

Fall Ball Fallacy: Why Throwing Less INCREASES Your Risk of Injury

September 4, 2015

As summer ends, travel teams pressure parents and players to play fall ball so their son doesn't "fall behind", the main selling point being that fall ball is a weekend-games-only commitment, with few to no mid-week practices.

For hitters, hitting less during the week doesn't pose much of an injury risk. For pitchers, throwing less during the week and then pitching on the weekends can be DISASTROUS.

Why?

In a word...TIMING.

[The American Sports Medicine Institute](#) states year-round baseball and injury to be "strongly linked":

RISK FACTORS FOR ADOLESCENT PITCHERS

Research has shown that the amount of competitive pitching and pitching while fatigued are strongly linked to injury.^{4,5,6} Other risk factors may include pitching on multiple teams,⁵ pitching year-round,⁶ playing catcher when not pitching,⁷ poor pitching mechanics,^{8,9} and poor physical conditioning.^{10,11} Recommendations for youth pitchers are shown on the ASMI Position Statement for Youth Pitchers.¹²

But this is not only due to the total number of pitches thrown. Just as important is the harm of DECREASED throwing between starts in fall ball.

The importance of throwing is NOT about arm strength:

Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, 2004, 18(3), 447-450
© 2004 National Strength & Conditioning Association

DIFFERENCE IN ISOKINETIC TORQUE ACCELERATION ENERGY OF THE ROTATOR CUFF: COMPETITIVE MALE PITCHERS VERSUS MALE NONATHLETES

Throwing is about TIMING:

feel it important to speculate on this finding. This may be simply due to the fact that the overhead athletes do not need extra strength or power to come from the shoulder during the act of throwing. Since the shoulder is the end link in a very long kinematic chain used during the throwing motion, the torque generated through the legs and trunk may be enough to diminish the actual need for power to be developed specifically at the glenohumeral joint. Trunk coiling or rotation immediately after the

Most pitchers are told "You long toss to increase arm strength". WRONG.

**You long toss / throw between starts
to perfect the timing of your throwing motion.**

Think about hitting: Do hitters practice their swing to make their arms stronger? No. They practice the TIMING of their swing to maximize energy transfer from the legs to the arms.

Applying that to throwing/pitching, long toss/throwing between starts helps you perfect the TIMING of your throwing motion and maximize energy transfer from the legs to throwing arm.

This is called "the kinetic chain", with kinetic meaning "movement".

Poor timing = inefficient kinetic chain = increased arm stress

So unless you are able to throw AT LEAST 3 days per week between pitching starts, DO NOT play fall ball.

Remember...



Have Questions About This Newsletter?

Contact (PitchingDoc@msn.com / 631-352-7654) Dr. Arnold!