

The "Super Six" Pitching/Throwing Concepts to Prevent Injury

December 12, 2011

During my 7 years in practice and reading research, there were several pitching/throwing recommendations that helped keep my pitching students healthy.

Here are the 6 concepts that significantly helped with injury prevention:

#6: Learn the Changeup Before the Curveball

A 2008 study (<http://ajs.sagepub.com/content/36/4/686.abstract>) found that

"...the curveball was associated with a 52% increased risk of shoulder pain" yet curveballs did NOT increase elbow stress when proper mechanics were used.

Because youth pitchers are so inconsistent with their mechanics, they shouldn't throw curveballs until their mechanics improve.

Until that happens, learn the Changeup:

www.pitchingdoc.com/fileupload/Pitching%20Newsletters/The%20Changeup.pdf

#5: Control Your Glove to Increase Accuracy and Velocity

Just as we teach hitters to keep their hands raised, steady, and still, the same should be done for the glove.

Keeping the glove chest-high with little movement throughout the throw/pitch keeps the shoulders level, the Release Point consistent, and maximizes velocity.

"Tucking" your glove increases glove movement, disrupting Release Point consistency and decreasing velocity.



#4: No Balance Point When Pitching

Just as we don't teach infielders/outfielders to "wait back" when throwing, neither should we teach pitchers to wait back.

Building momentum is one of the keys to velocity. A balance point ruins momentum.

USE YOUR HIPS! → "*Be Quick But Don't Hurry.*" - John Wooden



#3: Jumping Rope is Best for Shoulder Health

Forget rubber tubing, forget "bands". Jumping rope works all shoulder muscles simultaneously, maximizing shoulder function.

Jumping rope also improves eye-hand coordination, posture, balance, endurance, and timing.

Use a weighted jump rope as soon as your son/player can do 2 minutes straight (300 jumps) since it's better at strengthening the shoulder:

<http://www.pitchingdoc.com/fileupload/Pitching%20Newsletters/Jumping%20Rope.Fall%20Shoulderand%20Towel%20Drill%20Programs.9.7.1.pdf>

#2: Throw More, Pitch Less

Just as I've said "a hitter is someone who's perfected the art of swinging", **a pitcher is someone who's perfected the art of throwing.**

But you **MUST** learn to throw before you can learn to pitch and you **MUST** have a consistent throwing motion if you want to have a consistent pitching delivery.

#1: No Fall Ball!

The American Sports Medicine Institute cites **year-round baseball as the #1 risk factor for injury** - <http://www.asmi.org/asmiweb/usabaseball.htm>

Don't give in to the pressure to play Fall Ball but instead **take 3 months off** every Fall (usually mid-August through mid-November) to play another sport and let your arm heal.