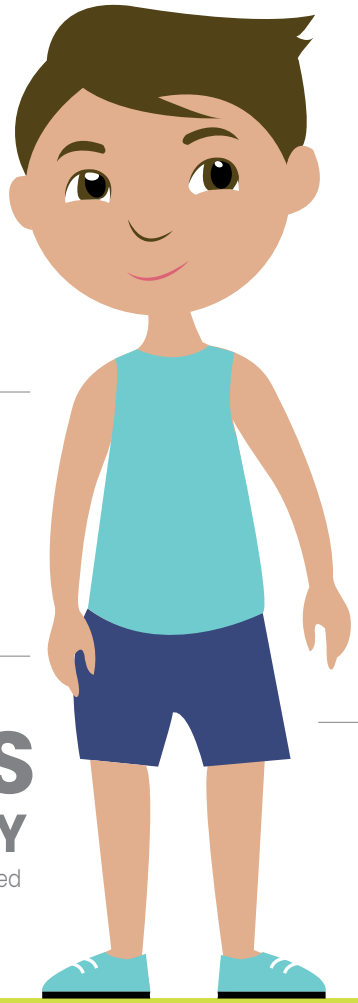
The Risk of Overuse Injuries



OVERUSE INJURIES MAY RESULT FROM

poor technique, training errors, too much training, too little rest, weak or imbalanced muscles and specializing too early.

LASTING EFFECTS CAN INCLUDE

missed playing time, reduced function and mental exhaustion.

SYMPTOMS OF OVERUSE INJURY

often develop slowly, leaving athletes undiagnosed and untreated for longer.

TYPICAL OVERUSE PROBLEMS INCLUDE

general stress, inflammation and tendinitis.

DAMAGE TO THE GROWTH PLATE MAY FOLLOW

repeated microtrauma - tiny tears in muscle fibers and connective tissue.

STRESS FRACTURES

develop when tired muscles cannot absorb shock, transferring that force to bone.

OVERUSE INJURIES ARE MORE COMMON IN



Rowing • baseball • volleyball • cross-country • track and field • other low-contact sports

ABOUT 50% of sports injuries in young athletes - children ages 6 to 12 and adolescents ages 13 to 18 - result from overuse

Too much activity too soon causes acute overuse injury. Chronic overuse injury develops from repeated activity over several weeks or months.

WOMEN'S SPORTS SUCH AS



Field hockey • soccer • cross-country • volleyball

SHOW THE MOST OVERUSE INJURIES

OVERUSE INJURY PREVENTION

- In young athletes, avoid repetitive sport and specialization. Those who play varied sports tend to have fewer injuries and play longer.
- Train in one sport up to five days a week, with at least one day free of all organized physical activity.
- Take two to three months away from one sport each year so injuries can heal, your body can recover and you can focus on strength training and conditioning. This also offers a mental break that can help athletes avoid burnout and overtraining syndrome.
- Young athletes should play only one overhead throwing sport at a time and avoid year-round play in that sport. Trying several sports across the year builds a broader mix of skills and offers a break from repetitive, single-sport activity.
- No injury thresholds exist for given sports or ages, but data favor limiting vigorous activity to 16 to 20 hours a week for young athletes.
- Get a pre-participation physical each year to find life-threatening conditions and factors that increase the risk of overuse injuries.

References: National Athletic Trainers' Association, Journal of Athletic Training, American Academy of Pediatrics
Infographic: National Athletic Trainers' Association