

Throwing Arm Position and Injury Risk

February 14, 2012

One of the most common coaching points with young pitchers is to make sure the back elbow is raised when the front foot hits the ground:



Now [a new study presented by the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](#) suggests that **trunk position, NOT arm position, is more important** in producing elbow stress during the throw.

Previous research by [Dr. Michele Sabick](#) suggests that **INCREASED SHOULDER TILT**, specifically more than 15 degrees, can **significantly increase injury risk** in the elbow and shoulder.

I emailed Dr. Carl Nissen, MD, the author of the new study, and he agreed:

*"I do...agree with Dr. Sabick that **more than 15 degrees of [shoulder tilt]** will normally result in **[increased stress]** across the elbow and shoulder."*

Dr. Nissen went on to conclude:

*"The results of this study suggest that **an improperly positioned elbow...is not a factor in increasing injury rates** as neither elbow drop nor drag correlated with elbow stress. Elbow drag, however, did correlate with decreased ball velocity demonstrating that elbow position is important for pitcher performance."*

So **leave throwing arm alone** and focus on keeping the shoulders as level as possible to decrease shoulder/elbow stress

Have a Question About This Newsletter?

Email (PitchingDoc@msn.com) or call (631-352-7654) Dr. Arnold!