

# Shoulder Pain in Throwing Athletes

## Which athletes should be worried about shoulder injuries?

Athletes who often throw (such as baseball or softball players) or strike a ball (such as volleyball or tennis players) are prone to shoulder injuries. The overhead throwing or striking motion can cause pinched muscles and can damage the shoulder.

## What causes it?

The most common cause is an uneven balance between muscles. This causes a change in the way you throw or strike the ball, called biomechanics (BI-oh-muh-CAN-ics). Repeatedly throwing or striking with poor biomechanics makes your muscles work harder.

## What are the symptoms?

Pain in the shoulder during the overhead motion of throwing or striking is the most common symptom. Other symptoms may include a change in your performance (power or accuracy) or pain in your neck, elbow, or lower back.

## How is it diagnosed?

See your doctor if your symptoms affect your movement. Your doctor will look at your shoulder. He or she might want to x-ray your shoulder or do magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

## How is it treated?

The first step is to rest your shoulder. Stretching and strengthening exercises are also important. You may need to see a physical therapist. Some people need surgery if rest and exercise do not help.

## Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00067>

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