



Position Statement for Youth Baseball Pitchers

With the rise in elbow and shoulder injuries in youth baseball pitchers, the adult community needs to take steps to prevent these injuries. Research points to overuse as the principle risk factor. Poor pitching mechanics also contribute to injury risk. Another suggested risk factor is poor physical fitness.

Throwing curveballs has been suggested as a risk factor, but the existing research does not support this concern. However, a youth pitcher may not have enough physical development, neuromuscular control, and proper coaching instruction to throw a curveball with good mechanics. Throwing curveballs too early may be counter-productive, leading to arm fatigue as well as limiting the youth's ability to master fastball mechanics.

Thus, the recommendations for preventing injuries in youth baseball pitchers are:

1. Watch and respond to signs of fatigue. If a youth pitcher complains of fatigue or looks fatigued, let him rest from pitching and other throwing.
2. No overhead throwing of any kind for at least 2-3 months per year (4 months is preferred). No competitive baseball pitching for at least 4 months per year.
3. Do not pitch more than 100 innings in games in any calendar year.
4. Follow limits for pitch counts and days rest. (Example limits are shown in the table below.)
5. Avoid pitching on multiple teams with overlapping seasons.
6. Learn good throwing mechanics as soon as possible. The first steps should be to learn, in order: 1) basic throwing, 2) fastball pitching, 3) change-up pitching.
7. Avoid using radar guns.
8. A pitcher should not also be a catcher for his team. The pitcher-catcher combination results in many throws and may increase the risk of injury.
9. If a pitcher complains of pain in his elbow or shoulder, get an evaluation from a sports medicine physician.
10. Inspire youth pitchers to have fun playing baseball and other sports. Participation and enjoyment of various physical activities will increase the youth's athleticism and interest in sports.

Example limits for number of pitches thrown in games

Age (yrs)	2006 USA Baseball Guidelines	2010 Little League Baseball Regulations
Daily limits		
17-18	n/a	105/day
15-16	n/a	95/day
13-14	75/game	
11-12	75/game	85/day
9-10	50/game	75/day
7-8	n/a	50/day
Weekly limits		
13-14	125/wk; 1000/season; 3000/yr	
11-12	100/wk; 1000/season; 3000/yr	
9-10	75/wk; 1000/season; 2000/yr	
7-18		21-35 pitches --> 1 day rest; 36-50 pitches --> 2 days rest; 51-65 pitches --> 3 days rest 66- pitches --> 4 days rest