

YOUTH SPORT SPECIALIZATION SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Athletic Trainers' Association supports the following recommendations as they relate to the health and well-being of adolescent and young athletes:



DELAY SPECIALIZING IN A SINGLE SPORT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE:
Sport specialization is often described as participating and/or training for a single sport year-round. Adolescent and young athletes should strive to participate, or sample, a variety of sports. This recommendation supports general physical fitness, athleticism and reduces injury risk in athletes.



ONE TEAM AT A TIME:
Adolescent and young athletes should participate in one organized sport per season. Many adolescent and young athletes participate or train year-round in a single sport, while competing in other organized sports simultaneously. Total volume of organized sport participation per season is an important risk factor for injury.



LESS THAN EIGHT MONTHS PER YEAR:
Adolescent and young athletes should not play a single sport more than eight months per year.



NO MORE HOURS/WEEK THAN AGE IN YEARS:
Adolescent and young athletes should not participate in organized sport and/or activity more hours per week than their age (i.e., a 12-year-old athlete should not participate in more than 12 hours per week of organized sport).



TWO DAYS OF REST PER WEEK:
Adolescent and young athletes should have a minimum of two days off per week from organized training and competition. Athletes should not participate in other organized team sports, competitions and/or training on rest and recovery days.



REST AND RECOVERY TIME FROM ORGANIZED SPORT PARTICIPATION:
Adolescent and young athletes should spend time away from organized sport and/or activity at the end of each competitive season. This allows for both physical and mental recovery, promotes health and well-being and minimizes injury risk and burnout/dropout.

ENDORSED BY:



HEALTH IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

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REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.