

Arm Care Program For The Youth Pitcher

By Steven Ellis, former Chicago Cubs pitching pro



MLB pitcher Trevor Bauer follows an extensive arm care program.

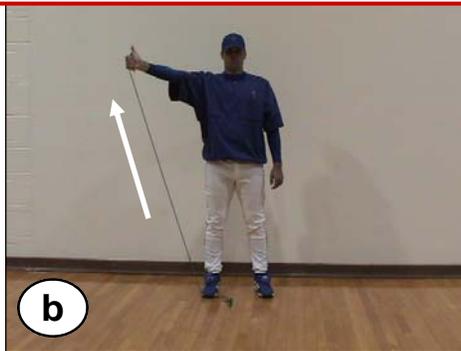
By working on specific shoulder, rotator cuff and arm conditioning and strengthening techniques, you may be able to avoid injury and improve the efficiency of your throwing motion. Here are two arm care routines you can do to strengthen your rotator cuff and shoulder:

Resistance band (tubing) exercises



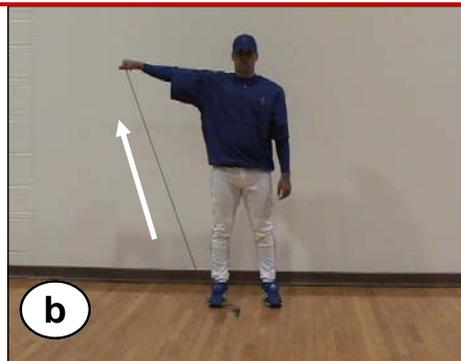
Flexion

Stand with tubing securely in active hand and opposite end under same foot of the involved side to control tension. Tube should be taut. Lift active hand straight forward from side to shoulder height. Repeat.



45° flexion

Stand with tubing securely in active hand and opposite end under same foot of the involved side to control tension. The tube should be taut. Lift active hand straight up from side at 45° to shoulder height and repeat.



Abduction

Stand with tubing securely in active hand and opposite end under same foot of the involved side to control tension. Tube should be taut. Lift active hand straight to the side to shoulder height at 90°. Repeat.



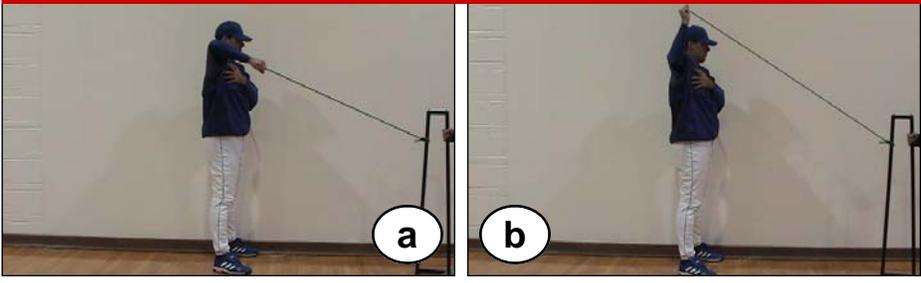
Internal rotation

Stand with tubing securely in active hand and opposite end attached to a doorknob or fence. Tube should be taut. Starting with active arm away from body, rotate active arm inward to body. Keep elbow at side. Repeat.



External rotation

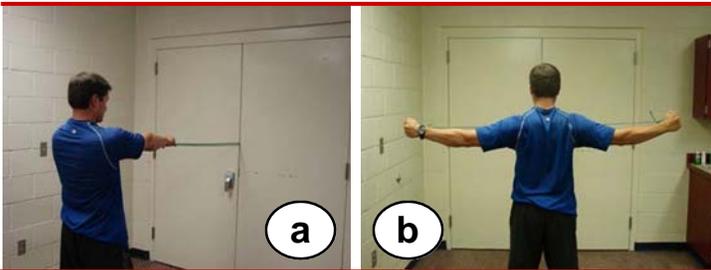
Stand with tubing securely in active hand and opposite end attached to a doorknob or fence. Tube should be taut. Starting with active arm in at body, rotate active arm outward away from body. Keep elbow at side. Repeat.



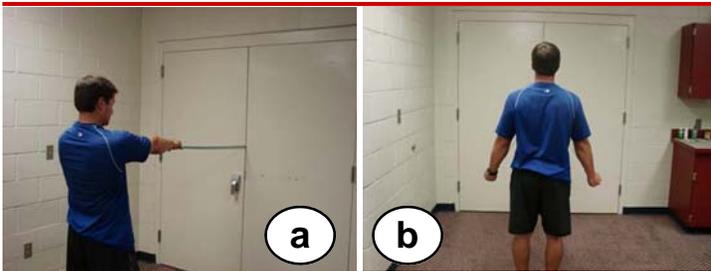
External rotation at 90°
 Stand with shoulder abducted at 90°, externally rotated 90°, and elbow flexed at 90° (elbow at shoulder height). Keeping shoulder abducted, rotate shoulder backward keeping elbow at 90°. Return tubing and hand to start position. Repeat. Keep back straight and elbow still.



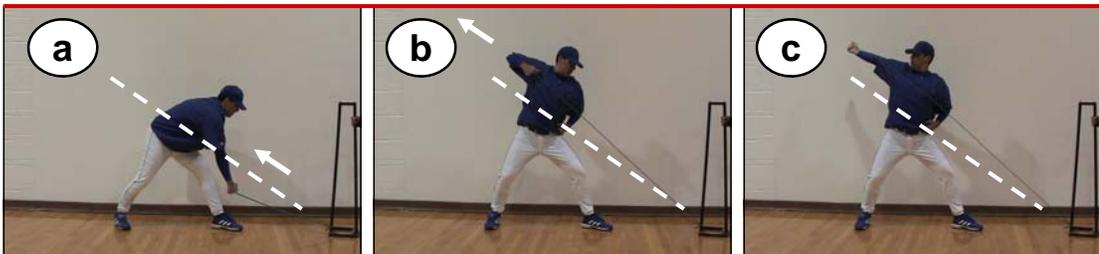
Reverse rotation 90/90



Reverse fly



Straight arm pulldown



Reverse throw

Start in follow-through pitching position, feet spread apart. With tubing taut, bring tube back to chest by lifting with elbow (see "pic b"). Continue to diagonally extend hand away from body into high-cock throwing position and repeat.

Lightweight dumbbell exercises



Post delt

Bend at waist. Arms hang freely. Squeeze shoulder blades together. Bring dumbbells straight out and up to shoulder height. Return to start position in a slow, controlled manner.



Lateral raise

Stand straight. Squeeze shoulder blades together and raise dumbbells straight outward and upward from side to shoulder height. Return to start position in a slow, controlled manner.



Full can

Stand straight. Squeeze shoulder blades together and raise dumbbells, thumbs up, to shoulder height at a 45° angle. Return to start position in a slow, controlled manner.



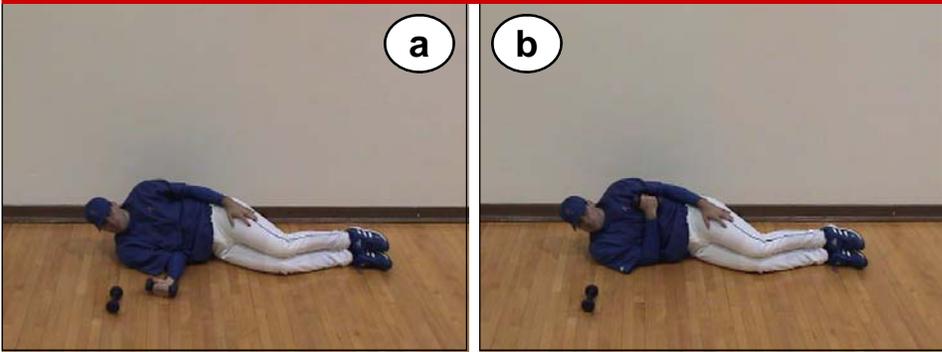
Anterior raise

Standing straight, squeeze shoulder blades together and raise dumbbells straight forward from side to shoulder height. Return to start position in a slow, controlled manner.



External rotation

Lying on side, active elbow pressed into side of body, squeeze shoulder blades together. Slowly raise dumbbell away from body until arm is pointed directly upward. Lower to start position in a slow, controlled manner.

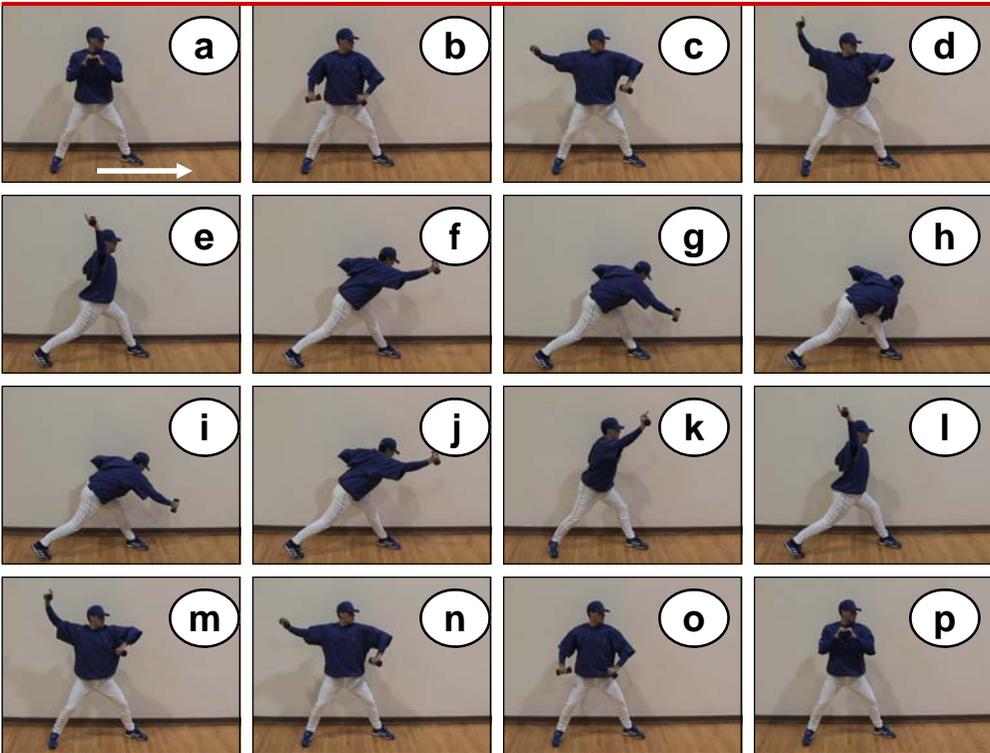


Internal rotation
 Lying on side, active elbow pressed into side of body, squeeze shoulder blades together and slowly bring dumbbell into mid-section of body. Return to start position in a slow, controlled manner.

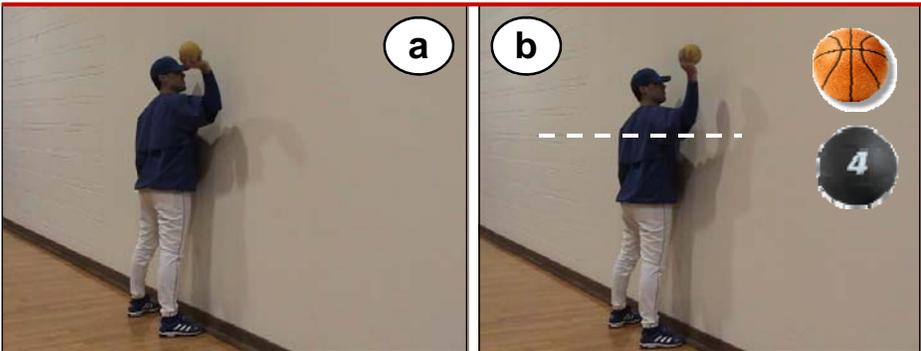


Separation drill

Slowly mimic the arm action of your pitching motion. Separate hands down and back by squeezing shoulder blades together and thrusting chest outward. Bring dumbbells into "high cock" pitching position. Slowly return to start position. Repeat.



Full range of motion drill
 Slowly mimic the arm action of pitching motion. Separate hands down and back by squeezing shoulder blades together and thrusting chest outward. Continue the throwing motion right through your follow through position. Then go in reverse. Be slow and deliberate. Use good form. Repeat.



90° cuff dribble
 A basketball or small medicine ball is needed. Stand facing wall and bring active elbow to shoulder height with hand at 90°. Dribble ball against wall as fast as possible. Tap the ball; release. Do not catch the ball. 30 dribbles counts as one set.

TUBING EXERCISES	SETS	REPS	DATE						
Flexion	3	12							
45° Flexion	3	12							
Abduction	3	12							
Internal rotation	3	12							
External rotation	3	12							
External rotation @ 90° -or- Reverse rotation 90/90	3	12							
Reverse fly @ 90°	3	12							
Straight arm pulldown	3	12							
Reverse throw	1	25							
Optional: 90° cuff dribble	1	30 sec.							

DUMBBELL EXERCISES	SETS	REPS	WEIGHT	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
Post delt	3	12	3-5 lbs.						
Lateral raise	3	12	3-5 lbs.						
Full can	3	12	3-5 lbs.						
Anterior raise	3	12	3-5 lbs.						
External rotation	3	12	3-5 lbs.						
Internal rotation	3	12	3-5 lbs.						
Separation drill <i>(Perform slowly!)</i>	1	25	3-5 lbs.						
Full ROM drill <i>(Perform slowly!)</i>	1	25	3-5 lbs.						
Optional: 90° cuff dribble	1	30 sec.							

7 secrets to improving rotator cuff strength for pitching

Here are some important points to remember about the rotator cuff:

1. Keep it strong in the back and stretched in the front.
2. Don't over-work or use too heavy weights or over-train it.
3. Do the exercises always after upper body work or throwing.
4. Do it 3 times a week off-season and 2 times a week during the season.
5. Make sure the rotator cuff gets recovery time.
6. Do arm care exercises for the shoulder, bicep, tricep, elbow, forearm, wrist and hand three times a week. Use light weight dumbbells, or flexible tubing. Also do push-ups 2-3 times a week.
7. Dumbbells, flexible tubing and medicine balls are much more functional than using machines in the weight room.

Remember the ideal weight used should be 2-3 pounds, and not more than 5 lbs. And don't overdo it. Just like any weight training, the rotator cuff needs time to recover.

So for high school, college and pro pitchers, you must think about doing your rotator cuff exercises as "arm insurance."

Now it's time to hear from you...

Are there any pitching grips tips that I missed? Or maybe you have an idea of how I can make this checklist even better?



Either way, send me a message to my personal email at steven@thecompletepitcher.com and let me know what you think of this list.

