

Why a Football Girdle Matters (for a 13-year-old)

A football girdle is tight, short pants with pockets for hard pads. For a 13-year-old playing youth football, a girdle is important because it protects body parts that are often hit—hip, thigh, tailbone—and helps keep pads in the right place so you can play safely and move well.

What a girdle does

- **Holds pads over bones:** The girdle has built-in or pocketed pads that sit on the hip bones, tailbone (coccyx), and thighs to absorb impacts.
- **Reduces bruises and cuts:** The padding lowers the force of hits and prevents scrapes from turf and other players.
- **Keeps everything snug:** A tight fit prevents pads from sliding out of place during running, cutting, and tackling.
- **Helps with comfort & confidence:** When your equipment fits right, you can focus more on the game and less on worrying about getting hurt.

Step-by-step: How to choose the right girdle

1. Measure your waist (at the natural waist) and your inseam if possible. Use the brand's size chart — sizes vary between companies.
2. Pick a youth size that matches those measurements. For a 13-year-old, you're probably in the youth/teen sizes; ask your coach or a store employee if unsure.
3. Decide on pad style: built-in pads (sewn in) are simpler; pocketed girdles let you move or replace pads as needed.
4. Make sure the girdle is approved by your league if your league has equipment rules.

Step-by-step: How to put it on and check the fit

1. Put on the girdle like shorts and pull it up so it sits at your waist.
2. If it has pockets, insert pads so they cover your hip bones, tailbone, and thighs. Pads should sit directly over the bone you want to protect.
3. Check mobility: squat, run in place, and take a few quick steps. The girdle should be snug (so pads don't move) but not so tight that it hurts or prevents breathing or movement.
4. Have a coach or parent check pad placement. Pads moving during practice means the fit isn't correct.

Care, safety and replacement

- **Wash regularly:** Follow the label — usually machine wash cold and air dry or tumble low. Remove pads (if removable) unless instructions say otherwise.
- **Check pads often:** Look for cracks, hard spots, or torn fabric. Damaged pads should be replaced; they won't protect well if broken.
- **Replace when needed:** If the girdle has stretched out, the elastic is weak, or pads are worn, get a new one. Don't play in gear that doesn't fit.
- **Don't rely on a girdle alone:** It protects hips, thighs, and tailbone but not the chest, shoulders, or head. Always wear the full set of required equipment (helmet, shoulder pads, mouthguard,

etc.).

Quick safety checklist for a 13-year-old

- Girdle fits snugly but you can move and breathe.
- Pads cover the hip bones, tailbone, and thighs and stay in place when you move.
- Girdle and pads are allowed by your league and approved by coaches.
- Girdle is clean and pads show no cracks or heavy wear.

If you're ever unsure, ask your coach, equipment manager, or a parent to help you choose and fit a girdle. A good-fitting girdle helps you play harder and safer.