**[Pitching Injuries: It's not what you're doing; it's what you've already done!](http://www.isgbaseball.com/uploads/9/0/8/4/9084026/pitching_injuries__limitations.docx)**

*Jim Jones, President, ISG*  
  
[**Your Arm hurts?  Thank Your Little League, Fall Ball, and AAU Coaches**](http://ericcressey.com/your-arm-hurts-thank-your-coaches)  
  
(Title Courtesy of Eric Cressey)  
  
In an interview with world-renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews commented about the crazy increase in the number of Tommy John surgeries he'd performed over the past decade.  
  
""I had a kid come in, a 15-year-old from Boca Raton, (Fla.), who tore his ligament completely in two,' Andrews said. 'The interesting thing is when I X-rayed his elbow with good magnification; he has a little calcification right where the ligament attaches to the bone. We're seeing more of that now. He actually got hurt with a minor pull of the ligament when he was 10, 11, 12 years of age. That little calcification gets bigger and, initially, it won't look like anything but a sore elbow. As that matures, it becomes more prominent. It turns into an English pea-size bone piece and pulls part of the ligament off when they're young.'"  
  
In other words, it takes repeated bouts of microtrauma over the course of many years to bring an athlete to threshold - even if they have little to no symptoms along the way.  Injury prevention starts at the youngest ages; otherwise, you're just playing from behind the 8-ball when you start training high school and college players.  
  
Management of the youth player’s pitching program is necessary if he is to have a chance of staying healthy later in his career. Below are various suggestions on pitching loads to help reduce the chance of injury to young pitchers.  
  
Special care should be taken with the combination pitcher/position player to protect against overuse.  
  
**Suggested Pitch and Inning Limitations**  
  
**American Sports Medicine Institute:**  
  
Recommended limits for 9-10 year old pitchers;  
  
Ø  50 pitches / game  
  
Ø  75 pitches / week  
  
Ø  1,000 pitches / season  
  
Ø  2,000 pitches / year  
  
            Recommended limits for 11-12 year old pitchers;  
  
Ø  75 pitches / game  
  
Ø  100 pitches / week  
  
Ø  1,000 pitches / season  
  
Ø  3,000 pitches / year  
  
            Recommended limits for 13-14 year old pitchers;  
  
Ø  75 pitches / game  
  
Ø  125 pitches / week  
  
Ø  1,000 pitches / season  
  
Ø  3,000 pitches / year  
  
**The National Pitching Association:**  
  
Starting Pitchers   > 12-16 yrs old - 75-90 pitches / week @ 15-20 pitches/inn. (5 inns.)  
  
                           > 17-21 yrs old - 90-105 pitches / week @ 15-20 pitches/ inn.(6 inns.)  
  
                > 2-3 days rest before pitching again after reaching the pitch count in one game  
  
Relief Pitchers > 15-45 pitches @ 15-20 pitches / inning spread over 3-5 games / week   
  
            > Number of pitches should not exceed 90 pitches over those 3-5 games (3 innings)  
  
                > If 75 pitches are reached inside any combination of 3 successive days - no pitching for 2-3 days.  
  
**Babe Ruth Baseball:**  
  
7 innings in a Calendar week (1 pitch in an inning = 1 inning)  
  
2 calendar days (48 hours) rest when pitching more than 3 innings  
  
**American Legion Baseball**:  
  
No more than 10 innings in three (3) consecutive days  
  
**Pony Baseball:**  
  
17-18 years old > no more than 9 innings / day  
  
15-16 years old > no more than 7 innings / day  
  
            When 4 innings or more are thrown - 40 hours rest  
  
**Little League Pitch Count:**  
  
50 pitches early in age and season  
  
65-70 later w/ good technique  
  
20+ pitches in an inning - remove  
  
**Tom House:**  
  
At 75 pitches the pitcher will start experiencing muscle failure   
  
            - @15 pitches/ inning = 7 innings  
  
It takes 48 to 72 hours for the arm to recover from muscle failure  
  
            Small pitch totals with more frequency (eg. 2 inn. - 3 times / week) is easier on the arm and better for development than large pitch totals in a single outing (eg. 6 inn. - 1 time/week**)**  
  
  
  
**Special Note:** High pitch counts in one inning and short recovery time before the next inning increase arm injury risks.  
  
A good rule of thumb is **“Throw more – Pitch less”**.