

HOW TO BREAK IN A SOFTBALL GLOVE

There are many different methods for breaking in a softball glove, and each method has its supporters and detractors. We suggest checking with the manufacturer of your glove to see what they suggest, as gloves made from different types or grades of leather may have different requirements.

The two basic goals of breaking in a softball glove are to first soften the leather and then to create a pocket in the glove. No matter what you do, most will agree that the most effective way to break in a softball glove is by using it!

Softening the Leather: There are a number of different oils and lotions that can be used to soften the leather on your glove. Our preferred product is Nokona's *NLT Classic Glove Conditioner* (available at Jonquil Sporting Goods). The following products also are used for this purpose:

- Vaseline
- Saddle Soap
- Other Manufacturer's Solutions
- Mink Oil or Neatsfoot Oil
- Tanners Glove Oil
- "Hot Glove" Treatment. This treatment consists of putting a special foam on your glove and then baking it in your oven for 4 minutes. This method is very controversial among softball glove owners - some swear by it, others call it harmful to the glove.

Remember, when softening the leather - **more oil, soap, cream is not better!** Use cream and oil in small amounts and wipe it around your glove, don't slop it on and allow it to soak in - this will make the leather deteriorate faster.

Forming the Pocket: Besides actually playing catch or spending your afternoons throwing a ball into your glove, there are a number of ways to form a pocket in your softball glove. The most popular method for forming the pocket is to place a softball in the pocket and tie the glove shut with shoelaces, string or even a belt. There are also several products that are designed to hold the softball glove shut and in the proper position while it is not in use.