



How Many Pitches Should I Allow My Child To Throw?

This is a question routinely asked by parents, coaches, and players. While the answer is elusive and varies depending on the source, there is an organization with good recommendations. The American Sports Medicine Institute of Birmingham, Alabama, brought together, coaches, orthopaedic surgeons and professional baseball pitchers to reach a consensus. USA Baseball helped fund this project.

The following recommendations were developed from these meetings, and a review of the existing research: They feel that youth baseball players currently do not throw (play catch) enough, but pitch too much and too often. They throw breaking pitches too early. Youth pitchers do require rest between outings but should continue to play catch and be encouraged to play other positions.

As parents and coaches we need to tell these young pitchers (or position players too) that if his arm hurts, he must tell his parents or coach immediately. At this age there is no such thing as playing through the pain. If throwing hurts they must stop throwing and if the symptoms persist they should be evaluated by a physician familiar with sports and the associated problems common in young throwers.

Suggested Pitch Counts

AGE	Maximum Pitches / Game	Maximum Games / Week
8 - 10	52	2
11 - 12	68	2
13 - 14	76	2
15 - 16	91	2
17 - 18	106	2

Suggested Recovery Times

(Minimum # of pitches thrown that should require recommended days of rest between outings)

AGE	1 DAY REST	2 DAYS REST	3 DAYS REST	4 DAYS REST
8 - 10	21	34	43	51
11 - 12	27	35	55	58
13 - 14	30	36	56	70
15 - 16	25	38	62	77
17 - 18	27	45	62	89

Recommended ages for learning various pitches

Fastball: all
 Change-up: all
 Curve ball: 14
 Knuckleball: 15
 Slider: 16
 Forkball: 16
 Screwball: 17+?

- If pain continues past a few days ,or continues to occur with throwing, parents need to contact a physician or physical therapist to evaluate for n injury. Throwing mechanics should be critically analyzed by an appropriate coach or expert.

For further information on throwing injuries, prevention, and rehabilitation contact:

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