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Young Baseball Players Could Benefit from Preseason Arm Injury Prevention Programs

Orlando, FL – Preseason prevention programs are beneficial to young baseball pitchers, according to research presented today at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's (AOSSM) Specialty Day. The study, the first to analyze a well-monitored preseason training program, showed numerous arm flexibility and strength improvements in participating athletes that could ultimately diminish the risk of injuries.

“Pitchers participating in this targeted prevention program demonstrated reduced internal rotation (IR) and horizontal adduction (HA) deficits,” commented corresponding author Charles A. Thigpen, PT, PhD, ATC, from ATI Physical Therapy in Greenville, South Carolina. “Improvements in these performance areas are important, as similar deficits have been linked to arm injuries in previous research.”

The study group included 143 pitchers at a median age of 15.7, of which 88 participated in additional preseason training and 76 continued with normal training. The prevention program was supervised by an athletic trainer and included resistance training with dumbbell weights and elastic tubing, as well as a focused flexibility program. This required an approximately fifteen minute commitment from pitchers, 4 times a week.

“Pitchers are most affected by arm injuries, in particular those who have had a prior injury,” noted Thigpen. “If we can encourage parents, coaches, and youth baseball organizations across the country to adopt similar programs, athletes may have a better chance for reducing time off the field because of injury, especially considering the increased effectiveness of the program in preventing subsequent arm injuries.”

Pitchers who had previous injuries and participated in the preseason training program were 4 times less likely to suffer an injury than those in the general arm care program. Further studies with follow-up are needed to confirm the benefits of these programs. This study was funded by NATA Research and Education Foundation.

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The [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](http://www.aossm.org) (AOSSM) is a world leader in sports medicine education, research, communication and fellowship, and includes national and international orthopaedic sports medicine leaders. The Society works closely with many other sports medicine specialists, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, family physicians, and others to improve the identification, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries. AOSSM is also a founding partner of the [STOP Sports Injuries](http://www.stopsportsinjuries.org) campaign to prevent overuse and traumatic injuries in kids. For more information on AOSSM or the STOP Sports Injuries campaign, visit www.sportsmed.org or www.stopsportsinjuries.org