

Pitcher's Elbow

Medial apophysitis, or pitcher's elbow, is a condition that occurs as a result of an injury or irritation to the inside of the elbow, commonly affecting young athletes. It is often classified as an "overuse syndrome" in baseball or softball players in the developmental stages of rapid growth (approximately 11 to 15 years of age).



CAUSES

Forceful and repetitive actions, such as overhand throwing in baseball players, and lack of recovery (not enough time between periods of activity), can cause inflammation of the growth plate inside the throwing elbow. This occurs in adolescents because their elbow structure (bones, growth plate, and ligaments) is not fully mature or developed.

With pitcher's elbow, you may experience:

- Gradually worsening pain at the inside of your elbow when throwing a ball.
- Lingering soreness at the inside of your elbow following throwing activities.
- Swelling and tenderness around the inside area of the elbow area.
- Inability to throw the ball at your normal speed.
- Loss of grip strength.
- Loss of accuracy or distance when throwing.
- Muscle cramping in your forearm.
- Loss of motion of your elbow.
- Discomfort with daily activities that use your forearm muscles, like turning a doorknob or carrying a heavy object in front of you.

HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Once other conditions have been ruled out and pitcher's elbow is diagnosed, your physical therapist will work with you to develop an individualized plan tailored to your specific elbow condition, and your athletic goals. There are many physical therapy treatments that have been shown to be effective in treating this condition. Your physical therapist may focus on:

- Range of motion
- Strength training
- Manual therapy
- Pain management
- Functional training
- Education