

SOFTBALL EQUIPMENT

(Source: <http://www.CoachSoftball.com>)

Choosing the Right Helmet – A helmet is an important part of every player’s equipment and should fit snugly on the head. There are several styles available in the local sporting goods stores that allow long hair to be pulled through the back. Cushion, snug fit, comfortable cushioning, and secure face protector (cage) is important. All batting helmets must bear the official NOCSAE stamp to assure that it complies with the latest safety standards.



Choosing the Right Bat – A great bat will not turn a poor hitter into a great hitter. If the player’s hitting mechanics are all wrong, no bat will help. When choosing a bat, a number of factors must be taken into account. These are the size/strength of the player, the level of skill, the type of bat (material), the bat weight, bat length, and barrel size. According to [CoachSoftball.com](http://www.CoachSoftball.com), for young players, especially new inexperienced, we advise that the lighter the bat the better. Players need to be able to generate enough bat speed to effectively hit the ball. So it's that much more important that a young, less-experienced player have a light enough bat to swing with enough bat speed to hit the ball.

Choosing the Right Glove – The most important piece of equipment is the glove. A glove can have a big effect on a player’s performance. According to [CoachSoftball.com](http://www.CoachSoftball.com), the key to a glove is control. The player should be able to move the glove quickly to the ball, which requires a glove that's not too big and heavy for the player. Even more importantly, the player must be able to close the glove with her hand, so that the ball does not fall out. This requires a glove that is soft and “broken-in” enough so that the player can close the glove and 'squeeze' the ball. The new, pre-oiled gloves are usually excellent for Tee Ballers, as they are soft and require little or no break-in. As much as you want to buy the best for your daughter, avoid the expensive, stiff gloves for players under 10.



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Breaking-in the Glove - There are as many different methods to breaking-in a glove. The easiest and most effect method to break in a glove according to [CoachSoftball.com](http://www.CoachSoftball.com) is from Rawlings. Commercially available 'kits' can be purchased at most sporting goods stores.

Rawlings' "master glove designer" recommends:

1. Press a small amount of shaving cream with lanoline on a clean, dry cloth and carefully work the cream around the outer shell, palm, and back. A light coating is all that is necessary. This will lubricate the leather fibers.
2. Allow the cream to dry thoroughly for 12 to 24 hours.
3. Wipe off the glove and play catch for 10 to 15 minutes, or 50 to 70 throws. This stretches and conforms the glove to your hand and speeds the break-in process
4. Position a ball in the pocket and tie the glove closed for a few days with a string or rubber band around the outer perimeter.
5. As the glove starts to break in, pour a small amount of glove oil on a clean, dry cloth, and carefully work the oil around the outer shell, palm, and back. A light coating is all that's needed.
6. Allow the glove to dry thoroughly for 24 hours so the oil has time to penetrate and condition the leather.
7. Store the glove in a cool, dry place with a ball in the pocket when not in use.
8. Laces will stretch with use. Keep laces taut but do not over tighten them. Check for replacement if necessary after each season.
9. Do not over oil your glove! Twice a season is sufficient!

