



Play Ball!!! By Blake Rossi, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC

It's that time of year again, high school baseball/softball is in full swing, little league has started and the adult fast pitch and slow pitch are about to start. For many of us this time of year also means shoulder pain and elbow pain that won't subside without loads of ice and rest. Shoulder and elbow pain is a very common complaint among throwing athletes and tends to be a stubborn problem for many of us.

Throwing requires strength, coordination, flexibility and motor control of not only the upper extremity but also of the lower extremity. Most of us think that if our shoulder or elbow hurt it is because of a local impairment that may be the cause of excessive load on the upper extremity. Because throwing is whole body movement lower extremity strength, balance and flexibility are a key component of throwing. Often time if there is a lack of strength, stability and flexibility of the lower extremity that can cause excessive forces that are transmitted through the upper extremity which can result in pain in the shoulder and elbow. In a recent study it was shown that people who had elbow ulnar collateral ligament pathology had decreased balance on the lead and stance lower extremity during balance testing (Garrison et al, 2013).

When evaluating a patient who is a thrower it is very important to look at the body as a whole to find key impairments that may be causing excessive load on



the upper extremity. I often time see that patients exhibit decreased balance, core stability and hip flexibility to allow for adequate throwing mechanics. We also cannot overlook upper extremity strength, flexibility and coordination impairments that may be contributing to shoulder/elbow pain. Having thorough assessment by a physical therapist can help reduce shoulder and elbow pain and help to prevent you from having to rest from the sports you love.

Whether you are a weekend warrior playing multiple slow pitch games or a collegiate baseball/softball

player and chronic shoulder and elbow pain has stopped you from participating in the sports you love. It is important to get evaluated by one of the physical therapists at Mammoth Hospital SPORT center in Bishop or Mammoth and get back to playing without pain. After all, the whole song that we know and love is very true! The foot bone is connected to the.....shoulder bone!