

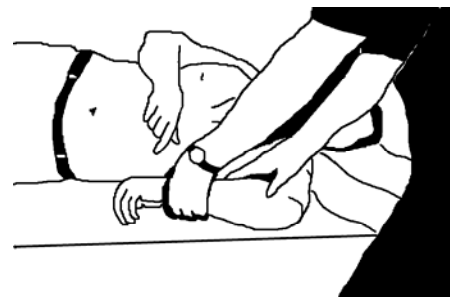
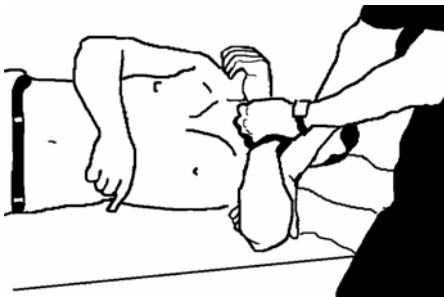
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Posterior Capsular Stretching

This is the best stretching exercise to stretch posterior-inferior glenohumeral ligament tightness. This is the ligament that becomes contracted and tighter and tougher in overhead throwing athletes. Generally, the better the player, the more he or she throws because of demands by coaches, parents, schools and athletic programs in general. These are precisely the players who have the most to lose by a tight ligament, and the most to gain by preventative stretching of that ligament. The tight ligament is not a problem in and of itself – the tightness causes the ball (the humeral head) to rock upwards in the socket (the glenoid) with every throwing motion. Over time and thousands of throws, this rocking can tear more important structures in the shoulder like the labrum or the rotator cuff. These stretches have been shown to greatly reduce the likelihood these more serious problems. Tears of these structures often end throwers' careers, and always end their season.

It is important that the athlete lies on his side with the back about 45 degrees off the table (tilted halfway facing the assistant). The coach, friend, teammate, trainer or family member rotates the arm as shown, until resistance is met. Pushing lightly will cause a slight discomfort, and this can be detected by when the patient grimaces or comments "that's it," or something of that nature. Then, at that very point or very slightly beyond that point, hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Total time is 6 minutes, which gives 5-10 seconds between each 30-second stretch. DO NOT stretch too aggressively such that it is painful. The athlete will quickly quit and nothing will be accomplished. This is best done after throwing in practice or especially after games. If your doctor has told you that you may be at risk for throwing injury, then these stretches must be done at least 4 times per week, for 6 weeks, and then you should return to your doctor for repeat measurements. Done correctly and with patience and persistence, you will see results and make it much more likely that you will continue to throw well for many years.



The second-best exercise can be done by the athlete alone, but is really not as good because it is very easy to lose focus, and does not isolate the posterior inferior ligament nearly as well. This diagram is included as an alternative but should not be substituted completely.

