



GUIDE TO SOFTBALL INJURY PREVENTION

The various motor skills associated with softball, such as pitching, batting and fielding, place considerable perceptual and physical demands upon players. Each of these disciplines comes with their own injury risks.

- Ankle sprains, knee internal derangements, shoulder, and low back injuries were the most common conditions in NCAA women's softball.
 - Sliding results in 23 percent of all game injuries, primarily ankle sprains.
 - Non-contact knee internal derangement (ACL injury) accounts for the greatest amount of activity time loss.
 - Both pitching and batting can put significant strain on the shoulders, meaning that shoulder overuse injuries can grow over time.
 - Prolonged periods of batting can lead to serious back injuries like muscle strains and herniated discs.
- In a game versus a practice, an athlete was more than three times as likely to sustain a concussion, more than twice as likely to sustain a knee internal derangement, and almost twice as likely to sustain an ankle sprain.
- A common misconception is that the windmill motion of softball pitching creates less stress on the arm than the overhead motion of baseball pitching does.

INJURY PREVENTION MEASURES

- **The National Athletic Trainers' Association suggests that high school athletes engage in conditioning training at least six weeks before the start of practice.**
- **Teach proper sliding technique and early decision making.**
- **Teach proper throwing mechanics. Warm-up before you throw; do not throw to warm-up.**
- **Proper strength training will decrease injuries.**
 - Learn to squat, jump, land, and change direction to prevent knee and ankle injuries.
 - Perform specific shoulder girdle exercises to help prevent rotator cuff and other shoulder injuries.
 - Core strengthening will help prevent lower back injury.
- **Never play through pain! Your team needs its players on the field, not on the sidelines.**
- **Field maintenance is critical to injury prevention.**
- **Make sure first aid is available at all games and practices.**