

## Baseball Infield Skin and Lip Maintenance

Maintaining a baseball infield both **BEFORE** and **AFTER** use ensures a level playing surface and seamless transitions, crucial for safe and consistent playing conditions. This guide outlines essential maintenance practices to prevent the formation of unsafe conditions and ensure your infield remains in suitable condition for play.

### Maintaining the Infield Edges and High Traffic Areas

- Using an infield rake, begin by raking the arc edges from the outfield back into the infield and removing any material that may have built up along the arc or in the outfield grass. Once completed, repeat the same process around the infield grass transitions. This practice should be done approximately 2 ft. around the entire interior of the infield and prevents the formation of lips along transition edges, it also provides a “buffer” for dragging afterward.
- After completing the infield transitions, rake any migrated material back into low spots that are a result of traffic i.e. around bases (lead-off and slide areas), positional wear, and running lanes if necessary.
- **Frequency:** After every game or practice.

### Nail Dragging

**\*This practice is only needed if the infield has become too compact for safe play and restricts the efficacy of consistent dragging results**

- **Preparation:** Lightly moisten the infield skin to soften the infield surface and allow the nail drag to penetrate the surface without causing damage. A nail drag should only penetrate the surface at the depth of a player's cleat (  $\frac{1}{4}$  –  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch) Loosening the material at too great a depth will create loose and inconsistent playing conditions which can result in unsafe and undesirable conditions.
- **Technique:** Drag nail board either manually or with equipment over the entirety of the infield while staying approximately 2 feet off the edges, alternating directions and/or patterns while maintaining a slow and consistent speed will result in a more consistent surface. Be sure to start and stop at different points, and vary your drag patterns each maintenance session to keep the infield level. Once completed, lift and carry the nail board off the field, then rake out and/or remove any material that was built up underneath the nail board.

### Screen Dragging

- **Follow-up:** After nail dragging, use a screen drag for a finished appearance. Like with nail dragging, vary your start and stop locations and maintain a buffer from the grass edge.
- **Finishing:** Shake off the excess material from the drag, which can be either blended back in or discarded.

Regular maintenance of the infield skin is essential for preventing future repairs and ensuring a safe and consistent playing surface for your team. It also helps with consistent surface drainage during rain events resulting in a much quicker return to play.