

RETURN TO HITTING: AN INTERVAL HITTING PROGRESSION AND OVERVIEW OF HITTING MECHANICS FOLLOWING INJURY

Ryan Monti, PT, DPT, SCS¹

ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Participation in baseball is prevalent across all age groups. Baseball injuries are common and can impact a player's ability to participate. An injury to any region can influence the player's ability to swing the bat. As a part of the athlete's rehabilitation, a sports-specific program should be implemented re-introducing the hitting cycle that addresses proper biomechanics as well as providing a progressive atmosphere to return to hitting. Although there are several return to throwing progression programs in the literature, to the author's knowledge no published hitting progression programs exist. Thus, the purpose of this clinical commentary is to propose a progressive return to hitting program that emphasizes proper mechanics for ballplayers who have sustained an injury.

Description of Topic: This return to hitting program describes in detail the phases of the baseball hitting cycle. Proper biomechanical information is provided on each phase that can be used to assist the clinician in injury prevention. This article gives the healthcare professional guidance for assessment for appropriate readiness for return to sport using impairment measures, patient-report measures, and physical performance measures. The purpose of this hitting progression is to provide a safe, gradual increase in hitting intensity by moving from a fixed position to soft toss and finally to increasing pitch velocity.

Discussion: This interval hitting program guides the clinician from when the patient is ready to begin hitting through a full return to sport. Use of appropriate hitting mechanics must be ensured during rehabilitation to avoid compensation. Similar to the return to throwing programs that exist, this interval hitting progression program can provide a framework to quantify progression and reduce the chance of re-injury from occurring during the return to sport phase of rehab.

Keywords: Baseball, hitting, injury progression

Level of Evidence: Level 5

¹ Sports and Orthopedic Physical Therapy, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio, USA.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Mitchell Selhorst, PT, DPT, OCS; Shaun Coffman, PT, DPT, OCS; and Jason Pedicini, PT, DPT, OCS from Nationwide Children's Hospital as well as Mathew Marshall, PT, DPT from Orthopedic One Physical Therapy in Columbus, Ohio for providing critical review to earlier drafts of this manuscript.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Ryan Monti, PT, DPT, SCS
Sports and Orthopedic Physical Therapy,
Nationwide Children's Hospital,
Columbus, OH, 43205
E-mail: Ryan.Monti@Nationwidechildrens.org