

[Choosing The Right Softball Bat](#)

In softball, there is an old saying that if you can hit they'll find some place for you to play. Don't quit developing your other basic skills, but even if you aren't the fastest or most agile player on the team, mastering the art of hitting can make you a star.

One key element of becoming a great hitter is choosing the right bat. A good bat won't automatically make you the team's leading hitter, but the wrong bat choice can definitely hold you back from reaching your potential. Choosing a bat is a personal decision.

Modern technology has made it possible for today's player to find a bat that is engineered to enhance your natural performance and can even be specifically tailored to suit your hitting strengths. It is absolutely vital that you pick a bat that fits your unique body type and skill level, adjusted for your height, weight, and hitting strength.

Bat Composition

Bat technology might seem complicated but it's not advanced trigonometry. There are three specific elements to the construction of a bat: barrel size, bat taper and grip.

The barrel is the top part of the bat. The barrel size includes both the length of the barrel and the diameter. A longer barreled bat has a larger "sweet spot" to hit the ball better. A ordinary softball bat is 2 1/2 inches in diameter, but a standard fast pitch softball bat has a 2 3/4 inch diameter barrel. Players often prefer using a smaller barreled bat in order to gain more swing speed with the lighter bat.

The bat taper is the diameter of the bat's handle.

Standard bats will be tapered 31/32 of an inch but might be slightly smaller or larger depending on bat weight. Often players prefer using a narrow taper so their bat will be lighter and they can rotate their wrists faster when swinging. The grip is just the covering that bat manufacturers use on the handle of aluminum bats. Leather or synthetic leather makes for a stickier feel making for a surer grip. A rubber grip absorbs more of the shock. Some bats even come with a extra cushioned grip to further absorb the shock.

Determining Bat Length and Weight

There are rules of thumb for bat length based on age range which can be starting points for young players. However, a bat length based on individual height and weight is best.

Softball bats are weighted in ounces. Reputable manufacturers have already done a great job balancing each bat's weight to its length. Most bats are marked with a weight to length ratio which is designated as -4, -6 etc. For example, a 34 inch bat with a -6 ratio weighs 28 ounces.

Two personal factors determine the right weight bat for you - hitting style and strength. Personal preference is a big part of this decision, and you should get together with your coach or hitting instructor to help you make the decision. Bigger, stronger players can control a heavier bat to hit with more power, but some players a faster swing so they use a lighter bat.

Different league rules allow different types, models and construction of softball bats. This can change at any time so it is vital to confirm with your coach and your league that the bat you decide on fits within the current rules. In the meantime, the bat manufacturers are constantly working on new models with newly developed materials and designs. Since modern bats are usually expensive, check for the latest information at the time you are shopping for your bat.

About the Author

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