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Baseball Glove Repairs – An Interview with Doctor Glove, "The Best Friend Any Baseball Glove Ever Had"

By Owen VanAlden

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Baseball glove repair and relacing is what Doctor Glove is all about, and for over 25 years people have been relying on him to give new life to their old baseball or softball glove. Doctor Glove, who is known as "The Best Friend Any Baseball Glove Ever Had," recently talked about the art and craft of baseball and softball glove repair.

"When it comes to glove repairs, I like to think I can fix anything and everything. I haven't been proved wrong yet, but I guess there's always a first time," Doctor Glove laughed. "Over the years I've been asked to fix just about every imaginable type of problem in a glove – but I'm careful to say that I haven't seen everything yet because every time I do, someone brings me a glove that's been 'critically injured' in some new way."

Doctor Glove has an almost cult-like following among his loyal client base in Southern California, but thanks to his website (<http://www.DoctorGlove.com>) he also gets gloves shipped to him from all around the world.

Relacing, sometimes called re-stringing, is the most common need, says the Doctor, because the rawhide laces used in gloves only last for a few seasons before weakening, stretching and breaking. He said, "Most of the rips and tears I see in gloves happened because the owner had worn-out, stretched laces and didn't replace them when he should have."

When asked about glove repairs, Doctor Glove said, "I fix a lot of routine problems like rips and tears, or maybe some stitching that's come undone, or maybe someone wants to replace the original padding or put in additional padding. Some clients come to me complaining about their glove being limp or 'floppy,' and most of the time that's because the plastic inserts that are in the thumb and pinkie padding have broken. I make a new plastic insert and 'bingo,' that problem is solved - I've put the 'snap' back in

their old glove."

"Many of my clients have been using their glove for 10, 20, 30 years or more and would not dream of buying a new one. Maybe it was a special gift, or maybe it was handed down from father to son, or maybe they wore that glove in a championship game, or it has some other special memory associated with it. People become attached to their glove the same way some people become attached to their old cars – it would kill them to get rid of it," the Doctor said.

The Story Behind The Slogan

Doctor Glove's slogan is "The Best Friend Any Baseball Glove Ever Had," and he told the story behind the slogan. The Doctor said, "I've fixed a lot of gloves that were chewed up or mauled by dogs, and I've been telling people for years that dogs may be man's best friend, but they're also his glove's worst enemy. Well, after I fixed a glove for a guy whose dog had eaten the wrist strap and webbing of his

favorite glove, the guy said, "If a dog is a glove's worst enemy, then you're a glove's best friend, in fact, you're the absolute best friend any baseball glove ever had!"

Customizing Gloves: Strengthening and Additional Finger Lacing

Doctor Glove talked about another specialty of his work, customizing gloves. "I do a lot of 'custom strengthening' work - that's when the owner feels his glove is too weak or flimsy and thinks the lacing will break too easily, even if the glove has new laces. A lot of glove manufacturers use 3/16 inch laces in places where they really should have used 1/4 inch laces, which are much, much stronger."

"A lot of times, my 'custom strengthening' jobs are brand new gloves that have barely been broken in – the owner likes the feel and look of the new glove, but not the strength, toughness or durability. What I do to strengthen a glove is add laces as needed to the webbing or pocket area, by either doubling or tripling the existing lacing, or adding a new lace course (and making holes as necessary). When I 'custom strengthen' a glove, I imagine how strong I would want the glove to be if I had to catch Randy Johnson fastballs!"

"Another type of customization I am frequently asked to do is adding a lace run through the four fingers of an infielder's or outfielder's glove (catcher's glove and first baseman's gloves don't have fingers). In most gloves, there is only one run of lacing connecting the fingers (criss-crossing at the very top of the glove). Some high-end gloves have a second lace run connecting the four fingers about midway up the fingers between the palm and the top finger lace. This second finger lace run adds a little strength, but more than that it helps a glove hold its form and shape."

"Gloves that I have "custom strengthened" or added a new lace run though the fingers serve a functional purpose plus they look great! The owner has increased confidence in his ability to catch anything and everything that comes his way, and he also can proudly show off his customized, individualized glove."

Women's and Girls Softball Gloves

The latest `rage' in Southern California girls' softball leagues is a Doctor Glove creation, using designer eyelets instead of the traditional round brass or black eyelets. "I can add pastel colors, or bright vibrant team colors, or even eyelets in fun shapes like hearts and daisies. I've even done `patriotic' gloves with red, white and blue star eyelets. When gloves are manufactured they use just a few eyelets (also called grommets), but I can put them anywhere on the glove."

"There's no reason why a woman or girl has to leave her femininity in the locker room when she's playing softball, and I help her make a fashion statement with her glove."

Doctor Glove Invents Glove Potion® Leather Products

"I'm always been creative when it comes to fixing a major problem, and I believe in the old saying, 'necessity is the mother of invention.' Remember how 'The Professor' on the old TV show Gilligan's Island could make just about anything out of absolutely nothing? Well, that's they way I am with gloves – finding ways to make even the most difficult of repairs and inventing tools to get the job done."

"Anyway, I developed Glove Potion® and Glove Potion #9® cleaners, restorers, conditioners and protectors for glove leather because I wasn't happy with any of the other available products. Maybe

someday I'll get rich with the royalties from my Glove Potion® and Glove Potion #9® (when we start selling it at places like Wal-Mart and big sporting goods stores)."

Doctor Glove Guarantees His Work

"All of my work comes with an unconditional one year guarantee – if one of my repairs doesn't hold up for at least a year, or even if a lace breaks, I'll repair the glove for free."

For more information, visit Doctor Glove's Internet website www.DoctorGlove.com or call him at (818) 521-5626.

Owen VanAlden, the author of many books and articles on training, organization and motivation in corporate America, is an ardent baseball fan and sports memorabilia collector, especially baseball gloves. When not writing at his computer or speaking at a training seminar, Mr. VanAlden is likely to be found at Dodger Stadium rooting on his beloved Dodgers. Mr. VanAlden can be emailed at: owen@sparksfly.com

Simple Tips For Playing Baseball

By Robert Michael

Playing Baseball

Baseball is a game of skill and for that reason the best athlete is not always the best player. Baseball involves thrilling, pitching, catching, baserunning, fielding, and hitting. If you want to improve in all of

these areas and skills then you must practice regularly using drills. Practicing must be fast and include jumping from one drill to the other. A good baseball player must always focus on making the most out of every drill session instead of just going through the motions which can often lead to bad habits. If you want to improve your baseball game focus on top form in as many drill opportunities as you can. Here's some information to help you while work on improving your baseball game.

Throwing the ball

You should grab the baseball with your index finger and middle finger along the long seams of the baseball while keeping your thumb underneath it to provide support. When you throw be sure to square your shoulders with your target and while moving towards the target throw with a 3/4 arm action.

Fielding the Ball

If you keep your feet spread and stay down you'll ensure good balance. You do not want the ball to go between your legs and you always want your glove in front of you so you can block the ball and see it go into your glove.

Catching Fly Balls

If you're out in the outfield you'll want to be striding towards your target and you'll want to be behind the ball. You need to be able to see the ball and you need to be able to quickly get your stride to throw to your target. Finally, be sure to catch the ball above the shoulder with your elbow bent. This will help cushion when catching.

Batting Stance

When batting your stance should consist of your feet shoulder length apart with your toes pointed inward slightly. This stance will help you keep your balance. Be sure to look at the pitcher with your head level.

Base Running

Always run in a way to give yourself the best chance for top speed. For example, if you plan on running more than one base try to time your steps so you hit the base with your right foot as you get less arc and stay consistently striding without losing speed towards the next base.

Pitching

Good pitchers focus on making consistent strikes with proper mechanics. Proper mechanics will

reduce the chances of an injury. If you vary the speed of your pitch the batters will remain confused and their timing will be off.

These tips for improving your baseball are just beginning. It is important that you practice on all of

these skills if you want to become a well–rounded baseball player.

Robert Michael is a writer for

which is an excellent place to find baseball

links, resources and articles. For more information go to:



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