



Keys to Nolan Ryan's Longevity

Key #1: Decelerating the Arm Efficiently

The arm will only accelerate as efficiently as it can decelerate...in other words your body will try it's best to protect itself. The more efficiently your arm decelerates, the harder you can throw, the more (in volume and in frequency) you can throw and the faster you can recover. These were all critical to Nolan's long career.



Matt Cain Sequence- *notice the pronation immediately into launch, flexion at trunk, continuation of body's rotation around front hip and the arm relaxed and loose.



Roy Oswalt Sequence- *Notice the throwing shoulder much closer to the catcher at release than the directional/gloveside shoulder - which is one of our 5 keys at the Texas Baseball Ranch® to efficient deceleration; notice also the pronation immediately into launch and flexion at the trunk....which all add to a very efficient deceleration.

Side note: While we believe Dr. Marshall has some exceptionally sound ideas on arm health/preparation and the most efficient ways to decelerate and protect the arm...and we wholeheartedly agree with and utilize many of them...we do not agree with all/many of his positions on developing a pitching athlete's movement pattern. Dr. Marshall would likewise vehemently disagree with much of our perspective. I wanted to state for the record here that Dr. Marshall deserves much credit for our current position on pronation and deceleration but in no way are our belief systems regarding the rest of the delivery in any way parallel or aligned with Dr. Marshall.



Nolan Ryan & Cliff Lee...as they continue to rotate around their front hip. * Notice their shoulders have rotated over 180 degrees from where they began and their throwing arm is relaxed, soft,

flexed...saving themselves from the 'bang' and the stress to their labrum...indicating that they've been able to dissipate the force created throughout their body and not have it isolated on the elbow or shoulder joint..

No one can question Justin Verlander's stuff or his mental tenacity...Verlander is indeed a warrior... but this picture from several years ago with the Tigers clearly tells the story of a very inefficient deceleration...and the soft tissue in Justin's shoulder have paid the price over time. When Justin began seeing a decrease in his velocity, his agent reached out to us and this was one area we spent time working on.

Key issues from this picture. 1) Very little trunk flexion 2) the body has stopped rotating around the front hip thereby the arm will straighten and the soft tissue in the shoulder forced to dissipate the force.



The answer? **Improving your patterns of deceleration on a daily basis.**

Our athletes perform a "Marshal 1" drill EVERY single day for 5-15 minutes without fail. It is the only drill that we will never miss. Some days it's the ONLY thing our pitchers will do. Most days it represents step one of our lead up drills and our eventual ramp up to our bullpens. Regardless of whether it is done as a stand-alone or simply the first step in our throwing process, "Marshal 1" is a cornerstone to our entire program. For some, deceleration is absolutely natural, for others the pattern must be enhanced.

Why is our deceleration drill so important to us? Because if we can't decelerate the arm efficiently, we are going to be constantly injured, hurt and/or sore...which means we therefore can't be working

on our throwing nearly as often as we need to be to develop consistency and a high-level motor pattern.

I refer to our deceleration drill as “Marshall 1”. It is a hybrid of the ideas of Lloyd Lee from Pine Bluff Arkansas and Dr. Mike Marshall.



We use an incline 4-6' high to rest our knee so we can replicate the leg/ body position at release. That way the only thing our athlete has to focus on is his deceleration from the release of the baseball until the arm comes to complete rest. The rest of the body is already preset. A picture of Nolan Ryan at release gives us that position from which we are going to work through. From that starting position we keep our chest facing forward and bring our arm straight back as if we were pulling back a bow and arrow. Remember this is a 'deceleration drill...we are focusing ONLY on the arm & body's ability to slow down without exponential stress on the soft tissue of the elbow or shoulder.

This clearly is not how the athlete would normally throw the ball, but remember we are not concerned with natural arm action here...we are working strictly on improving patterns of deceleration.



We then throw the ball, concentrating on releasing the ball out in front with our throwing shoulder significantly in front of our gloveside shoulder and pronating immediately after launch.



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For more information on the Texas Baseball Ranch® and the various training programs offered, visit www.TexasBaseballRanch.com, call (936) 588-6762 or email: info@TexasBaseballRanch.com