

Baseball Pitching Elbow and Shoulder Injury Prevention Guidelines

Elbow and shoulder injuries in youth baseball players have been on the rise in recent years and research points to overuse as a main cause. Overuse injuries often are preventable. These guidelines may help prevent these injuries in baseball pitchers.

Prevention of elbow and shoulder overuse injuries

- Properly warm up
- Use age-appropriate pitches
- Use proper pitching mechanics
- Never pitch with elbow or shoulder pain
- Don't pitch on consecutive days
- Take the appropriate amount of time off based on previous game's pitch count
- Stay within recommended pitch counts per game for age group
- Take time off from all baseball activities (three months per year is recommended)

Talk to a sports medicine professional (physician, physical therapist or athletic trainer) about any concerns regarding possible injuries.

Norton Orthopaedic Specialists – Brownsboro

Norton Medical Plaza II – Brownsboro, Suite 250
9880 Angies Way
Louisville, KY 40241
(502) 394-6341

Recommended pitch counts	
Age	Pitch count per game
8-10	50-65
11-12	70-80
13-14	75-90
15-16	90-100
17-18	95-110

6 times the age is a good rule of thumb (e.g., 15-year-old pitcher = 90 pitches)

Age-appropriate pitches	
Fastball	8 (+/-2)
Change-up	10 (+/-3)
Curveball	14 (+/-1)
Knuckleball	15 (+/-3)
Slider	16 (+/-2)
Forkball	16 (+/-2)
Screwball	17 (+/-2)

Days of rest based on pitch count				
Age	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days
8-10	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+

Sources: Little League Baseball, USA Baseball, STOP Sports Injuries and research by Fleisig & Andrews