

HELMET BUYING GUIDE



When it comes to buying protective gear for baseball or softball, no piece is more important than a helmet. Each manufacturer makes high and low end helmets and each will protect you, but it is important to choose the right helmet for your level of play. Majority of the helmets are approved by NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) which is the safety regulator for helmets.

The materials that a helmet is made out of will be determined by the price of the helmet. High end helmets are made with high impact padding for energy absorption as well as soft padding for comfort. Basic helmets typically only have the bulky soft padding that absorbs impacts. These helmets may be the best choice for younger players, since they will be more comfortable and more likely to fit since the padding expands and contracts significantly. For players at high levels of play, such as high school and beyond, it is important to get a helmet with a form of high density foam to prevent injuries.

The majority of helmets come with two ear flaps, but it is possible to get the one ear flap helmets that the professionals wear. These helmets are only recommended for high levels of play where age and experience can help prevent injury from the missing ear. By having one less ear flap, the player can hear everything better as well as having a lighter helmet. If you do choose a one eared helmet, it is important to make sure that if you are a right handed batter, the left ear is covered and if you are a left handed batter, the right ear is covered.

Sizing

Finding the right size helmet can be as easy as trying on every helmet in the store and then choosing the most comfortable. For most people, this isn't practical or possible. To properly measure your head for the correct size, use fabric measuring tape to measure around the circumference of your head slightly above your ears. The following chart will help convert your measurement to a hat size.

Hat Size	Circumference (in)	Circumference (cm)
6	18 3/4 in	49 cm
6 1/8	19 1/4 in	50 cm
6 1/4	19 5/8 in	51 cm
6 3/8	20 in	52 cm
6 1/2	20 3/8 in	53 cm
6 5/8	20 3/4 in	54 cm
6 3/4	21 1/4 in	55 cm
6 7/8	21 5/8 in	56 cm
7	22 in	57 cm
7 1/8	22 3/8 in	58 cm
7 1/4	22 3/4 in	59 cm
7 3/8	23 1/8 in	60 cm
7 1/2	23 5/8 in	61 cm
7 5/8	24 in	62 cm
7 3/4	24 3/8 in	63 cm
7 7/8	24 3/4 in	64 cm
8	25 in	65 cm

When you have the batting helmet, it is important to make sure the helmet is snug but not uncomfortably tight. It is also crucial to make sure the helmet is not too big. To test this, put the helmet on and shake your head from side to side quickly; if the helmet moves separately from your head, it is too big. You may need a smaller size helmet or a padding fit kit. A fit kit will make the helmet smaller by adding extra pads to the inside of the helmet. These fit kits are usually brand specific but can be easily cut to fit in any shape helmet. One thing to remember is to never purchase a bigger helmet to grow into. Your head does not grow much past age 10. The danger of a helmet that is too big is that the helmet will move around on the head and lead to an injury.

FITTING INSTRUCTIONS

Helmet should be worn so that the front brim sits approximately 1" above the eyebrows



CORRECT FIT



INCORRECT FIT

The proper way to wear a helmet is to have the brim pulled down to the forehead, so that it is parallel to the ground. If it is too high up, it exposes your forehead and eyes. If it is too low, it will cover your eyes and expose the base of the back of your head. For pony tails, some helmets have a slot along the padding to allow extra room in the helmet for better comfort with a pony tail.



Face Masks and Cages

The common way to buy a helmet with a cage is to buy the two separately. Majority of helmets have a matching face mask that easily attaches to the helmet without modification. The different shapes and styles of helmets from different manufacturers make it difficult for a face mask to fit on more than one helmet. Face masks are easy to attach with only a few screws. It is recommended that players that wear face masks on their helmet also wear chin straps. This prevents the helmet from moving around when the player is running.