

Softball Glove Guideline

In softball, a fielding glove is one of the most important tools you'll need to become a successful player. In a lot of ways, it's the final piece to that spectacular diving catch in the outfield or what you need to stop that line drive down the third base line. Not all gloves are created equal in terms of size and material. What size softball glove you should use largely depends on the position you play, but there are also other factors that help determine exactly which glove you should equip yourself with.

Parts of a Softball Glove



Pocket Size and Webbing

- **Pocket size** - The pocket size of an outfielder's glove is bigger than that of a middle infielder, allowing outfielders to catch fly balls with more ease. Shortstops and second baseman usually have a shallower pocket, which allows them to get the ball out of the glove quicker, especially on double plays.
- **Webbing** - There are different types of webbings found in gloves for softball players including, but not limited to: I-web, Basket web, Closed web, Single Post web, Dual Post web, Modified Trapeze web, and Trapeze web. The type of webbing most common for infielders contains a looser stitch which gives more control in hopes of getting the ball out quicker - it also doesn't pick up large clumps of dirt with it.

Traditionally, there are eight different kinds of webbings to choose from :

			
Closed Web	Dual Post Web	Modified Trapeze Web	Trapeze Web
			
Single Post Web	Two-Piece Closed Web	Basket Web	I-Web

- **Padding** - Padding preference is another thing to consider. The amount of padding you have on your glove depends on the position you play. Catcher's mitts feature more padding to protect their hands from pitchers' throws. Other positions, such as first and third base, may also need more padding. Recently, the popularity of extra wrist padding has grown, especially at the corner infield positions.
- **Wrist Adjustments** - Some gloves are made with wrist adjustments that allow players to make the glove fit snug to their hand, allowing them to put on and take off the glove with ease. These can either be Velcro, a buckle system, laced, or a D-ring fastener.
- **Material** - Gloves can be made of many different types of materials including leather, synthetic materials, mesh, and treated leather. Leather is the preferred material among players due to their durability and comfort. Players may opt for treated leather gloves which are pre-conditioned with oils for quicker break in period. Some prefer a mesh backed glove for a lighter glove. For younger players, a synthetic glove is good it's the lightest and most inexpensive glove available.

Fastpitch Gloves

Certain positions require gloves with particular webbing. Check out the list below for common webbings you'll find for each position:

- Middle infielders, first base, and some outfielders – open web that allows for quicker transfer to throwing hand
- Pitchers, third base, and some outfielders – closed web that provides more support for outfielders and shields ball in pitchers glove

How to Measure a Softball Glove

When trying to find out how long a glove is, you can look on the thumb or pinky finger and you should see the size etched in the leather there. The sizes range from 8 to 15 inches, and to 35 inches for catcher's mitts. To measure a glove that does not have a size, take a fabric tape measure and measure from the top of the index finger, down along the glove, to the center of the heel of the glove:



FASTPITCH SOFTBALL GLOVE SIZING CHART BY POSITION

AGE	CATCHER	FIRST BASE	SECOND BASE / SHORT STOP	THIRD BASE	PITCHER	OUTFIELD
UNDER 7	29.5 - 30"	11.5"	8-10.5"	8-10.5"	8-10.5"	9-11"
8 - 10	30-32"	11.5-12"	10.5-11.25"	10.5-11.5"	10.5-11.5"	10-12"
11 - 13	31-.32.5"	12-13"	11.25-12"	11.75-12.5"	11.5-12.5"	11.75-12.5"
OVER 14	33-35"	12-13"	11.5-12.5"	11.75-12.5"	11.5-12.5"	12-13"

Catcher's Mitts

A catcher's glove is more commonly referred to as a catcher's mitt because it does not have separately cut fingers like other positions. This allows catchers to catch fastballs for an entire game without wearing down quickly or the catches becoming painful. For this reason, catchers' mitts tend to be very stiff right off the shelf and take a while to break in. Many catchers buy their replacement mitt a few months before they think their old mitt will wear out so they have time to break their new glove in. Catcher mitts tend to have a closed pocket because they can be attached with the most lacing and take the most abuse without breaking.

There is a difference between baseball and softball catcher's mitts. The softball catcher's mitt has a deeper pocket and thinner side walls to accommodate for the bigger ball. Catcher's mitts are also measured differently. Instead of the standard measuring, they are measured around the circumference of the glove to capture the entire catching area of the mitt. The standard size range is from 29.5 to 34.5 inches for baseball and from 29.5 to 35 inches for softball.



First Basemen's Gloves

A first baseman's glove is very similar to the catcher's mitt with the exception that it is longer and doesn't have as much padding. It's designed to have the same catching area as a catcher's glove, but is flexible for scooping throws out of the dirt. The first baseman's glove is stronger than a standard glove so that the fingers do not flop back like a regular fielder's glove would. They also have open web designs to allow the pocket to be a little deeper and lighter than a closed pocket. First basemen's gloves normally start being worn at age 10 or older, because it can be difficult for younger kids to close the big glove. The typical size range for softball is from 11.5 to 13 inches.



Pitcher's Gloves

These gloves won't have as much padding as other gloves and instead rely on being comfortable. They're usually larger than other gloves to allow pitchers to move their hands around to grip the ball and hide their hand movements from the batter before a pitch. A pitcher doesn't need to be as worried as other players about the performance of their glove. But the comfort is important since they are constantly catching and will often have to stop line drives hit back through the middle. It's also important to make sure the glove isn't too heavy. Many manufacturers make light versions of high-end gloves with special materials that weigh significantly less than standard gloves.



Infield Gloves

These smaller gloves are made to allow for quick plays like a double play in the middle infield. They are shorter and have a shallower pocket than other gloves. Infielders typically want an open pocket that makes it easy to get the ball out quickly. This is typically an I-web, post web, Dual Post web, or modified trapeze pocket. The only position that sometimes wants a closed pocket is third base. This is because third base gets harder hits that a closed pocket can handle better than an open one will. The standard size for a baseball infield glove is 11.25 to 12 inches, and 11.5 to 12.5 inches for softball. For softball players, there aren't as many selections in terms of webs because of the large ball, so the choices will be limited. .



Outfield Gloves

These larger gloves are made for diving catches and to catch fly balls. This means that the gloves are longer and deeper with extra support in the fingers. The pocket designs for baseball are typically open with the main options being a modified trapeze and an H-web. These pockets are the best for long extension plays that need to keep the ball in the glove, such as diving plays and snow cones. For softball, the pockets can be closed webs, because they need to be extra deep to account for the size of the softball. The typical size of an outfielder's glove is 9 to 15 inches for softball.

