

# Baseball Glove Buyers Guide

The purpose of this Baseball Glove Buyer's Guide is to try and take the mystery out of how to buy a baseball glove, how to properly break in your new glove and how to maintain it so it will give you years of quality service.

Before you actually make the purchase there are several things you can do to ensure buying the most suitable glove available for your individual purpose. Please look at this list first then go to the links below.

## [Buyers Guide Information Links](#)

### 1) Educate yourself regarding baseball gloves

A: What makes a quality glove

B: What materials do I need in my glove

C: Best glove for the position(s) this glove will be used for

D: What are reasonable expectations regarding performance and durability

E: What is an acceptable price range for the glove I need

### 2) Determine the purpose this glove will serve

A: Infield, Outfield, Utility, Catcher, First Base

B: What age is the person using this glove

C: What position(s) will this person typically play

D: What size glove will I need

### 3) How do I maintain this investment

A: Proper break-in

B: Proper glove care and maintenance

C: Proper storage in the off season

Our intention is for you, the glove buyer to find the answers to these questions and any other you may have in this guide to buying a baseball glove. If we've missed something, left your question unanswered or made it to confusing please feel free to call us, our knowledgeable Customer Service staff will be happy to assist you. If we don't know the answer we will do everything we can to get it for you.

| Glove Size & Common Usage by Position |                |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Size                                  | Baseball       |
| 12.75in                               | Outfield       |
| 12.5in                                | Outfield       |
| 12.25in                               | Utility        |
| 12in                                  | Utility        |
| 11.75in                               | Infield        |
| 11.5in                                | Infield        |
| 11.25in                               | Middle Infield |
| 11in                                  | Middle Infield |
| 10.75in                               | 2nd Base       |
| 10.5in                                | 2nd Base       |

| Baseball Glove Sizing Chart - General Guideline by Age |          |                             |
|--|----------|-----------------------------|
| Age  | Position | Glove Size                  |
| 5-6  | General  | 10in - 10.5in (youth model) |
| 7-8  | General  | 10.5in - 11in (youth model) |
| 9-12   | General  | 11in - 11.5in (youth model) |

|                   |          |                |
|-------------------|----------|----------------|
| High School/Adult | Infield  | 11in - 12in    |
| High School/Adult | Outfield | 12in - 12.75in |

### **How to Measure a Glove**

Baseball gloves are measured by starting at the top of the index finger of the glove and measuring down the finger, along the inside of the pocket and then out to the heel of the glove. Use a flexible tape and allow it to "lay" in the pocket as you measure. For first base mitts (which have no fingers) simply measure from the highest point on the mitt in the same fashion as a fielders glove. All gloves are referenced for size by inches. Typically baseball gloves have a range from 9 inches (youth starter size) to 12.75 inches for adult outfield play. Catchers mitt sizes while expressed in inches are measured by circumference. Typically a baseball catchers mitt will measure in circumference from 30 inches (youth size) up to 34.5 inches with .5 inch incremental sizes in this range.

### **Gloves vs Mitts**

The main difference between gloves and mitts is that gloves have fingers and mitts don't. Mitts tend to do a better job of controlling balls that don't hit in the pocket and can aid scooping ground balls and short hops. 1st base and catcher are the only positions which use mitts.

### **Youth Gloves**

Perhaps the most important point in this section is to avoid the temptation to buy a glove that is to "large" for the person using it with the thought in mind "they will grow into it". What will actually happen is the player will get discouraged and want to quit after the glove falls off his hand a couple of times or you'll get discouraged and either go buy another glove the right size or wonder why "little Johnny" can't keep his glove on like the rest of the guys. Either way its a lose-lose proposition. Buy the right size the first time and avoid needless pain.

Youth gloves are smaller so kids will be able to maintain glove control, typically are designed to be easy to break-in and will sometimes have a notch in the heel to help the glove break-in correctly. Youth gloves are designed with smaller finger and wrist openings to better fit smaller hands, generally have a Velcro or other type wrist adjustment, a great feature in youth gloves as it will help keep the glove fitting properly over a longer period of time and will allow the use of the glove by more than one person. Youth gloves may have an over-sized pocket to aid youngsters who are learning how to catch.

### **First Base Mitts**

Most first base mitts are designed for baseball use and measure between 12 and 13 inches. First base mitts usually have a thin but stiff pad that runs around the circumference of the mitt with little or no padding in the palm or finger area. First base mitts made specifically for youth players generally will measure 11 to 11.5 inches.

### **Catcher's Mitts**

Baseball catcher's mitts usually have a thick pad around the circumference of the mitt with thick padding in the finger area and less padding in the palm area. The pocket in a modern catchers mitt is somewhat larger but more shallow than it used to be with the modern catchers glove being more flexible and evolving towards a first base mitt look alike as the quickness of the ball to hand transfer for a catcher is critical. Catchers mitts range in circumference from 31 inches to 34 inches with .5 inch incremental sizes in this range. Youth catcher mitts most typically are in the 31 to 32 inch range and

if made specifically for youth players will have a smaller hand opening and finger stalls with some type of wrist adjustment.

#### **Open vs Closed Web**

**Open Web:** Most typically preferred by middle infielders, first basemen and some outfielders. An open web helps get the ball out of the glove quicker.

**Closed Web:** Preferred by pitchers, third basemen and most outfielders. Pitchers like the closed web to help hide the ball from the batter while third basemen and outfielders like the additional support a closed web provides.

#### **Conventional or Open Back vs Closed Back**

Conventional also referred to as open back vs closed back is mainly a matter of style and personal preference.

Conventional back gloves leave a space open across the back of the glove and tends to be somewhat lighter.

Some closed back gloves have a wrist adjustment which allows you to adjust how tight or loose the glove fits.

**Conventional or Open back:** Preferred by infielders and catchers because of the flexibility.

**Closed back:** Mostly preferred by outfielders and first basemen.

Many outfielders closed back gloves have a "finger hole" which adds additional support.

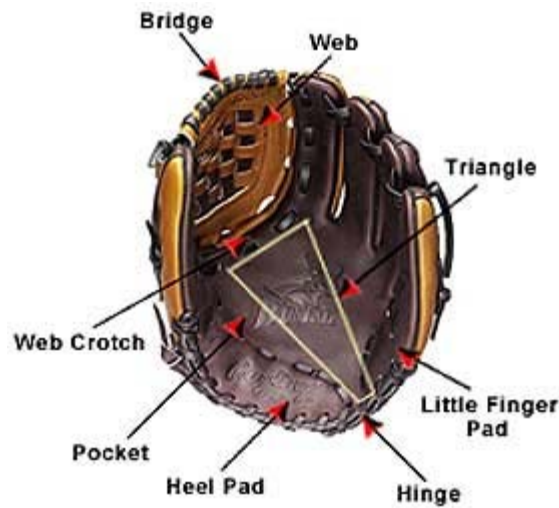
#### **Break-In & Care**

For whatever reason there exists more theories on the proper way to break-in and care for a baseball glove than we have the space to explore. Most of these theories are, at best, anecdotal and bear no resemblance to the proper care of leather which, obviously baseball gloves are made from. The first thing to bear in mind is we are talking about "leather" and regardless of what you may have heard or read in the past there are some absolute don'ts when it comes to caring for your newly purchased baseball glove. Lets start with the break-in process.

##### **Break-In:**

Depending on the type of leather your glove is made of the length of time will vary between several days and a couple of weeks.

Universally accepted is the more you play catch with your new glove the quicker it will break-in. We've read of one person who actually took his new glove to the batting cages, purchased a couple of buckets of balls and rather than hitting them he caught them, repeating this process over several days helped speed up the process. Please understand there isn't an "overnight" solution to breaking in your glove, using it on a daily basis is the key. Some people think prior to using the glove for the first time you should apply a small amount of Glove Oil to the glove, if you choose to do this its fine. Do NOT overuse the Glove Oil. Do use a Glove Oil or Conditioner made specifically for baseball gloves, we'll provide a list of some generally well accepted products later.



Whether you apply Glove Oil the first time before you use the glove or not make certain you apply Glove Oil or Conditioner sparingly when you do oil your glove. Start with the palm of the glove and work out from this point until you have covered the entire glove (on the outside). Do NOT saturate the glove, just lightly coat it. Let the Glove Oil or Conditioner dry throughly before using it. Remember the more you catch with it the faster the process will be. Some believe putting a ball in the pocket after using the glove and then closing it tightly with a strong rubber band when not in use will help form the pocket more quickly. It's ok to do this, you can use a softball or a baseball depending on the size pocket your trying to develop. While this is an acceptable method for outfield, utility, third baseman's and first baseman's gloves you probably don't want to do this with a glove intended for a shortstop or second baseman whose

#### **Dont's & Do's**

##### **Some very important dont's:**

- Don't put your glove in a micro-wave
- Don't put your glove in an oven
- Don't use a hair dryer or any other source of heat on your glove
- Don't submerge or put your glove in water
- Don't beat the leather with a hammer or bat
- Don't leave your glove in the trunk of a car when not in use
- Don't use anything on your glove other than an oil or conditioner made for baseball gloves or fine leather
- Don't use any oil or conditioner that contains silicone regardless of who made it
- Don't saturate your glove with any glove conditioner - use sparingly

##### **Some important do's:**

- Do play catch every day during break-in process
- Do check and tighten the laces routinely as needed
- Do wear a batting glove on your fielding glove hand - protects the inside from moisture
- Do store the glove away from extreme heat when not in use
- Do let it dry naturally should the glove get wet

##### **Partial list of generally accepted glove conditioning products:**

- Glove Loogie
- LEXOL-nf
- Rawlings Glovolium
- Glovesmith Glove Conditioner

#### **Off Season Storage**

##### **Off Season Storage**

The baseball season is over. What am I going to do until the start of the next season? One thing you can do is take care of the faithful companion that stuck by you thru thick and thin, hopefully more thick than thin. Anyway it's time to take care of your glove, the one you made that major investment in

before the season got underway, the one you don't want ending up like your last glove, the one you've taken care of during the season, that glove! First, inspect your glove carefully to determine if it needs any repair work including relacing. If so now is the time to get the work done.

[Sandalady](#)  
[The Sports Doctor](#)

Using a very "small" amount of glove conditioner start at the palm and working outward (gee I think I've done this before) until the entire surface of the glove is "lightly" coated. Apply a very small amount of conditioner to a clean cloth and wipe out the inside of the glove including the finger stalls. Once you've completed this process you can place a ball in the pocket if you wish, place the glove in a clean cloth bag and store it in a well protected area such as the top shelf of your bedroom closet. You can now proceed to the Hot Stove League with that certain piece-of-mind we're all searching for.

### **Glove Pricing**

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### **Baseball Glove Pricing**

You will discover a very broad range of prices as you shop for a baseball glove. Generally speaking pricing in higher end gloves from the major manufacturer's range from \$140 to \$280 for their higher end to top of the line gloves. Depending on your individual needs and expectations you might find exactly what your looking for in a glove costing \$65 to \$130. Can you purchase a glove for less? The answer is yes. Most major glove makers sell lower priced gloves for the "recreational" market or for youth just starting out. Typically these gloves will sell in the \$25 to \$50 area. You can get less expensive gloves in the \$15 to \$25 range but these gloves generally may have a leather outer shell or may be made of synthetic materials. There is usually little if any price differentiation between a fielders glove, catcher's mitt or first baseman's mitt. Perhaps most importantly, know what your buying before you buy it so you won't be disappointed after the purchase.