

The Best Glove Oil?

For nearly 100 years, baseball players have been oiling their gloves. The oil of choice was neat's-foot for many decades. Neat's-foot used to be the oil that came from boiling the leg bones of cows. Now it's any old cow oil with additional ingredients to make it clear and light.

Neat's-foot was so popular, even librarians used it on leather-bound books. But they were in for a horrible surprise. After a few years alone on the shelf, that leather started to petrify and crumble. Now librarians use lanolin – a lighter oil derived from sheepskin. You should too.

You can get lanolin in Lexol products, right at your hardware store. Lanolin lubricates the leather like neat's-foot, but it doesn't make it darker and it doesn't make it heavy or harm it over the long term.

If you still prefer neat's-foot oil, which gives gloves a nice tacky feel, go easy with it. Or try Lexol nf, their neat's-foot/lanolin mixture.

Are you partial to petroleum jelly? Some glovers swear by it, others say it clogs the pores and collects dirt. Just remember: you oil a glove to help lubricate the leather fibers after a long season has robbed some of the oil that was put in at the tannery. You don't use oil because a glove is "dry" – since leather absorbs all the moisture it needs from the air. Go easy on the oil, and don't depend on it to break in a glove either. That takes good old-fashioned elbow grease