



The Shoulder is Connected to the...what?

I see a lot of different types of athletes in my practice as a physical therapist and sports performance trainer. It is one of the many reasons I love my job. The diversity of challenges they present make me want to be better and work harder for them. Overhead throwing athletes present numerous different obstacles that I have seen many physical therapists miss.

Shoulder pain and even medial epicondylitis (pitcher's elbow/medial elbow pain) are common complaints with these athletes. The cause can be related to a number of factors including overuse, tightness in the scapular area/subscapularis muscle (immobility), tightness in the glenohumeral capsule preventing proper rotational movements within the joint, rotator cuff weakness or a decrease in these muscles to decelerate during throwing and yes even immobility and weakness of the opposite side hip. Yep. I did say hip. That is not a mistake.

The ability to load the opposing hip properly and control or decelerate through that hip can and does contribute to numerous overhead throwing problems that range from tendonitis to tearing and fraying of tendons to impingement of the sub-acromial joint space (the front and top aspects of the shoulder). Proper evaluation of not only the shoulder, but also of the elbow, wrist and hip areas should be included to give the therapist and athlete a "bird's eye view" of what may be causing the shoulder dysfunction.

Any rehabilitation program of the shoulder should include not only treating the symptoms of the dysfunction, but the causes. Rather, it should focus on the causes. Treating athletes means looking at the entire athlete and everything that contributes to their performance. Want to learn more? We are here to help. Contact us at www.elitelevelpt.com

