

A GUIDE TO SELECTING BASEBALL EQUIPMENT

Baseball Glove

STEP 1: Know Your Game

Not all ball gloves are designed for every game. While certain gloves can work well in baseball or softball, many gloves are designed with a specific game in mind whether it is Little League, Softball or Baseball. Little League gloves are often marked with an age range, but size and strength of the player are perhaps the most significant criteria. Try on a number of gloves and select the glove that compliments the player. A softball glove is traditionally 12.5 inches or larger. Some baseball outfielders gloves can work very well in both baseball or softball.

STEP 2: Know Your Position

Ball gloves come in a variety of styles, shapes and sizes. The correct style of glove is often determined by a player's position on the field. For instance, a baseball pitcher's glove has a closed web and ranges from 11.5 to 12.5 inches in length. An outfielder's glove is a longer glove, usually 12.5 inches to 13 inches in length and varies in webbing styles. If a player plays multiple positions, a utility glove is the best option. Utility gloves tend to be a bit larger than an infield glove and have a closed web. Almost all gloves are designated by position to help with your selection.

STEP 3: Gloves Should Feel Right

Select a ball glove that feels good on the hand. A player should be able to flex and easily close the glove. The glove should feel snug on the hand and not likely to slip during play.

- The player should be able to fit his fingers into the first 1" to 2" of the glove finger lining
- Some players prefer closed backs, while others prefer conventional open backs
- Some players prefer open webs vs. closed webs. A pitcher would use a closed web to hide the ball. Outfielders usually use an open web. Infielders go either way depending on position and personal preference.
- Be able to close the glove around the ball.
- Leather is the preferred glove, so be careful about synthetic material which will never break in. Although it feels flexible on the shelf, it won't ever "catch" and stay closed around the ball.
- Middle infielders should look for a shallower pocket within the recommended size range for the best transfer.
- First basemen and catchers should look at youth sized or "tweener" mitts for these positions.

STEP 4: Glove Sizing Guidelines

Consider whether the player is playing T-ball, Little League, softball or on a big, regulation sized field. Note the pattern size listed in inches is the measurement from the top of the index finger down through the palm to the base of the glove's heel.

- T-ball (ages 4-7) 9" to 10.75"
- Baseball (ages 7-9) 10" to 11.25"
- Baseball (ages 9-12) 11" to 11.75"
- Baseball (ages 13+ 10.75" to 13"

STEP 5: Frequency

When selecting a glove, consider how often the glove will be used. High quality gloves feature stronger leather and lacing ensuring durability and longer life. Learn the fundamentals of fielding and catching by wearing a glove that fits your hand well. A glove that is too big will be tough to handle. Beginners who want to be the best they can won't be able to develop proper skills. A glove can't be bought for "the future," or for the player to "grow into it." Improperly fit gloves will only hurt performance and development; size your glove by age and by position.

STEP 6: Features You'll Find

- **Pocket:** not too deep, especially for outfielders and infielders that catch the ball, and then transfer it quickly.
- **Webbing:** different styles are available, depending on the price or position played. Pitchers prefer closed webs to hide the ball. Open webs are preferred for third base and outfield.
- **Backs:** open backs, preferred by middle infielders, have an open space across the back. Closed backs only have a small finger hole. Although a matter of preference, open backs can break in more quickly.
- **Wrist Adjustment:** look for the ability to adjust the opening, whether with Velcro or tightening of the laces since a glove size changes from sweat and the sun/heat.
- **Leather:** the better quality lasts longer. Better and thicker leather comes from the center of the steer hide. Kangaroo and buffalo leather are rare, but excellent options for upper level players.
- **Lacing:** it's wise to keep your lace knots tied. Quality lacing is not stiff. Tighten your laces periodically and keep your glove clean and conditioned so the natural oils do not dry out.
- **Padding:** too much and you'll lose feeling for the ball. If your glove hand starts hurting when you have a hard catch, use a batting glove or padded insert.

STEP 7: Caring for Your Glove

Once you have your glove broken in, taking good care of it will help you play with it longer. Here are some basic tips for caring for your glove.

- **Keep it clean.** Wipe it off with a damp rag if it gets dirty. Use a leather soap like Tanner Leather.
- **Keep it dry.** If it is damp from sweat after playing, do not pack it away immediately; let it air dry. Do not put it next to a heat source because that will make it dry or brittle.
- **Keep its storage temperatures even.** Keeping the glove where it gets really hot or cold ages the glove.
- **If and when conditioning the pocket, oil only the pocket.** Putting oil on the rest of the glove will break down the leather more quickly and make it weighty. Use a spray bottle to "mist" oil on the glove. Oil the entire glove only before putting the glove away for the winter.
- **Treat it nicely.** Don't leave it lying around to get chewed up by a family pet or rotting in a trunk.
- **Store and carry it properly.** That means avoiding letting it get smashed in a folded position in your baseball bag. Tie criss-cross with jumbo rubber bands or lace.
- **Check the laces and stitching.** They can come loose or get frayed over time. Check to see if you need re-lacing since they stretch over time.
- **Store in a cool, dry place with a ball in the pocket when not in use.**

Aluminum Bats

Step 1: How do I choose the right bat?

In most cases, bats are measured in inches and weighed in ounces. Typically, a bigger, stronger player will prefer a longer heavier bat, while a smaller player will prefer a shorter lighter bat. Since a player's power is generated through bat speed, it is important that you can swing your bat through the strike zone at maximum speed. Keep in mind that the right bat for you is based on personal preference. Make sure the bat you pick feels good when you swing it.

Step 2: Can I use my bat in a batting cage?

Easton does not recommend that you use your bat in a batting cage as the rubber balls used in most commercial batting cages are harder and denser than a regular ball and add an increased amount of stress to your bat upon impact which causing "denting." If you do practice in a batting cage, use the bats provided by the cage. Save your bat for use in games and practices where leather covered balls are used. Note: using your Easton bat in a batting cage will void your warranty.

Step 3: When is it too cold to use my bat?

Easton suggests using your bat in temperatures above 60 degrees. Colder weather makes balls harder, which may cause damage to your bat. However, in cold weather it is usually the hard or wet baseball, which does more damage to a bat. During batting practices avoid using old, wet and heavy balls. The strength of a modern day aluminum alloys used in bats is very stable over a wide range of temperatures, but always check your bat's warranty.

Step 4: Do aluminum bats wear out?

Despite all the new high-tech features and alloys, baseball bats do wear out. The metal is constantly flexing and snapping back, and it gets fatigued. It's recommended that hitters rotate their bat after each hit in batting practice to spread the shock to the entire circumference of the bat. Manufacturers have stated that performance alloys start to fatigue after about 600 hits.

Step 5: Which is the bat for me?

Some bats are "end loaded" bats and others are more balanced. It's a matter of feel and subjectivity. Swings a lot of bats to feel what's comfortable. Bat speed through the strike zone is one of the main keys to a hitter's success. Bats that are heavy in the head will be slower to swing. Hitting the ball on the "sweet spot" runs a close second. Through the sweet spots on aluminum bats may appear bigger than wood, good contact still has to be made.

Determine Your Bat Length by Weight and Height

Your weight (pounds)	Your height (inches)									
	36-40	41-44	45-48	49-52	53-56	57-60	61-64	65-68	69-72	73+
	Bat length									
less than 60	26"	27"	28"	29"	29"					
61-70	27"	27"	28"	29"	30"	30"				
71-80		28"	28"	29"	30"	30"	31"			
81-90		28"	29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	32"		
91-100		28"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
101-110		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
111-120		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
121-130		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
131-140		29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
141-150			30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
151-160			30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	33"
161-170				31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	34"
171-180						32"	33"	33"	34"	34"
180+							33"	33"	34"	34"

Determine Your Bat Length by Age

Age	Bat length
5-7 years old	24"-26"
8-9 years old	26"-28"
10 years old	28"-29"
11-12 years old	30"-31"
13-14 years old	31"-32"
15-16 years old	32"-33"
17+ years old	34"