

Little Leaguer's Elbow

Explanation of Diagnosis

Little Leaguer's Elbow is an **overuse injury** that occurs in young athletes, primarily baseball pitchers, due to **repetitive throwing motions**. It results from excessive stress on the **medial epicondyle (inner elbow), growth plate, and surrounding structures**, leading to **pain, swelling, and reduced throwing strength**. If untreated, it can cause permanent damage to the elbow joint.

Specific Work Modifications

- If involved in **physical work**, **avoid** repetitive throwing, lifting, or forceful arm movements.
- **Modify tasks** to limit stress on the elbow (use proper lifting techniques, avoid prolonged gripping).
- **Use an elbow brace or sleeve** for support if needed.
- **Take frequent breaks** to reduce overuse.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Stop all throwing activities (pitching, baseball, softball) until pain resolves.** Continuing to throw can worsen the injury.
- **Avoid weightlifting or overhead sports** that stress the elbow (tennis, gymnastics).
- **Modify training** by focusing on lower body conditioning and core strengthening.
- **Gradually return** to throwing after pain resolves, starting with low-intensity tossing.

Recommended Supplements

- **Calcium (1000-1200 mg daily)** - Supports bone and growth plate health.
- **Vitamin D3 (1000-2000 IU daily)** - Enhances calcium absorption.
- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Supports connective tissue repair.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Aids in muscle relaxation and recovery.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces inflammation.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Bone-supporting foods:** Dairy products, almonds, leafy greens, and fortified cereals for calcium.
- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Salmon, walnuts, turmeric, and berries.

- **Protein-rich foods:** Lean meats, eggs, lentils, and dairy to support muscle recovery.
- **Limit processed foods and excess sugar**, which can increase inflammation.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily** for muscle and joint hydration.
- **Avoid sugary sports drinks;** use electrolyte drinks only during intense activity.

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **2-3 times daily** to maintain mobility and strengthen the elbow safely:

1. Wrist Flexor & Extensor Stretch

- Extend the arm with the palm facing up.
- Use the opposite hand to **gently pull fingers back**.
- Hold **20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times**.

2. Forearm Supination/Pronation Exercise

- Hold a **light weight (1-2 lbs)** in the affected hand.
- Rotate the palm **up and down slowly**.
- **10 reps, 2-3 times daily**.

3. Elbow Range of Motion (Flexion & Extension)

- Slowly bend and straighten your elbow.
- **10 reps, 2-3 times daily**.

4. Scapular Strengthening (Wall Angels)

- Stand against a wall and slide arms up and down like making a snow angel.
- **10 reps, 2-3 times daily**.

5. Core and Lower Body Strengthening (Planks, Squats)

- Focus on **core and leg strength** to reduce stress on the arm.

Avoid throwing or weight-bearing exercises on the arm until pain resolves.

Helpful Books

1. *"The Arm: Inside the Billion-Dollar Mystery of the Most Valuable Commodity in Sports"*
- Jeff Passan
2. *"Pitch Smart: Guidelines for Youth Pitchers to Prevent Injury"* - MLB & USA Baseball

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Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.