

## Harold Reynolds' Tip of the Month: *Building Up Arm Strength*



Many big leaguers call it a "hose" or a "cannon." Whatever you call it, your arm is probably the most important asset in playing the game of baseball. If your arm is not right, then you can forget playing the game.

Unfortunately, many young players have never been taught how to care for their arms or how to build up arm strength. I can't tell you how many guys I've seen in pro ball who have arm trouble because they never learned to build up arm strength.

There is a routine I used all through my career, and I never had an arm injury. The routine I used is the same one you can use to build up your arm strength and prevent injury- no matter what age you are. You may have heard of the term "long toss." It is a routine used by many big leaguers. Here is what you do:

Start by spacing yourself about 10-15 yards from your throwing partner. Make 10 throws from this distance, just playing normal catch, not trying to throw the ball too hard. Just get your arm loose, and work on good mechanics and hitting the target. After 10 throws from each of you, you and your throwing partner both take one step back, and then each of you makes one throw from the new distance. Then, after each throw, you each take one more step back and make a throw.

Continue doing this until you have moved to the distance that places you the farthest you can be apart from your throwing partner and still be able to get the ball to him in the air. This "long toss" routine should last 5-10 minutes. Remember, you are throwing the ball with some velocity like in a normal game of catch, but not trying to play "burnout."

If you continue this "long toss" routine each time you go out to throw the baseball, you'll find that after a few days, you will be able to lengthen the distance you throw the ball and you will be able to throw the ball farther without as much effort. This means you are building up your arm strength and protecting yourself from future injury. Keep working at it and take care of your arm!