

[How to Break in a Fastpitch Softball Glove the Right Way](#)

There are many suggestions about how to break in a new [Fastpitch Softball Glove](#). Some of them are pretty good and others are really bad. It's a wonder some gloves make it to the field at all with the suggestions we have seen or heard of. The main thing you want to remember is to follow the manufacturers suggestions for breaking in their gloves.

Your new glove is made of leather, a natural product. The manufacturing process of tanning the hide into leather usually involves adding some kind of oil or chemical into the hide to cure it and soften it. This is usually all that is required for a new glove. There are some **Fastpitch gloves** that are really stiff when brand new that may require a little more glove conditioner during the break in period. The terms oil and **conditioner** generally mean the same thing. They aren't so much an oil as they are a conditioner so most manufacturers call them conditioners now. The term oil is just a holdout from the old days. Some of the oils out there will actually harm the leather and cause it to deteriorate and break down, almost a spongy feel to the leather. That is not how to take care of your new glove.

So that is some of the things you don't want to do. Here are some suggestions that you do want to do. Ready, it's a tough one. Wait for it...

Go out and play catch! That's it. That is the best way and the Right way to break in your new softball glove. [Akadema, one of the most exciting new glove makers](#), suggests that you spot condition only when necessary. They also say to please do not under any circumstances put the glove in a microwave or dunk the glove in water.

If your glove is too stiff to easily play catch, then when you get your new glove you should rub a small amount of [conditioner](#) – from the manufacturer – on your glove. Use a sponge or apply with your hand and fingers. Rub it into the palm and back and on the seams and laces. Don't apply to the fingers or thumb areas, as you want these to stay stiff.

It is important to **condition the laces** because they take most of the stress when a ball hits the pocket; they hold the glove together. You should also rub some [conditioner](#) on the inside of the glove to protect the leather from moisture. You can just put some on your fingers and then put your hand into your glove and work the conditioner into the leather.

Remove any excess conditioner with a soft cloth. Put a softball in the pocket and tie the glove with a rubber band or string to hold the ball tightly in the pocket of the glove. Leave it to rest overnight, wipe off any excess conditioner and go play catch.

Playing catch with your new glove does a couple of things to help break it in. By wearing the glove it forms to your hand and catching a ball manipulates the pocket to the shape of the ball. Now isn't that just what you want anyway?

Just putting a ball inside and tying up the glove is ok, but you won't get that "custom" feel and fit that you will by wearing it and playing catch. Try to **catch the ball in the pocket** as much as possible so the glove will form correctly. You should

put a ball in your glove and tie it closed after playing catch or after the game. This will help keep the shape.

There are lots of gadgets out there for keeping the glove closed, most are pretty cool, but if you are a **Fastpitch softball player** worth your salt you already have the best thing in your bag to tie up that glove. Prewrap, that's right just take a length of that colored prewrap that you use to hold back your hair with. It stretches like a rubber band and you could just use the one in your hair when the game is over. You can also use a piece of it tied around the wrist strap to recognize your glove quickly. That stuff is pretty neat; wish I had invented it.

Another tip I have heard and seen is to go to the **batting cage**, get a few tokens and instead of hitting the balls, stand in there and catch them with your new glove. After a couple tokens, the glove will probably be pretty well broken in and game ready. Also not bad practice for fielding line drives – wear your helmet.

Most gloves should be worn with a [batting glove](#), this helps keep the moisture and sweat from soaking into the inside of the glove. If the batting glove gets wet, replace it with a dry one. A small amount of conditioner, not oil, can be rubbed into the inside palm area as a moisture barrier.

What To Do to Break In Your New Glove:

Play Catch – 20 to 30 minutes a day for a couple weeks is enough for most gloves, but your coach won't mind if you go a little longer.

Keep a Ball in Glove – tie a ball in the glove when finished playing catch and after games or practice.

Spot Condition – only do this if the glove is really stiff, and usually only on the palm area. A small amount on the back can help soften it also. A very small amount on the inside can also help keep sweat off the inside.

Mallet – a mallet can be used on really stiff gloves to help shape it if you can't play catch long enough. A small amount of conditioner on the palm or pocket then hit with the mallet as if catching a ball.

Shaving Cream – This is a method used by a lot of players. Use a foam type shave cream and lightly apply to the palm area. It also leaves a bit of tackiness, which can be nice to help catch the ball. Don't put too much on, it can leave it mushy. Be sure to wipe all excess shave cream out of the seams and lace holes so the dirt doesn't collect in there.

Dirt from the Fastpitch softball field will be gritty and act like sandpaper to the seams and laces so wipe your glove after playing.

What NOT To Do to Break in Your New Glove:

Use Oils or Vaseline – these will only make the glove heavy and possibly deteriorate or break down the leather and stitching. Vaseline will clog the pores of the leather on most gloves and this makes them heavy. Do not use Olive oil or linseed oil.

Dunk glove in Water – this is a sure way to ruin a new glove. It may soften it up but it will also help it grow mold and bacteria inside which is bad for you and the glove.

Heat in Microwave – NEVER do this. The water molecules in the leather will boil and burst holes in the leather. If there is any metal in the glove, well that light show might be neat but it will ruin a nice glove, and your microwave. You may get some good conditioning in while mowing the lawn to pay for a new microwave!

Cook in the Oven – this is suggested by some manufacturers and old timers. If you do this, keep the oven at very low temps (200 deg) and only for 10-15 minutes. Then remove from oven and apply conditioner. Then go play catch. (Caution: if you leave in the oven too long or too hot it can dry the leather or burn it)

[Break in your new Fastpitch Softball Glove the Right Way](#) and it will treat you right out on the field.