DOES THE SLEEPER STRETCH IMPROVE SHOULDER INTERNAL ROTATION RANGE OF MOTION IN COLLEGE BASEBALL ATHLETES?
Boergers RJ, Pinto-Zipp G: Seton Hall University South Orange, NJ

Context: It is unclear whether a self stretching procedure such as the sleeper stretch is effective at increasing shoulder internal rotation range of motion. Objective: To determine if the sleeper stretch is a useful exercise for improving shoulder internal rotation range of motion in baseball athletes. Design: Pre-post test design. Setting: University athletic training room.
Patients or Other Participants: Nine collegiate baseball players with glenohumeral internal rotation deficits (>10°) participated in the study. Intervention: All members of a university baseball team were screened for glenohumeral internal rotation deficit (GIRD). Team members with GIRD (>10°) were instructed on how to perform the sleeper stretch by the primary investigator and were asked to complete the stretch twice a day for 2 weeks on their own. The sleeper stretch was performed in the 90°/90° position and the rollover positions and was held for 30 seconds. Main Outcome Measure(s): Internal and external rotation of the dominant and non-dominant shoulder was measured before and after the sleeper stretch intervention. Results: Internal rotation of the dominant shoulder yielded a mean increase of 15.9° ± 5.1°. Mean difference score for internal rotation of the dominant and non-dominant shoulders was significantly different (p ≤ .003). Mean difference score for external rotation of the dominant and non-dominant shoulders was not significant (p = .538). Conclusion: The sleeper stretch did improve internal rotation range of motion in the involved shoulder, but external rotation did not improve. We believe it can be a useful tool for stretching the posterior capsule of the shoulder, thus improving internal rotation range of motion. One limitation of this study was that a relatively low severity of GIRD (>10°) was used as inclusion criteria, while most other studies consider GIRD to occur once the deficit is >25°. Choosing a GIRD >25° would have greatly limited the number of participants in the study. Further research is needed to evaluate compliance by participants and effectiveness at reducing injuries. Key Words: shoulder, posterior capsule, stretch, range of motion, internal rotation, deficit