

### Performance in Baseball and Softball

Performance is the ultimate goal in all sports, including baseball and softball. Whether you are a professional or elite athlete, a rep or houseleague player or a weekend warrior, everyone wants to improve their performance.

While age old concepts such as “perfect practice makes perfect”, “sport-specific conditioning” and “mental preparedness” are very important components of performance, one area is consistently omitted from the preparation of athletes at all levels, **biomechanical balance**. All the practice and training in the world will not allow you to perform at your ultimate level if your body is not balanced biomechanically.

#### Biomechanical Principles

A simple definition of biomechanics is, ‘the mechanics of the living body’. There are several key biomechanical principles that must be addressed before conditioning can be ultimately effective, your best sport performance can be attained and optimal health can be maintained.

In order to demonstrate the first of these key biomechanical principles lets draw a parallel between a house and your body. The strength of a house is only as good as the foundation underneath it. Build on a poor foundation and no matter what you do above, the house will eventually fall apart. The biomechanical foundation of your body is your feet and similarly to the house analogy no matter what you do above (eg conditioning, practice etc) you can never attain your ultimate performance if your feet don’t properly support your body and allow you to efficiently transfer energy from the ground (ground reaction force) to your body above. In other words, you will not be able to produce optimal power in any sport, including baseball and softball. **Your feet must be stable.**

Moving up the body, the next key area is the pelvis. Malalignment of the pelvis is a very common problem with baseball and softball players. Without proper alignment in this critical area, optimal hip rotation essential in hitting and throwing, is not possible. The hips may be literally blocked from full rotation and/or decreased speed of hip rotation will dramatically and negatively effect performance. **Your hips must be mobile.**

Biomechanically speaking, the last critical region is the upper spine and shoulder. Lack of essential **spinal mobility (t-spine)** and **shoulder stability (scapula)**, will set up a ball player for a myriad of upper back, neck and arm problems. Arm injuries related to biomechanical faults include instability, shoulder impingement, ‘sick’ scapula, rotator cuff tendonitis, rotator cuff and labral tears and elbow ligament injuries (ie Tommy John surgery).

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# Honsberger Physiotherapy

The best way to avoid biomechanically induced injuries is to be tested. Honsberger Physiotherapy and Biomechanics Clinic specializes in identification of biomechanical faults before injuries occur. After identification, we re-align the body, followed by specific flexibility and strengthening exercises to rebalance the body and ensure all segments of the body function properly.

Once the body is properly biomechanically balanced, then all conditioning efforts are enhanced, injuries are eliminated or markedly reduced and performance is maximized.

Balance is always regarded as the foundation of sporting activities. Just remember, you can't be balanced in your sport unless your body is balanced.

Play ball!

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