

## Avoiding Overuse Injuries in Baseball

From Little League to the big leagues, tracking the number of pitches a baseball hurler throws is important for the prevention of overuse injuries.

According to Dr. Douglas Moran of Concord Orthopaedics, keeping a pitch count is a valuable tool for managers at all levels. [https://youtu.be/YcXqHI\\_kggI](https://youtu.be/YcXqHI_kggI)

“The thing that’s happened in the last three to five years is that we’ve gotten very scientific about pitch counts,” said Moran, who is also a team physician for the New Hampshire Fisher Cats. “Even here with the Fisher Cats, if we have a major league player down for a rehab assignment, he’s on a strict pitch count. He literally will come out in the middle of a batter. It can be two-and-two and if he’s thrown 70 pitches, he’s out. So for Little Leaguers, pitch count is very important. Number of innings pitched is very important and rest between appearances is very important.”

According to Moran, the youth baseball programs do a good job of limiting the number of innings a pitcher can throw, but it’s the time between games that can also make a big difference in staying healthy.

“In Little League and high school baseball it’s closely supervised. (Coaches) are at the most risk to ignore the guidelines because they will forfeit a game if they pitch a kid who has thrown too many innings. It’s monitored,” Moran said. “It’s the between games, what your child does between games.”

Moran said that parents have to be responsible and resist the urge to have their young baseball pitchers get in some extra throwing.

“If you’re a dad and your kid is a great pitcher and he pitched a game on Tuesday, on Wednesday he ought to read a book or do some stretching exercises which are easily accessible on any sports medicine website. But (they should) not throw,” Moran said. “It’s really the between games, the unregulated throwing that can hurt a kid.”

Moran said that a theory has developed that illustrates that baseball pitchers that did not throw as much at a younger age are able to have longer careers.

“One of the most interesting things about stress injuries, whether it’s muscles or ligaments, is that in baseball pitching there’s a theory, that is probably quite accurate, that the baseball pitchers that didn’t have early great success, they weren’t phenoms at 18, 19, it took them until they were 23, 24 to get into the starting rotation...they last longer than the 17, 18 and 19-year-old phenoms, because they didn’t pitch that many innings,” Moran said. “These are kids who are 21 and 22 and they’re limited because they’re not in the starting rotation. Those are the guys that will last longer and pitch into their 30s and 40s.”