

Strike out kids' overuse injuries this baseball season

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Young baseball players are at risk for overuse injuries, but there are

ways to play it safe and prevent such problems, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) says.

"Overhead athletes, such as baseball players, place significant repetitive stress on the shoulder and elbow joints," orthopedic sports surgeon Dr. Nima Mehran said in an academy news release.

Between overuse and the year-round nature of the sport, [young athletes](#) are at increased risk for shoulder and [elbow injury](#), he said.

"The best way to avoid these injuries in [baseball players](#) is by avoiding single sport specialization and encouraging the kids to be active in multiple sports," said Mehran, an AAOS spokesman. "This will allow them to break from the repetitive motions in baseball while developing other skills necessary for injury prevention."

Here are his other recommendations:

- **Follow youth baseball guidelines.** These are designed to reduce the risk of [overuse injuries](#). They include limiting the number of pitches thrown and type of pitches thrown according to age. If a young pitcher has shoulder or arm pain, get them checked out. Remember that players are also at risk for muscle sprains, strains and bruises. The AAOS offers tips to reduce that risk.
- **Get a checkup.** A pre-season [physical exam](#) is important for players of all ages. Identifying potential medical problems can help prevent injuries and illnesses.
- **Warm up.** Always start with easy calisthenics, such as jumping jacks. Continue with walking or light running, such as running the bases. Gentle stretching of the back, hamstrings and shoulders is also a good idea.
- **Cool down.** Stretch after a practice or game to help reduce muscle soreness and keep muscles long and flexible. Slowly and

- gently [stretch](#) after activity, holding each stretch for 30 seconds.
- **Stay hydrated.** Even mild dehydration can hurt your performance on the field. If you don't get enough fluids, your body can't effectively cool itself through sweat and evaporation. Generally, it's a good idea to drink 24 ounces of non-caffeinated fluid 2 hours before exercise and 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes throughout exercise, according to the AAOS.

More information

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [sports injuries](#).

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