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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