

# Enhance Performance During the Baseball Season by Reducing Overuse

June 2015 - Mike Reinold, Champion Physical Therapy & Performance

I've talked over and over again that overuse is the number one reason why we have so many high school and youth baseball injuries. It's likely the most significant factor while also being the easiest to address. People grasp the concept that overuse can lead to injury, but overuse is also the number one reason why performance is decreased over the course of a baseball season.

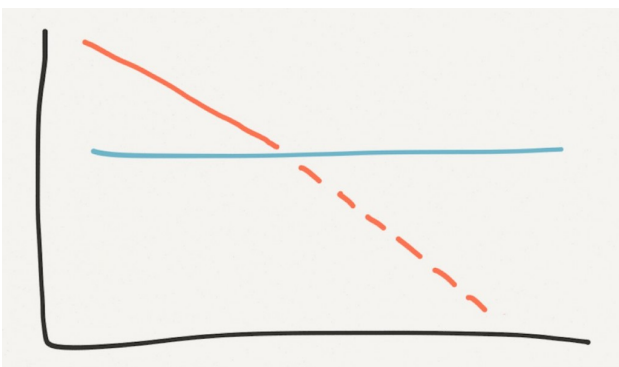
But it's all about temptation, right? Let's use a different example. Eating that donut right now probably isn't going to kill me today (I guess I could choke on it...), but creating a bad habit, like eating a lot of donuts, will have an impact on my longevity and quality of life. My short term actions will decrease my long term results.

Taking it back to summer baseball, it's tempting to play in multiple leagues or to sign up for every showcase and tournament you can find. You want to get the most exposure that you can, right? Realize that your short term actions will decrease your long term results.

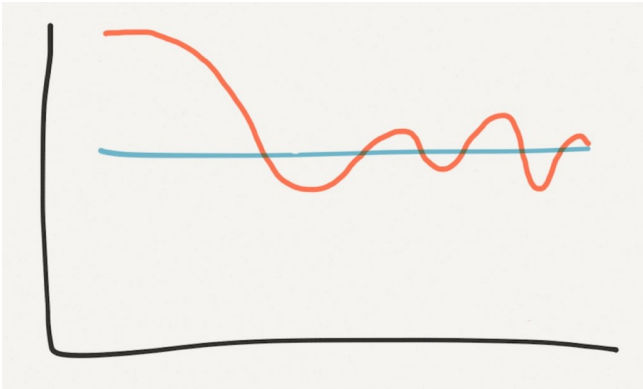
## Understanding the Stress of a Baseball Season

I like to think that you start every baseball season at 100% capacity, and slowly drip down over the course of the season. This is normal. There is this magical line of injury, let's say at 80% capacity. You can play at 81% but you can't play at 79%. This is a concept I have developed over the years because I see this ALL the time. I'm not sure why, but I do feel there is this magical line.

Here is what that magical line looks like. The blue line is your magical line that I don't want you to dip below over the course of the season. The red line is your capacity.



Once you dip below that magical line of 80%, it's really hard to get back up. You end up struggling to stay above water all season. You play on the weekend, empty the tank, and then we struggle to get you back over the line all week. This is by far the worst way to get through a season.



Some people spend every season like this and I wonder if they ever truly reach their potential. People that I tend to see that do wiggle back and forth over this line tend to be doing 1 of 2 things:

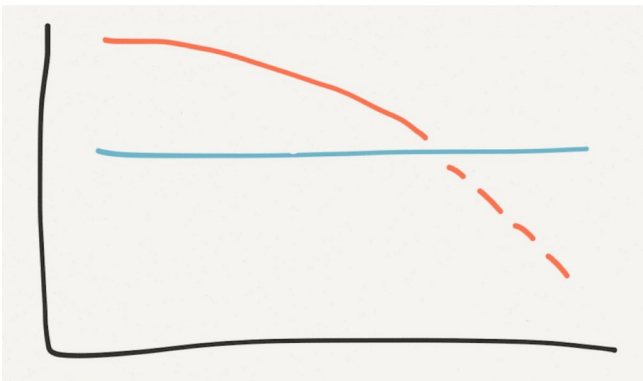
1. Way too much in general
2. Trying to make big gains during the season

What I mean by the second point is that you spent all winter working hard to get stronger, improve your mechanics, and enhance your velocity. But, you continue to push your physiological limits with your training in season when you should be scaling back the training and scaling up the skill competition. This leads to overuse, even though your actual innings may be down.

I'd rather you be at 100% capacity at 80% of showcases, rather than at 80% capacity at 100% of showcases. Plus, 80% of you isn't going to impress a scout or coach. The higher your red line, the higher your performance.

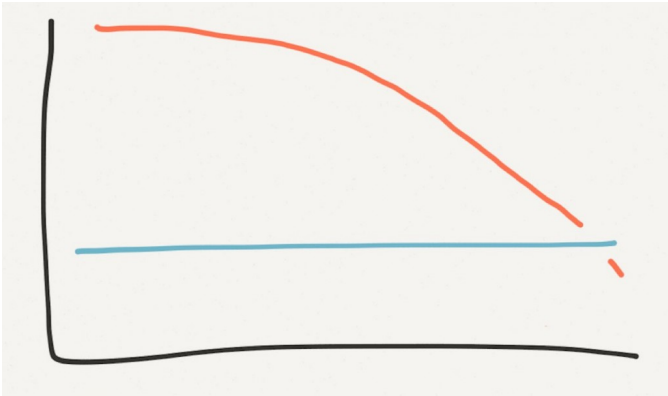
### **Enhance Performance During the Baseball Season by Reducing Overuse**

My job is to slow down that drip. I want to make the red line slowly drip over the course of the season.



I do this by helping you maintain your mobility, strength, stability, and endurance. Notice I said "maintain" and not "gain." You can also help slow this drip down with proper inseason programs. Paying attention to your recovery, sleep, and nutrition also play a part.

Your job is to raise your capacity as much as possible. You want to make that blue line go down as much as possible.



How do you do this? It's building your base in the offseason through a comprehensive performance training program that focuses on strength, power, speed, agility, endurance, mobility, and arm care. If it's midseason for you and you are struggling, keep this in mind next offseason!

I work with a lot of young athletes during the season. It is VERY obvious to me inseason which player put the effort in during the offseason to prepare. Their durability is noticeably improved. Overuse is specific to each individual. You can slow down your drip and raise your capacity with the right programs. This is why your innings may be far less than someone else on your team but you are always hurt and they stay injury free.