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## CATCHER'S GEAR

**Helmets** are the most essential part of a catcher's equipment. It keeps the head protected from baseballs, collisions, and the back swing of hitters. There are 2 types of helmets available for catchers that offer unique benefits. The hockey style helmet is typically recommended for youth catchers since it offers more protection, but the choice is ultimately based on your preferences. Here are some pros and cons of the 2 types of helmets:



### HOCKEY STYLE

Hockey Style helmets are a one-piece design made to ensure the head stays fully protected.

**Pros:**

- Offers the best protection of the head
- Better vision compared to two-piece
- Stays on the head firmly when throwing

**Cons:**

- More expensive than the two-piece style
- Once you take it off there is no more protection of the head



### TWO-PIECE

The two-piece style is designed for a lighter feel and head protection even when you take the mask off.

**Pros:**

- Cheaper in price
- Not too close to face (some players find this a pro as some a con)
- Can take off mask for vision and keep helm on for protection
- Cooler in temperature as it doesn't cover the sides of your face

**Cons:**

- Doesn't give complete protection of the head compared to the hockey style helmet
- Vision isn't as large as the hockey style helmet when wearing both pieces

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## CATCHER'S GEAR CONTINUED



Retired Catcher Brandon Inge pictured using "Knee Savers"



**Shin guards** are also an essential part for catcher's equipment. It protects your legs from missed pitches, foul balls, backswings, and collisions with base runners. All shin guards are structured similarly, but many catchers add "**knee savers**" to the back of the shin guards. The "knee savers" are a little cushioned block that sits atop the back of the shin guards. This physically prevents the catcher from squatting fully down on their knees. The purpose is to increase the angle between the thigh and the knee which results in less stress being placed on the tendons, muscles and cartilage. It ultimately increases comfort while maintaining the ability to pop out of the squat quickly to throw base runners out. Knee savers are typically recommended for youth catchers but ultimately come down to user preference.

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## CATCHER'S GEAR CONTINUED

A **catcher's mitt** is uniquely designed to protect the catcher's hand and make it easier to catch fast pitches. Here are some characteristics of catcher's mitt for you to look out for when you're shopping:

### Webbing

Catcher's mitts usually have closed webbing. The reason behind this is to get more support when catching the pitch and make it easy to frame. An open web gives you more visibility, but gives less support and makes it harder to frame

### Back

As a catcher, you can choose between two options regarding the back of the mitt. Most of the catcher will go for a "closed" back. The closed back gives more support and wrist protection. A mitt with an open back provides more mobility.

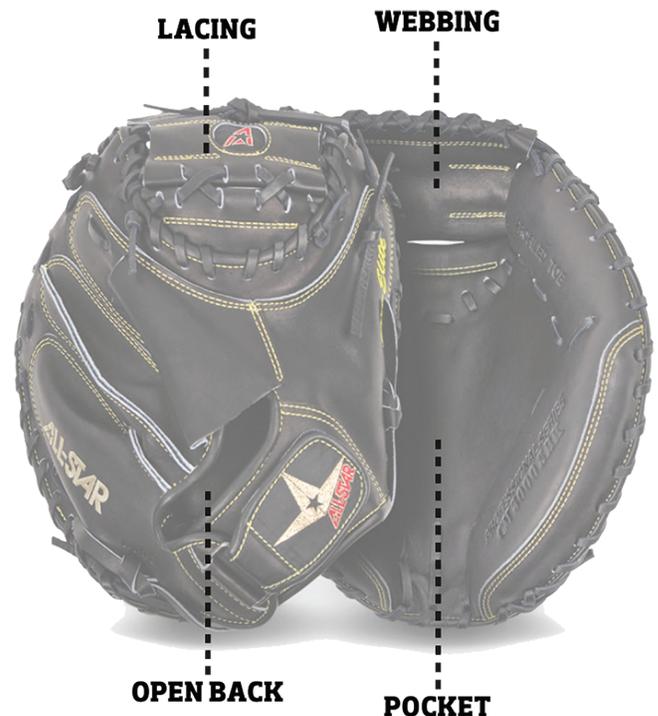
### Padding

Padding has advantages and disadvantages. More padding gives more protection, but it also gives you a smaller pocket. If you like the extra protection, go for a glove that is an inch bigger to gain a bigger pocket as well for more secure catches and the pocket size that you need.

### Leather

There are four available options regarding the leather. These offer different levels of durability and costs.

Less expensive leather is often softer and are more suited for youth players since the catcher will typically face slower pitching compared to college and professional players. The professional catchers often use the tougher leathers that need a lot of break-in time. These leathers last longer, mostly a couple of seasons. The players that look for these kind of gloves can choose between Steerhide or full-grain leather.



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## CATCHER'S GEAR CONTINUED

Here are some additional products that can help keep your catcher safe and injury free:

**Thumb Guards** are worn on the catching hand and fit inside of your Catcher's Mitt. Thumb injuries are common for catchers, so its purpose is to provide extra protection to the thumb and ligaments on your catching hand.



**Wrist Guards** provide protection to your wrists, helping prevent injury and bruised forearms caused by wild pitches and foul tips.

