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Range of Motion May be a Predictor for Elbow Injuries in Major League Baseball Pitchers

CHICAGO, IL – Certain elements of a pitcher’s throwing mechanics can increase the risk for elbow injuries, according to information presented by researchers at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine’s Annual Meeting today in Chicago, IL.

The researchers examined 296 MLB pitchers throughout eight seasons from 2005-2012. Pitchers with a deficit of more than five degrees in total range of motion (TRM) in their dominant shoulder had a 2.3 times higher risk of injury, while pitchers with a deficit of five or more degrees in shoulder flexion of the dominant shoulder had a 2.8 times higher risk of injury.

“Overhead throwing athletes like baseball pitchers are already prone to a unique set of elbow injuries,” said Kevin Wilk, DPT from the American Sports Medicine Institute in Birmingham, AL. “With this in mind, we wanted to explore whether specific elements of the throwing motion can contribute to a greater injury risk.”

Patients’ passive range of motion (PROM) measurements for the study were assessed by clinicians with a combined 35+ years of experience, including 30 years of combined experience performing spring training physicals for professional baseball players.

“While we only identified 50 individual elbow injuries in this study, they resulted in an average of 51 days on the disabled list – or about one-fourth of a major league season,” noted Wilk. “Hopefully our data can help team physicians and athletic trainers work to prevent these types of long-term injury absences.”

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The [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](http://www.aossm.org) (AOSSM) is a world leader in sports medicine education, research, communication and fellowship, and includes national and international orthopaedic sports medicine leaders. The Society works closely with many other sports medicine specialists, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, family physicians, and others to improve the identification, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries. AOSSM is also a founding partner of the [STOP Sports Injuries](http://www.stopsportsinjuries.org) campaign to prevent overuse and traumatic injuries in kids. For more information on AOSSM or the STOP Sports Injuries campaign, visit www.sportsmed.org or www.stopsportsinjuries.org