

# Strrrretch



Presented by JOI Rehabilitation • A Patient Education Newsletter

## How to Help Your Child Become a Better Throwing Athlete

By Jared S. Ernest, MPT

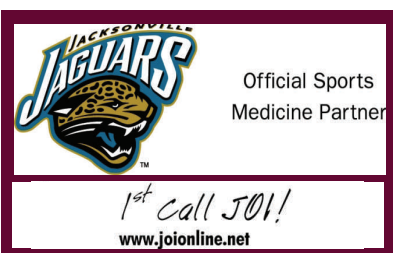
Florida's climate allows the games of baseball and softball to be played all year long. Many boys and girls will decide to try their skills at the pitching position. Most youngsters in league level play start pitching at the age of nine or ten. It is extremely important that the young developing pitcher not only learn the correct mechanics, but have the strength and flexibility to be able to demonstrate the proper technique. JOI Rehabilitation sees a great deal of throwing athletes in the clinic who participate at the middle school and high school level with injuries and subsequent surgeries as a direct result of incorrect mechanics.

### What Can Be Done?

Coaches do an incredible job of teaching your child the art of throwing a baseball or softball. However, they can be assisted by the staff at JOI Rehabilitation who have additional resources to address proper mechanics. JOI Rehabilitation possesses state-of-the-art equipment to perform a comprehensive video analysis of your child performing the sequences of throwing. This biomechanical assessment breaks down the complete motion of throwing into stages. This process is then reviewed by one of our experienced staff who specifically work with throwing athletes. From this data, clinicians work with your child on correcting the problems that were identified. Also, we will gladly work with your child's coach to assist with the complete circle of care.

The other part of this equation is the focus on the correct strength and flexibility in order for an athlete to be able to achieve the proper form of throwing. Again, JOI Rehabilitation clinicians have the expertise to develop specific programs for the individual needs of your child. The importance of this type of early intervention cannot be overemphasized. Just like any sport, throwing a baseball/softball is a learned activity, and it is of vital importance to have correct mechanics from the start. Investing in this process not will not only help your child reach his/her maximum potential with his/her sport, but keep them from having shoulder problems down the road.

For more information, call any JOI Rehabilitation



### JOI is proud to offer the following professional services.

- \* **CompuTrainer Spin Scan - \$75.00**
- \* **Biomechanical Fitting with Dartfish - \$100.00**
- \* **Biomechanical Fitting with CompuTrainer Spin Scan - \$150.00**



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VIDEO SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

# My Shoulder Hurts– Is It My Rotator Cuff?

By Laura D. Stinson, PT

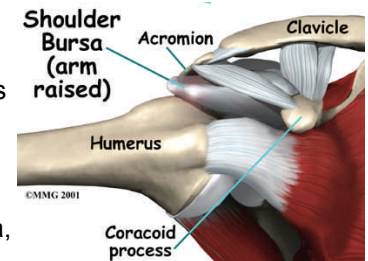
The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles that is attached to the humerus by tendons. These muscles enable us to move our shoulder, as well as provide stability for the shoulder. Symptoms of a rotator cuff problem usually include pain on the side or front of the shoulder, and there may be associated weakness. Routine activities, such as combing your hair and reaching out or behind the back may become difficult or too painful to perform. Initially, pain may occur only with specific activities and may go away with rest. As the problem progresses, pain may be present during and after the activity. One often cannot sleep on the affected side because of pain. As the severity of the injury increases, the pain may become constant.

Disorders of the shoulder include: Inflammation of a tendon (tendonitis) or of a bursa (bursitis). A bursa is a fluid-filled sac that provides a cushion between bones and tendons. Impingement syndrome, describes the pinching of a tendon between bones with often leads to inflammation of the tendon. Calcific tendonitis may result from chronic, or long-term, irritation of a tendon in which a calcium build-up occurs in the tendon resulting in pain. Partial or complete tears of a tendon may occur gradually over time from chronic overuse or irritation, or on occasion from a traumatic incident such as a fall.

Treatment of these disorders begins with rest and avoidance of the specific activities that cause pain. Many people try to “work through it,” which may progress the severity of the injury. This often makes the treatment more

difficult and increases the time it takes to heal. Conversely, it is not recommended to keep the shoulder still or put it in a sling since this may lead to stiffness in the joint (frozen shoulder). Using a cold pack on the shoulder helps decrease inflammation and provides some temporary relief of pain. Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) also help to relieve pain and inflammation. Examples include aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil), and naproxen (Aleve). Your doctor may also recommend physical therapy. P.T. treatments may include modalities used to reduce pain and inflammation, and stretching and strengthening exercises to restore normal flexibility and strength of the shoulder. If you continue to have pain even after the above mentioned treatments, your doctor may give you a shot of a steroid medication to relieve pain and inflammation. This may enable you to perform the exercises without pain and further irritation. Most rotator cuff injuries are not treated with surgery, however, surgery may be indicated if a rotator cuff tendon is torn or conservative treatment has failed.

In some cases, shoulder pain may be indicative of a more serious problem, such as a heart attack. If other symptoms occur, such as chest pain, sweating, shortness of breath, or nausea, **call 911 or other emergency services.**



# Could It Be More Than a Finger Jam?

By Kimberly Leroy, OTR/L

Hitting, crushing, or jamming a finger can be a common occurrence. For most, it is an injury that usually resolves over the next few days with some rest and ice. However, there are a few common finger injuries that are overlooked for a period of time until the pain becomes severe enough for a doctor's appointment. Some of these include a ligament sprain or rupture, chip fracture, or dislocation.

A ligament sprain is caused by a lateral force to the finger commonly occurring at the middle joint of the finger. If you have ongoing pain on the side of this joint, it can usually be treated by some buddy-taping to avoid continued lateral force until the pain improves. The worst case scenario is that the ligament has been ruptured and needs to be evaluated for proper splinting and possible further treatment by your doctor. A ligament rupture is more serious and should be seen immediately by a doctor to insure proper healing so that the joint will not be vulnerable to further injury.

Another potential injury is a chip fracture. Often a chip fracture is at a specific site and is tender to the touch. This is best treated by proper splinting and assessing the range of

motion as clinically determined by your doctor. Proper treatment can lead to a more speedy recovery and better outcome for future range of motion and use.

A third possible injury is a finger dislocation. Patients with this diagnosis have reported their fingers feeling “out of place” or that they “pulled it, and could feel it move back.” Many people get their fingers checked at a later date because the pain has not stopped and finger movement remains limited. Depending on the direction of the dislocation, it makes a difference in how the finger should be splinted. Splinting may be straight or with a slight bend, depending upon the dislocation. Knowing how to and how long to properly splint the finger can produce an optimal result for protecting affected tissues, which can result in better range of motion and use. A therapy program can also be a great component for an optimal result to increase range of motion and prevent permanent stiffness. So, if you are concerned about lingering finger pain, it is advisable to check with an orthopedic surgeon for further evaluation and treatment.

# What is my Core?

By Meghan Dunn PT, DPT, ATC

Many patients with low back, hip, or knee pain have been told by their doctor and/or physical therapist that they would benefit from 'core strengthening'. What does it mean to strengthen your "core"? And how would strengthening my core benefit me?

The major muscles of the 'core', or trunk of your body, can be found in the belly and mid-back regions. These muscles include the abdominals (transverse abdominus, obliques, rectus abdominus), the pelvic floor muscles, the multifidus, the erector spinae and the diaphragm. The core muscles stabilize the spine during active movement, and also provide pressure within the abdomen during coughing, sneezing and excretion of substances.

Weakness of the core muscles can increase your risk for pain, poor posture, and injury. Strengthening the core is essential for functional fitness, or fitness essential for daily living and regular activities. Core strength is also important during sports, in that it provides inward stability for outward movement. In other words, it provides a strong base of support for your arms and legs to move. Core muscles have been shown to contract several milliseconds prior to arm and leg movements in healthy individuals, theoretically stabilizing the spine prior to the movement. It takes only a small contraction of the core muscles to stiffen and stabilize the spine. It has been shown that patients with low back pain exhibit delayed contraction of these muscles.

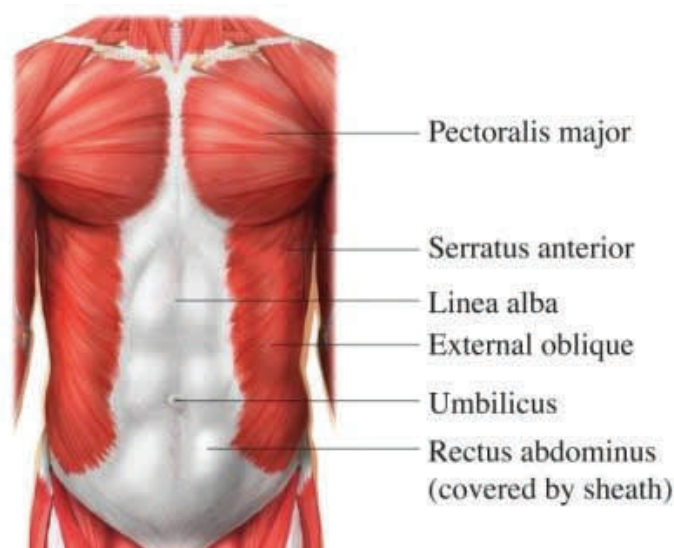
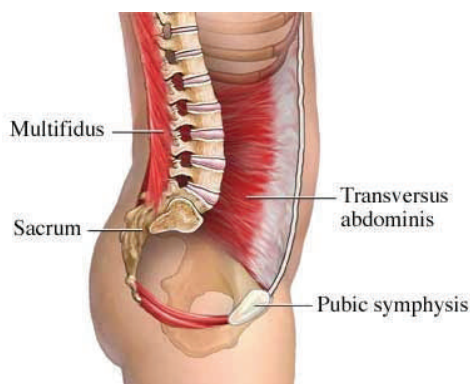
Core strengthening is important for injury prevention, injury management and postural control. Developing a strong core enables energy to be transferred from the center of the body to the limbs during active movement, including lifting. Core strengthening begins with flexibility exercises and basic activation of the core muscles. Your therapist may have you perform hip and back stretches along with abdominal isometrics, bracing, or pelvic tilts to accomplish this goal. When activation of the core muscles has been mastered, exercises are progressed to include limb movement and stabilization on the exercise ball. Higher level stabilization exercises involve standing, balance and coordination. Pilates and Yoga are examples of high level core stabilization activities.

Core strengthening is a safe and simple way to improve the stabilization of your spine, thus contributing to decreased pain and improved functional movement.

## Did you Know?

Decreasing low back pain is as easy as opening the vanity cabinet door in your bathroom and placing the ball of your foot inside. While brushing your teeth, shaving and putting on your makeup, this trick will cause you to go into a hip hinge instead of flexing or bending your spine. The overall result is less pressure or pain in your back.

For more information, please contact the JOI Rehabilitation location nearest you.



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## Zumba– Join the Party!

By Belinda Kirkland, PT, ATC, CHT

Fitness will most likely appear on the list of upcoming New Year's resolutions for most people. This year, let your fitness resolution include fun, a party-like atmosphere, and some Latin flavor. Zumba is a dance fitness program using Latin and international rhythms combined with easy-to-follow steps that sculpt and tone the body. It targets areas such as the glutes, legs, arms, abdominals and the most important muscle of the body, the heart. The class format is based on interval training utilizing a fast song followed by a slower song, and so on, to throw the body off and make it more difficult for a participant's body to adapt.



A simple definition of Interval Training is: shorter, high intensity exercise periods alternated with lower periods of intensity or rest. These varying periods of exercise are repeated throughout the workout. The recovery periods during the slower rhythms allow the participant to work at harder intensities rather than keeping energy in reserve.

Surprising your body with new activities, dance forces it to work harder because it is doing unfamiliar movements and using muscle groups in different ways. Zumba is continually introducing new choreography and music to certified instructors to keep the routines fresh. In the process you'll burn more calories than doing the same old routines. Interval training allows for a higher caloric burn in shorter time duration and increased use of fat as the fuel during training. The average one hour class can burn as many as 700 calories.

The fun part of Zumba is its intoxicating rhythms. Rhythms include salsa, meringue, cumbia, mambo, samba, calypso, tango, belly dance, flamenco and bachata, to name a few. If you find yourself bored with your current routine, then spice it up and give Zumba a try this year!

Ditch the treadmill and Join the Party!

## Low Back Pain and Sleeping Posture

By Sarah Katsaras, PT

Among the many patients with low back pain, one of the most common complaints is the inability to sleep well due to pain. This can be a significant problem for many reasons. The obvious problem is that lack of sleep greatly limits the ability to function during the day. The less obvious problem is that your spine does most of its healing from everyday stress at night, when the discs and joints are unloaded. Without this healing time, symptoms may increase significantly. Therefore, without proper rest, low back pain can worsen and this may become a vicious cycle.

The best solution to breaking this cycle of pain and loss of sleep is to try and maintain a neutral spine when you go to sleep. A neutral spine in the low back is when the back is close to straight with a slight backward curve. This position enables the discs and joints to be unloaded so they can heal and receive nutrition. Avoiding rotation in sleeping posture also takes unwanted stress off the discs and joints.

The best sleeping position is side lying with pillow support between the arms and legs. To keep your low back in neutral, you need to keep your hips and knees bent forward approximately 60-90 degrees. Lying on your back is also a good position if you use pillow support under your knees. Lying on your stomach is not usually recommended because it puts your low back into increased extension (or arches your low back). If you can only sleep on your stomach, use several pillows under your hips and stomach to keep your low back as close to neutral as possible with one or no pillows under your head.

It may take time to get used to sleeping in neutral with pillow support but you should see an improvement in low back pain and stiffness once you have done it consistently.