

Protect the Player First. Baseball Comes Second.

BY THE NUMBERS



1 IN 5
Youth pitchers experience elbow pain during a season.



26%
Of baseball players ages 9–12 report elbow pain.



30%
Of youth baseball players in a long-term study experienced elbow pain.



50%+
Of youth baseball injuries are caused by **OVERUSE**.



7–10x
Increase in youth pitching injuries since 2010.



40%+
Youth & high school players now account for over 40% of Tommy John surgeries at some sports medicine centers.

YOUNG ARMS ARE STILL DEVELOPING

- ✓ Growth plates are weaker than adult bones
- ✓ Pain is NOT “part of getting stronger”
- ✓ Fatigue increases injury risk
- ✓ Recovery days are essential for healthy development



A tired arm is an injured arm waiting to happen.

BIGGEST RISK FACTORS



TOO MUCH THROWING

- High pitch counts
- Multiple games/weekends
- Playing for multiple teams



NOT ENOUGH RECOVERY

- Pitching while fatigued
- No rest days
- Year-round baseball



POOR COMMUNICATION

- Hiding soreness or pain
- Pressure to “push through it”

#1 CAUSE OF ARM INJURIES:

OVERUSE
— NOT CURVEBALLS.



WARNING SIGNS



PAIN SHOULD NEVER BE IGNORED.

SMART ARM CARE: A TEAM EFFORT



PLAYERS

- ✓ Speak up about pain
- ✓ Warm up properly
- ✓ Hydrate & sleep
- ✓ Follow recovery guidelines



COACHES

- ✓ Watch for fatigue
- ✓ Prioritize development over wins
- ✓ Monitor total workload
- ✓ Build in rest days



PARENTS

- ✓ Encourage honesty about soreness
- ✓ Monitor throwing across ALL teams
- ✓ Remember: long-term health matters most



**EVERY THROW ADDS STRESS TO THE ARM.
SMART RECOVERY AND RESPONSIBLE PITCHING
PROTECT THE FUTURE OF THE PLAYER.**





KEEP YOUR CANNON HEALTHY!



RECOVERY GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG BALLERS



YOUR ARM IS LIKE A SUPERPOWER!

Every throw puts stress on your arm.

Rest helps your arm:

- ✓ Throw harder
- ✓ Recover faster
- ✓ Stay healthy
- ✓ Play longer



TELL AN ADULT IF...

Your arm:

- ♥ Hurts when you throw
- ♥ Feels super tired
- ♥ Feels tingly or numb
- ♥ Loses strength
- ♥ Keeps hurting the next day

PAIN IS NOT PART OF GETTING BETTER.



RECOVER LIKE AN ATHLETE



DRINK WATER

Your muscles need water to heal.



EAT GOOD FOOD

Protein helps muscles recover.



SLEEP 9-11 HOURS

Sleep is when your body repairs itself.



REST YOUR ARM

Rest days make your arm stronger.



STRETCH & MOVE

Light movement helps recovery.

SHOULD I ICE MY ARM?



- ★ Ice may help soreness.
- ★ Rest is **MOST** important.
- ★ Tell an adult if pain continues.



DON'T TRY TO BE "TOUGH"

NEVER:

- ✗ Hide pain
- ✗ Throw through pain
- ✗ Pitch when exhausted
- ✗ Play for too many teams without rest



SMART PLAYERS SPEAK UP.



HOW COACHES HELP



Tired arms



Slower pitches



Bad mechanics



Sore players



GOOD COACHES PROTECT PLAYERS.



Your body grows while you sleep.



Muscles get stronger during **REST** – not while throwing.



Pitching tired increases injury risk.



Even **PRO PLAYERS** take recovery days!



FUN FACTS

STRONG PLAYERS SPEAK UP.



CHAMPIONS RECOVER.



WESTSIDE YOUTH BASEBALL

PROTECT YOUR ARM. PROTECT YOUR FUTURE.



The information in this infographic is supported by trusted organizations and peer-reviewed research.

CITATIONS FOR THE INFORMATION IN THIS INFOGRAPHIC

1



OVERUSE & YOUTH PITCHING SAFETY

Fleisig, G. S., Andrews, J. R., Cutter, G. R., Weber, A., Loftice, J., McMichael, C., & Olsen, S. J. (2011). Risk of serious injury for young baseball pitchers: A 10-year prospective study. *American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 39(2), 253–257.

A 10-year prospective study identifying overuse as the leading factor for serious arm injuries in youth baseball pitchers.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21098816/>

2



ASMI POSITION STATEMENT

American Sports Medicine Institute. *Position Statement for Adolescent Baseball Pitchers*.

Comprehensive guidelines on pitch counts, workload, rest, fatigue, recovery, and year-round play to help prevent arm injuries in youth pitchers.

<https://asmi.org/position-statement-for-adolescent-baseball-pitchers/>

3



MLB / USA BASEBALL PITCH SMART

MLB & USA Baseball. *Pitch Smart Guidelines and Research*.

Evidence-based pitch count guidelines, rest recommendations, warm-up protocols, and educational resources for healthy pitching development.

<https://www.mlb.com/pitch-smart>

4



LITTLE LEAGUE – OVERUSE INJURIES

Little League International. *Overuse is the Primary Cause of Arm Injuries in Youth Baseball*.

Research showing overuse—not curveballs—is the primary cause of arm injuries in young baseball players.

<https://www.littleleague.org/partnerships/pitch-smart/overuse-primary-cause-arm-injuries/>

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PREVENTION OF ELBOW INJURIES

Fleisig, G. S., & Andrews, J. R. (2012). *Prevention of Elbow Injuries in Youth Baseball Pitchers*. *Sports Health*, 4(5), 419–424.

Practical recommendations for pitch counts, rest, recovery, and identifying early signs of arm fatigue.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3435945/>

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YOUTH PITCHING BEHAVIORS STUDY

Greiner, J. J., et al. (2021). *Pitching Behaviors in Youth Baseball Compared With Pitch Smart Guidelines*. *Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Examines workload and pitching behaviors in youth baseball and their alignment with Pitch Smart guidelines.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8581780/>

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YEAR-ROUND PLAY & INJURY RISK

Little League International. *The Risks of Year-Round Baseball for Young Athletes*.

Year-round play increases fatigue, limits recovery, and raises the risk of serious arm injuries.

<https://www.littleleague.org/partnerships/pitch-smart/year-round-play/>

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YOUTH ELBOW PAIN / “LITTLE LEAGUE ELBOW”

American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. *Elbow Pain in Little League Pitchers*.

Overview of common elbow injuries in youth pitchers, symptoms to watch for, and when to seek medical evaluation.

<https://now.aapmr.org/elbow-pain-in-little-league-pitchers-elbow/>

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COMMUNICATION & INJURY PREVENTION

American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine. *Protecting Youth Baseball Arms Through Education and Communication*.

Highlights the importance of education, communication, and technology in reducing youth baseball injuries.

<https://www.sportsmed.org/membership/sports-medicine-update/spring-2025/protecting-youth-baseball-arms-the-role-of-education-communication-and-new-technology>

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RECOVERY, FATIGUE & ARM CARE

Olsen, S. J., Fleisig, G. S., Dun, S., Loftice, J., & Andrews, J. R. (2006). *Risk Factors for Shoulder and Elbow Injuries in Adolescent Baseball Pitchers*. *American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 34(6), 905–912.

Identifies key risk factors including fatigue, workload, and inadequate recovery.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16452269/>



This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider for injury evaluation and treatment.



**SMART THROWS.
STRONG RECOVERY.
BRIGHT FUTURES.
PROTECT THE PLAYER.**

