Overarm striking is similar to the overhand or overarm throw. It occurs when the arm or hand, with or without an implement, applies force to send an overhead object away.

Overarm striking is a challenging hand-eye coordination skill as your child has to track the oncoming object while looking upward. This requires good body control and stability skills. Generally young children can only perform at the initial phase of this skill. To progress to the mature stage will require formal instruction and plenty of opportunities for exploration and practice.
Developmental Phases
Overarm Striking

Initial

- Feet are stationary.
- Striking elbow is bent in front of body before strike.
- Elbow straightens during strike, generating limited force from the extension of the flexed joint.
- Body faces the direction of the strike. No body rotation during the strike. Body may move from back to front, bending at the waist.

Transition

- Elbow is bent slightly and held at shoulder level.
- Body trunk turns to the side of the striking shoulder in preparation for the strike.
- Trunk rotates to face object as hand extends at the elbow to strike at the object.
- Back foot moves forward to balance the body during the follow-through.

Mature

- Foot opposite to striking hand steps forward. Body weight shifts to the back foot.
- Striking arm swings to the back and elbow is brought near head level.
- Shoulder and trunk rotate to the striking side in preparation for the strike.
- Body rotates back to face object. Weight transfers to the front foot as the striking arm straightens to strike at the object.
- Back foot moves forward to balance the body after the strike.

Approximate Age of Development (in years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Strategies
Overarm Striking

What to do if your child...

... has difficulty maintaining balance when striking?
- Hang a target slightly above your child’s eye level when he is seated.
- Get your child to reach out and strike the target using one hand at a time.

... does not reach up when striking?
- Hang targets above your child’s outstretched arm.
- Get your child to hit the target with an implement in his hand (e.g. paper roll, toilet roll, short shaft racquet).

... needs visual cues for correct weight transfer?
- Place footprint markers on the floor as visual cues for weight transfer from the back foot to front foot.

... tends to keep non-striking arm still and next to the body?
- Get your child to hold a pair of rolled up socks in his non-striking hand.
- During the overarm strike, get your child to swing the non-throwing hand backward to drop the socks to the back. This backswing of the non-throwing hand helps to generate force for the strike.
**Variations**

“Can your child strike overarm...?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the body moves</th>
<th>Force/Effort</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• like a badminton player</td>
<td>• quickly</td>
<td>• repeatedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• without moving his non-striking arm</td>
<td>• standing still (feet apart)</td>
<td>• like a robot with heavy arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• as if swatting a mosquito</td>
<td>• as if hitting a balloon/shuttlecock</td>
<td>• on tiptoe like a fairy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where the body moves</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Direction/Pathways</th>
<th>Levels/Extensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• while standing in a hoop/on a marker</td>
<td>• to the left/right</td>
<td>• at an object hung slightly above his head while seated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to land an object over a line</td>
<td>• upward/downward</td>
<td>• an object just above his outstretched hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• on one side of net</td>
<td>• to land an object across the court</td>
<td>• while lying flat on the ground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With whom/What the body moves</th>
<th>Self (body parts)/People</th>
<th>Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• with both hands</td>
<td>• to burst soap bubbles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• higher than you</td>
<td>• with a small/big paper plate or a roll of newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to you on other side of the net</td>
<td>• with a flat-faced racquet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMBINATIONS**

- A hanging beach ball lightly/with great force, while seated on a low bench/stool with both feet apart and planted firmly on the ground
- To burst bubbles above his head, without moving from a defined boundary
Activity 1
Overarm Striking

WHAT YOU NEED
- Unwanted stockings
- A hanger
- A balloon

HOW TO PLAY
- Get your child to hit a balloon towards you. Do this five times, using only his right hand. Repeat, using only the left hand. Next, alternate between right and left hands for five strikes each.
- Wrap unwanted stockings around a hanger. This will be your child’s “racquet”.
  - Repeat by getting your child to hit the balloon towards you for five times, using the “racquet” held only in his right hand.
  - Continue with the “racquet” held only in his left hand.
  - Next, alternate between right and left hands for five strikes each.
- Have your child keep the balloon up in the air by patting it with his racquet. Count the number of pats he can accumulate before missing the balloon.

BE AWARE
- Overarm striking is not random hitting of an object. It involves several movements, including swinging the striking hand backwards and near the ears for better momentum and accuracy.
- Repetitive striking to prevent a balloon from dropping to the floor will help your child learn to straighten his elbow and generate striking force.
Activity 2
Overarm Striking

WHAT YOU NEED

- A stuffed toy
- A box

HOW TO PLAY

- Hold and lift a box slightly above your child’s head. Have him hold a stuffed toy in his hand. He must then jump and put the stuffed toy into the box.

BE AWARE

- Encourage your child to swing his hand backwards, close to his ear, to gain the momentum and accuracy to put the toy into the box.

Challenge your child by holding the box at various heights.