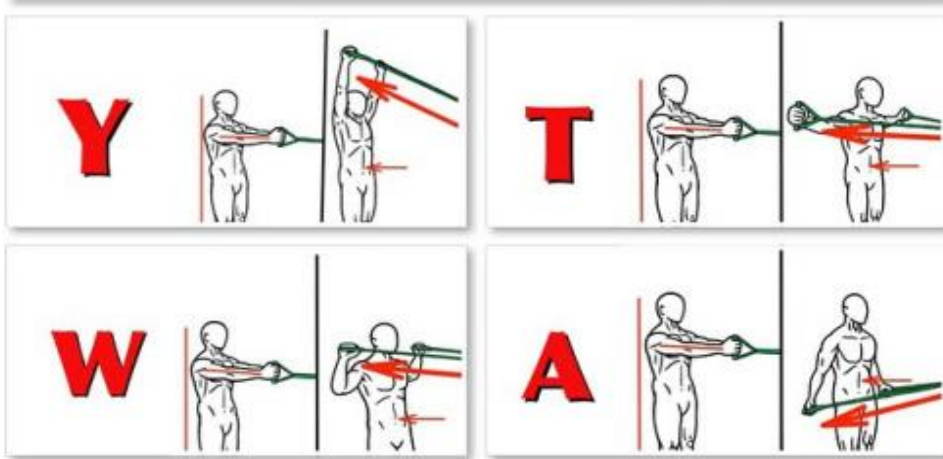


Benefits of Hip and Shoulder Strengthening in Regards to Overuse Injuries:

Strengthening areas of the body which are most prone to overuse injuries can significantly protect the athlete throughout his or her athletic seasons. Shoulder, hip, and glute muscles are often ignored and weak in young athletes. Yet, these areas often undergo the most stress during athletics, especially those that involve throwing and cutting.

Name: **“Shoulder YTWA”**

Benefits: Shoulder and Rotator Cuff Strengthening for Throwing Athletes



Name: **“Fire Hydrant”**

Benefit: Hip/Glute Strengthening. ACL Injury Prevention



Name: **“Single Leg Glute Bridge”**

Benefit: Hip/Glute Strengthening. ACL Injury Prevention



Name: **“Band Resisted Squat”**

Benefit: Work on Proper Squat Technique. Hip/Glute Strengthening. ACL Injury Prevention

