

Playing multiple sports can pay off

Experts say young athletes devoting to one sport year-round can suffer overuse injuries and burnout

ANCHOR LEDE

As we overlap fall and winter sports, sports medicine experts are reminding young athletes: you may think you need to commit to one sport year-round to rise to an elite level and earn a chance to play in college. But doing so can have drawbacks. Instead, experts say playing multiple sports with a tailored training plan can make you a more well-rounded athlete.

TAKE VO

Doctor James Murphy, an orthopedic surgeon at OSF HealthCare, says devoting too much energy to one sport and the repeated motions that come with it can lead to overuse injuries and mental burnout.

On the flip side, benefits of playing multiple sports include building endurance, balance and a range of movement.

For example, a child could run cross country in the fall before playing baseball in the spring.

SOT

Dr. James Murphy, OSF HealthCare orthopedic surgeon

**“You’re strengthening the legs. You’re resting the ligaments in the shoulder and elbow. You’re also allowing the child to stay competitive, learn endurance, learn teamwork and hear from another coach.”
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Maybe the runner isn’t interested in a spring sport but wants to stay in shape. Cross-training, where you do drills outside of your sport, can accomplish this. Runners can swim or ride a bike.