

# GARAGE SALES

## Buying Used Sporting Goods

When you're starting a new hobby or looking to upgrade your equipment for an activity you already love, hitting up garage sales for used equipment can be a great way to gear up without breaking the bank.

However, used sporting goods sometimes come with a big catch — and that's the risk for injury. Keep reading for tips on buying equipment that will keep you safe while you're having fun.

### SAFETY FIRST

Some sports are just inherently dangerous but no matter what activity you tackle, there's always a risk of injury with any type of exercise. It's important, then, when you buy new or new-to-you gear that you make sure it's safe for you to use. This means making sure it fits well, that you know how to properly wear or use it and that any padding or other safety features are in good shape and working well.

Take hygiene into account as



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well. Some gear is designed to be worn by one person and one person only. Avoid buying used mouthguards and jockstraps. You might also reconsider any skin-tight gear such as gymnastics leotards. Always

thoroughly wash and disinfect your gear before wearing it for the first time.

If you're buying gear for younger athletes, make sure they know how to use it properly and that it has all of the

necessary accessories to keep them safe. Know the difference between gear for one sport and another, even when they look similar. For instance, football helmets and some baseball helmets with a

protective face mask can look similar. But baseball helmets aren't designed for the sustained pounding a football helmet takes and won't protect your little linebacker.

### ASK THE COACH, TRAINER OR OTHER PLAYERS

Designs have also changed over the years, so make sure to ask your coach, trainer or other, more experienced players about used gear before letting them hit the field. As a last resort, you can ask your doctor to check the protective qualities of the gear as part of a sports physical.

You should also consider the level of sports you're going to be playing. For recreational or weekend play, you may not need the professional-level gear and, in fact, it might get in the way of your performance. On the flipside, if you're working your way up to a higher level of competition, investing in new, quality gear might be worth it to help your performance and reduce the risk of getting hurt.

For young athletes who are growing, gently used gear with no safety issues can be the right way to go. Those players are growing so quickly that investing in new gear doesn't make sense. Just make sure it fits well and meets safety requirements.

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### SELLER'S TIP

#### Sports Equipment: What Not to Sell

No matter how tempting it may be, never sell sports equipment that is broken or recalled. If the buyer doesn't realize it, the equipment could malfunction and cause serious injury. Always inspect your sporting goods to make sure they're in good working order and aren't under a safety recall before putting them out in your sale.

## AD SPACE