





Technique and fitness are important for Softball, as is avoiding injuries that stop you from performing at your best. Use this guide to help you prevent injury and perform better.

KEY: Movement to get stretch  
 Area being stretched

## MOULD YOUR GLOVE

Place a ball firmly where you want your pocket to be and then close your glove securely around the ball by tying a shoestring around it or using a large rubber band. Because time is needed to get the pocket started, let the glove sit for a day or two while the shape starts to form.

Your glove must fit properly and be worn correctly.

## THE CATCHER

The catcher must always use a catcher's mitt. The mitt has more padding and is designed to protect the hand more than regular gloves.

Catchers should always wear a helmet, face-mask, throat guard, chest protector, shin guards and knee savers (optional).



## FLEXI BALL

Softball New Zealand highly recommends that an 11 inch Flexi Ball is used at the under 12 age group level. The benefits of using the 11 inch Flexi Ball at this age group are more confidence, better mechanics and safety in fielding the moving ball.



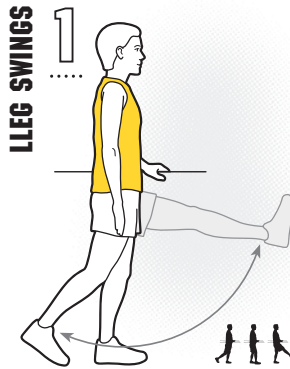
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# SMART TIPS FOR PREVENTING SOFTBALL INJURIES

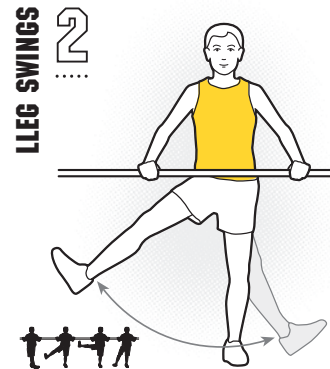
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON STAYING INJURY FREE VISIT:  
[www.acc.co.nz/sportsmart](http://www.acc.co.nz/sportsmart)

## WARM-UP

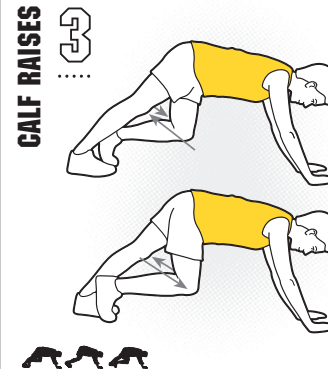
Start with about five minutes of light aerobic activity to raise your heart rate and get more blood flowing through your muscles. Jogging is a good way of doing this. Follow up with 10-15 repetitions of dynamic stretches (see right), gradually increasing the speed and range of movement. Then finish with some sports specific exercises.



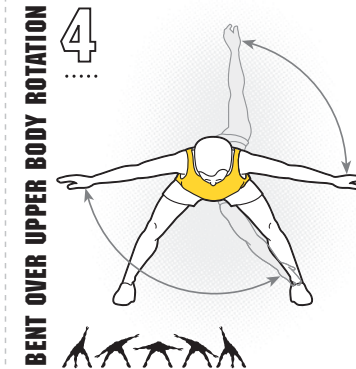
Holding on to something, swing outside leg forwards and backwards to a comfortable height. Keep trunk and lower back rigid. Alternate legs.



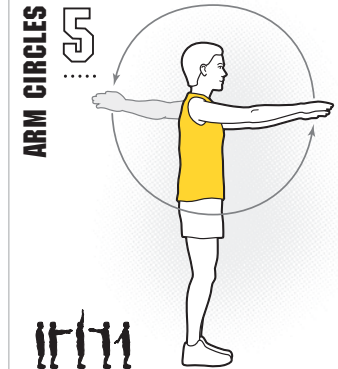
Holding on to something, swing one leg outwards, then across the body, pointing toes in the direction you're swinging. Minimise lower back movement. Alternate legs.



From a push-up position, push one heel towards the ground then put weight on ball of foot and repeat. Alternate legs.



Keep your back straight. Bend the knees as you transfer weight. Reach with your arm to the opposite foot. Do five each side.



Stand with your back straight and knees slightly bent. Swing both arms around in circles, keeping your back still. If you feel tight in an area, spend more time there to loosen it up. Change direction and repeat.

## COOL-DOWN & STRETCH

After play, some easy jogging and static stretches (see right) will help your body to recover and can improve flexibility. Apply each stretch slowly – don't bounce. Take it to the point of tension but not pain and hold for at least 30 seconds. Repeat twice on each side of the body.



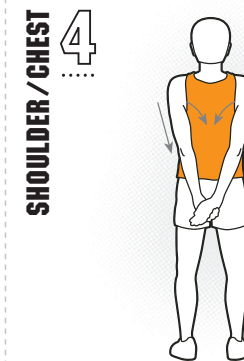
Place hands on wall with one leg to rear. Keep the rear leg locked straight and foot flat. Turn rear foot slightly inwards. Bend front leg taking stretch through rear calf.



Place hands on wall taking weight through rear leg. Turn rear foot slightly inwards and keep heel flat. Bend rear knee forward over rear foot.



Kneel on ground with front knee at 90°. With the back straight, tilt the pelvis back by tucking the abdomen up and in and squeezing buttocks. Keep head up.



Stand with head up, chin in, hands clasped behind back. Pull shoulders down and back. Press shoulder blades together and down. Pull the stomach in to prevent arching of the lower back.



Stand with feet comfortably apart. Fold arms above head. Bend to the side slowly. Stretch up with upper elbow.