

Tips for Avoiding Injuries During the Baseball & Softball Season

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As the summer months approach many people spend their evenings and weekends playing baseball and softball. For some it may be a competitive league, and for others it may be getting out the bat and glove for a pickup game with friends. Both scenarios provide opportunities for us to get out and enjoy our Minnesota summers. Here are some tips that can be useful for avoiding injuries, and proper warm-up prior to playing.

If you haven't worn your baseball or softball cleats since last season, check them over to ensure each cleat is screwed in tight and they still fit properly.

When it comes to throwing, make sure to warm-up your shoulder and arm muscles.

Here's a good throwing warm-up. Start by playing catch with a teammate at a distance of 10 yards apart and throwing at a slow to moderate speed. As your shoulder and arm muscles warm-up, begin backing away from your teammate. Throwing over greater distances requires more muscle force and power.

This concept can be applied when throwing and fielding ground balls. Start by throwing slow ground balls to allow your teammate time to move and setup to field the ball. As he or she gets warmed up, you can add speed and bounce to the ground ball, challenging your teammate to move and react more quickly.

Another important tip to remember is proper warm up and stretching of the whole body. To get your body going, take a jog around the field. This allows your leg and back muscles to warm-up. After this warm-up jog, stretch your legs out. Once you have stretched out start jogging again, but now you can gradually increase your speed. Running bases and fielding balls requires muscles to react quickly. Muscles that are warmed up will be able to react with less chance for injury.

Batting requires the whole body to generate speed and power to hit the ball. It is important to stretch and take warm-up swings before taking your stance at the plate.

A final tip to remember is to drink plenty of water. Keeping your body hydrated is a way to keep muscles from cramping and reduces the chance for injuries like a pulled muscle.

If you have the unfortunate event of experiencing an injury, ice can be used to decrease swelling for injuries such as twisting an ankle.

If you do experience a pulled muscle, ankle sprain, shoulder pain, or back pain that doesn't get better, it is a good idea to visit your doctor or physical therapist. This way injuries can be evaluated and treated properly.