

How to Use a Steel Mat Drag and Leveling Bar for Baseball Infield Maintenance

A well-maintained baseball infield is crucial for game quality and player safety. Two essential tools for achieving this are the steel mat drag and the leveling bar. This guide will explain how to effectively use these tools to maintain your infield, break up soil chunks, and ensure a level playing surface.

Understanding the Tools

- **Steel Mat Drag:** Ideal for breaking up soil chunks, especially in soils prone to chunking. Its action and friction efficiently pulverize and smooth the soil.
- **Leveling Bar:** Used ahead of the drag, it levels material, tackling large piles of loose material by spreading them evenly across the width of the drag.

Step 1: Preparing to Drag

- **Inspect the Infield:** Look for areas with chunking or uneven soil distribution, particularly around high-traffic areas like bases.
- **Position the Leveling Bar:** Ensure the leveling bar is securely attached and positioned ahead of the steel mat drag to tackle loose material first.

Step 2: Using the Steel Mat Drag

1. **Start Dragging:** Begin at one end of the infield. Be mindful that the steel mat drag will load up with soil as you move, potentially transporting material from the starting point.
2. **Even Distribution:** Maintain a steady, consistent speed to ensure even soil pulverization and distribution. Watch for areas where the drag collects too much soil, and be prepared to redistribute as needed.
3. **Complete the Circuit:** Finish dragging in an area where you can offload any accumulated soil without affecting the infield's levelness or playability.

Step 3: Finishing with the Leveling Bar

- **Leveling Work:** After dragging, inspect the infield for any areas that may still have uneven soil distribution. Use the leveling bar manually if necessary to fine-tune and spread out any remaining piles of material.

Step 4: Final Touches

- **Inspect and Adjust:** Do a final walkthrough of the infield. Look for any areas that might need additional attention, and use the leveling bar or drag as needed.
- **Cleanup:** Ensure any excess material removed from the infield is appropriately disposed of or stored for future use.

Regular use of a steel mat drag and leveling bar is essential for maintaining a high-quality baseball infield. These tools, when used effectively, can keep the playing surface level, reduce chunking, and ensure the infield remains in top condition for gameplay. Always remember to start and finish your maintenance in a way that preserves the infield's integrity, redistributing any displaced material appropriately.