



PREPARING YOUR NEW PUMA CRICKET BAT FOR MATCH PLAY :

It is vital that all new cricket bats are 'knocked in' to correctly prepare them for use with hard cricket balls during play. The blade of the bat, edges and toe are the areas of the bat most vulnerable to stress from high impact with a cricket ball, so should be the focus of the knocking in process.

STAGE ONE

Using a good quality bat oil, apply a single coat of oil to the face and back of the bat and leave to dry - it is not necessary to oil the stickered areas. Avoid using a Raw Linseed oil, as the protective face (*stage 3*) will not adhere well to the surface of the blade when applied. 24 hours later apply another coat of oil to the bat face and leave to dry for a further 48 hours...

STAGE TWO

The "knocking in" process should be done carefully and with patience. Using a hardwood bat mallet, give the face a final 'pressing' - which simulates the impact from a cricket ball hitting the bat during play. As the wood in the face compresses, gradually increase the force of the mallet's impact. As the area of compression on the face increases, the performance of the bat will improve.

Use the same method to round off the bat's edges, but use gentle impact at first to avoid unnecessary damage. Take extra care when rounding the edges as this is an especially vulnerable part of the bat and does require a great deal of care and attention. Do not hit the edge directly with the mallet. A gradual rounding off is required to correctly compact the wood and give the necessary strength and impact resistance.

STAGE THREE

You may choose to apply an additional protective face to the front of the bat - available at any good cricket retailer. This should be positioned 3 -5 mm above the toe guard, running up the face of the bat and finishing where the bat's stickers begin. Always inspect the area between the toe guard and protective face carefully, as this part of the bat will be exposed to contact with the ground and will soak up moisture if not oiled sufficiently.

STAGE FOUR

The final stage is to use the bat gradually to prepare it for match conditions. Throw downs in the nets or short catches with an old quality cricket ball are advisable.

Never hit or use a new ball in the nets. If the seam of the ball does mark the blade, or small surface cracks become visible, it is necessary to return to *stage 1* for further preparation. This stage should be performed for a further 2 hours to ensure the fibres of the wood are sufficiently compressed. Please note this is not a sign of a faulty bat but an indication the blade requires further attention at the knocking in stage. Once these steps have been taken, the bats should be ready for use in matches.

SPECIAL NOTE :

Remember : poor quality cricket balls will damage your bat.