



THE ULTIMATE LEATHER CARE GUIDE

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ABSTRACT

Leather is a timeless material known for its elegance and durability, but it requires proper care to maintain its beauty and functionality. The Ultimate Leather Care Guide offers comprehensive insights into how to clean, protect, and repair leather items, whether they are jackets, shoes, furniture, or accessories. This guide covers everything from understanding different types of leather to selecting the right care products and tools. By following the methods outlined, readers will learn how to tackle common stains, prevent damage, and extend the lifespan of their leather goods.



Beyond cleaning, the guide delves into the importance of conditioning, storing, and repairing leather, ensuring each piece remains in pristine condition. It also provides ecofriendly alternatives for sustainable leather care and busts common myths surrounding leather maintenance. Whether you're a firsttime leather owner or a seasoned enthusiast, this guide equips you with the knowledge and confidence to keep your leather items looking their best for years to come.

LET'S GET STARTED

The Ultimate Leather Care Guide is an essential resource for anyone seeking to maintain the elegance and durability of leather goods. This guide covers the full spectrum of leather care, from understanding the different types of leather to choosing the right cleaning methods and products. It offers detailed instructions on how to clean and treat leather items, such as jackets, shoes, bags, and furniture, to ensure they remain in top condition. With practical tips and stepbystep guidance, the guide helps users avoid common mistakes and extend the life of their leather possessions.

In addition to cleaning and maintenance, the guide also explores preventive care, including how to protect leather from stains, moisture, and wear. It provides insights into conditioning, storage, and repair, ensuring leather goods stay flexible and resist cracking. Emphasizing ecofriendly practices, this guide also highlights natural alternatives to harsh chemicals, making it a sustainable option for leather care enthusiasts. Whether you're looking to restore an old favorite or maintain a new leather item, this comprehensive guide has you covered.

INTRODUCTION TO LEATHER AND ITS TYPES

Leather has been a prized material for centuries, known for its durability, luxurious feel, and timeless appeal. It is a natural material made from the hides of animals, primarily cows, goats, and pigs, but it can also come from less common sources like deer, ostriches, and even fish. The process of turning raw animal hide into leather is known as tanning, which preserves the hide and enhances its texture, color, and strength.

Leather is widely used in various industries, from fashion to furniture, automotive interiors, and beyond, thanks to its versatility. However, not all leather is created equal. There are several types of leather, each with its own characteristics, which are important to understand in order to care for and maintain leather goods effectively.

1. FullGrain Leather:

Fullgrain leather is the highest quality of leather. It comes from the top layer of the hide and retains all of its natural grain, including imperfections and unique markings. This type of leather is incredibly durable, breathable, and ages beautifully, developing a rich patina over time. Fullgrain leather is often used in premium products such as highend furniture, luxury bags, and quality footwear.

2. TopGrain Leather:

Topgrain leather is slightly less durable than fullgrain but still of high quality. It is created by shaving off the top layer of the hide to remove imperfections, resulting in a smoother and more uniform appearance. While it doesn't develop the same patina as fullgrain leather, topgrain leather is still strong, flexible, and often used in items like wallets, belts, and car seats.

3. Genuine Leather:

Contrary to what the name might suggest, "genuine leather" is a lowerquality material made from the leftover layers of the hide, often bonded or processed with a synthetic backing. While genuine leather is affordable, it lacks the longevity and aesthetic appeal of full or topgrain leather. It is commonly found in lowerpriced products such as budget bags and shoes.

4. Bonded Leather:

Bonded leather is made by shredding leather scraps and bonding them together with a polyurethane or latex binder. This type of leather is inexpensive and often used for furniture and decorative items. However, it is not as durable or breathable as natural leather, and it may not age well.

5. Suede:

Suede is a type of leather made from the underside of the hide, giving it a soft, velvety texture. It is more delicate than other types of leather and is often used in clothing, footwear, and accessories. Suede requires more care to maintain its appearance and is highly susceptible to staining and water damage.

6. Nubuck Leather:

Nubuck is similar to suede but is made from the outer layer of the hide. It has a smooth surface that's been buffed to create a soft, velvety texture, but it is more durable than suede. Nubuck is commonly used in shoes, jackets, and furniture. Like suede, it requires special care to maintain its pristine condition.

7. Patent Leather:

Patent leather is characterized by its glossy, highshine finish, which is achieved by coating the leather with a layer of lacquer or plastic. This type of leather is often used for formal shoes, handbags, and accessories, offering a bold, elegant look. While visually striking, patent leather can be prone to scratches and scuff marks.

Understanding the different types of leather is essential not only for choosing the right products but also for knowing how to care for them. Each type of leather requires specific cleaning and maintenance techniques to preserve its appearance and longevity, making it important to recognize the type of leather you're working with before starting any care routine.



Leather and leather byproducts can be recycled

Leather trimmings from the manufacturing process can be repurposed as stuffing (e.g., for the inside of boxing punch bags) or combined with other materials to

make composite products such as leatherboard, which is used for insoles and heel inserts in footwear.

Leather at end of life can be ground down to use in this way too. At the very end of its life leather will biodegrade, depending on type in between 1050 years. We see leather trims being creatively incorporated into wall coverings, plus more and more companies are recycling the leather component from footwear and leathergoods into something new.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENUINE LEATHER AND SYNTHETIC LEATHER

1. Material Source:

Genuine Leather:

Genuine leather is made from the hide or skin of animals, typically cows, goats, or pigs. The process of creating genuine leather involves tanning, which preserves and strengthens the material. This natural process results in leather that retains its original structure and qualities. It is a byproduct of the meat industry, which makes use of the entire animal.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather, also known as "faux leather" or "vegan leather," is made from artificial materials like polyurethane (PU) or polyvinyl chloride (PVC). It is designed to mimic the appearance and feel of real leather but is created through industrial processes without any animal products. Synthetic leather is often used as an alternative to genuine leather, especially for those seeking crueltyfree or more affordable options.

2. Appearance:

Genuine Leather:

Genuine leather has a unique and natural appearance, with visible grain patterns, creases, and imperfections that make each piece of leather oneofakind. The texture

and look of genuine leather improve over time, developing a patina that gives it character and charm.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather tends to have a more uniform appearance. While manufacturers can add grain patterns and textures to make it look like real leather, these designs often lack the depth and authenticity of genuine leather. The finish can sometimes appear shiny or overly smooth, and it may not age as gracefully as real leather.



3. Durability and Longevity:

Genuine Leather:

Genuine leather is known for its exceptional durability. It can last for decades if properly cared for, becoming more supple and beautiful with age. It is resistant to tears, abrasions, and general wear and tear, making it ideal for highend products like furniture, shoes, and bags. Over time, leather softens and molds to the user, providing a personalized fit, particularly in items like shoes and jackets.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather is typically less durable than genuine leather. It is prone to cracking, peeling, and fading over time, especially if exposed to extreme temperatures or rough handling. Although it can last for several years, synthetic

leather generally has a shorter lifespan than genuine leather. It doesn't develop a patina, and the materials can degrade more quickly.

4. Environmental Impact:

Genuine Leather:

While genuine leather is a natural product, its environmental impact depends on various factors, including the tanning process. Traditional tanning methods often involve chemicals such as chromium, which can pollute the environment. However, there are more sustainable methods, such as vegetable tanning, which use plantbased ingredients. Leather is biodegradable, but its environmental footprint varies based on production and tanning practices.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather is generally considered less environmentally friendly due to the petroleum-based materials used in its production, such as PVC or PU. These materials are nonbiodegradable and can contribute to pollution in landfills. However, some manufacturers are working on producing more ecofriendly alternatives, such as biobased or recycled synthetics. The production of synthetic leather can also release harmful chemicals into the atmosphere, but it doesn't require animal resources.

5. Maintenance and Care:

Genuine Leather:

Leather requires proper care and maintenance to preserve its appearance and durability. Regular cleaning, conditioning, and occasional polishing are necessary to keep the leather looking its best. Leather items should be protected from prolonged exposure to direct sunlight, heat, and moisture. Over time, it can develop a beautiful patina that adds character but may also require some cleaning and reconditioning.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather is generally easier to clean and maintain than genuine leather. It typically only requires wiping down with a damp cloth to remove dust and dirt.

However, synthetic leather may not be as resistant to stains or scuffs as real leather, and over time, it can lose its shiny finish and develop cracks. Unlike genuine leather, it doesn't require conditioning, but it may be more prone to surface damage.

6. Cost:

Genuine Leather:

Genuine leather is more expensive than synthetic leather due to the natural materials, tanning processes, and craftsmanship involved. Highquality leather products can be considered luxury items, and their price reflects the durability, craftsmanship, and longevity of the material.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather is typically much more affordable than genuine leather. Since it is manufactured in a factory using massproduction techniques, it costs less to produce. Synthetic leather is a popular choice for budgetconscious consumers who want the look and feel of leather without the higher price tag.

7. Ethical Considerations:

Genuine Leather:

Genuine leather has ethical concerns associated with its production due to its use of animal products. For consumers who prioritize animal welfare, leather might not be an ideal choice unless they seek certified sustainable or crueltyfree options. Many brands are now focusing on improving the ethical sourcing of leather, including using byproducts from meat industries and opting for sustainable tanning processes.

Synthetic Leather:

Synthetic leather is seen as a more ethical choice by those who avoid animal products. It offers a crueltyfree alternative to leather and is increasingly popular in the fashion and accessories industries, particularly among vegans and those committed to sustainability. However, the environmental impact of synthetic leather remains a concern.

THE 10 BEST LEATHER CLEANERS OF 2024

Here's a quick look at the 10 best leather cleaners of 2024, perfect for restoring and maintaining your leather goods:



1. Leather Honey Leather Cleaner – A top-rated, nontoxic, and biodegradable option for deep cleaning leather without damaging it.
2. Trinova Leather Cleaner – Known for its gentle yet effective cleaning formula, this cleaner works on various leather items.
3. Bickmore Bick 4 Leather Cleaner – A versatile, nonabrasive cleaner that nourishes while cleaning, ideal for furniture and apparel.
4. Lexol Leather Cleaner – Trusted for decades, it cleans and conditions, maintaining leather's texture and flexibility.
5. Atsko SnoSeal Leather Cleaner – Perfect for heavy-duty cleaning, this product protects leather from the elements.

6. Weiman Leather Cleaner & Conditioner – Works to clean, condition, and protect leather, leaving a fresh, clean scent.
7. Furniture Clinic Leather Cleaner – A professional strength cleaner for tough stains on furniture and clothing.
8. Apple Brand Leather Cleaner – Popular for its deep cleaning properties and ability to remove stains without harming leather.
9. Meguiar's Gold Class Leather Cleaner – Known for its rich lather and gentle care, it cleans and softens leather items.
10. Chemical Guys Leather Cleaner and Conditioner – A two in one cleaner and conditioner that leaves leather smooth and protected.

HOW TO CLEAN GREASE STAINS ON LEATHER?

Whether you own a leather jacket, shoes or furniture, it is always a prized possession. The regal look and elegance radiated by leather is hard to miss. Naturally, it is expensive and needs a lot of aftercare. For most people, its cleaning is a daunting task, particularly when there is a grease stain on it.

Often people use strong commercial cleaners in such cases which damages the texture of leather. You should use only natural ingredients for this purpose like baking soda, talcum powder, liquid soap, etc. If you are choosing a company that offers end of lease cleaning in Sydney to clean a leather sofa set or a reclining chair make sure they follow an ecofriendly cleaning approach.

Here are some ways of cleaning grease stains on leather. They are inexpensive, effective and easy to follow. Let's have a look.

Quickly Fixing the Grease Stains On Leather

The best way to get rid of grease stains is to deal with it immediately. This way, you can prevent the grease from settling down on the leather surface. Always remember that the more time you will take to clean it, the more difficult it becomes to remove.

Collect Your Ingredients

If you have accidentally spilled bacon grease on your leather couch or butter on your leather jacket, clean it right away. Grab a piece of microfiber cloth, and talcum powder as these two things can clean such stains perfectly.



Dab the Affected Area with the Cloth

Use your microfiber cloth to dab the stain gently so that it can absorb the grease as much as possible. The problem with the leather is that it can quickly absorb the liquid, particularly grease.

So, it becomes a little challenging to clean it. But if you dab the area with a microfiber cloth, things will get a bit easy for you. Do not try to scrub the area because it can damage the surface of the leather.

Understand the Direction of the Texture

Whether it is a couch, coat or shoes, leather has a direction of the texture, just like wood. If you can identify that and apply a cleaner along with it, you are more

likely to get success. If you find it challenging to determine the direction of the texture, clean from the outside of the stain towards its centre.

This way, you can at least shrink the area of the stain. If you opt for end of lease cleaning in Sydney, you will find that the professionals also follow this technique.

Use Talcum Powder to Soak Up the Grease

To soak up the grease in a more effective manner, you can use your regular household baby powder. Sprinkle sufficient amount of powder on the affected area. It works brilliantly in removing the grease stains from the leather surface because talcum powder is a better absorbent than leather.

Leave it overnight or at least a couple of hours so that the powder can settle down and absorb the grease from the roots of the leather surface.

Brush Off the Talcum Powder

After that, Use a piece of soft cloth, to gently remove the talcum powder from the affected area. While removing the stain, be careful not to rub the surface inappropriately.

Otherwise, the mixture of grease and powder residue will stay on the surface. If you still find the stain on the surface, then contact experienced professionals who offer the best end of lease cleaning in Sydney.

Clean Grease Stains on Leather Using Liquid Detergent

If you haven't cleaned the grease stains on leather for a long time, it will be difficult to clean it with powder. Instead, you need to use a liquid detergent. The following procedure will be helpful.

Gather Your Supplies

The idea is to create lather and remove the grease mark. So, first collect the cleaning supplies – liquid soap, water and a couple of microfibre cloth. Also, get a spray bottle to make the task easier.

Apply the Detergent

Take a piece of cloth and pour a few drops of the liquid detergent on it and dab it on the stained area evenly. But before that, make sure that the detergent is suitable for the surface.

Create Lather

Once you have applied the liquid soap, spray some water on the surface. Then use your figure to rub the patch slowly until the lather is formed.

Use a Dry Cloth

After that, wipe off the surface using a dry cloth. This will not only remove the residue of grease but also the soapy solution.\



Use A Homemade Solution to Clean Grease Stains--

If you opt for end of lease cleaning in Sydney, you will find that many professionals prefer using a homemade solution. This solution is quite effective on grease stains. It removes the grease from the leather surface without causing any damage.

Collect All the Ingredients

To prepare the solution, first, you need to collect all the ingredients in appropriate amount. Take a container and add distilled water (3/8 cup), sea salt (1/8 cup), white flour (1/2 teaspoon), and baking soda (1 tablespoon). Mix the ingredients properly.

Do a Patch Test

Before applying the paste on the affected area, make sure that it is suitable for the surface. So, find a hidden area and apply a small amount of the paste and see if you notice any problem. If you see any issue, contact a company offering end of tenancy cleaning services. But if it is fine, go ahead and apply the paste on the affected area.

Apply the Paste on the Grease Stain

Once you are sure that it will not cause any damage to the leather surface, dab a piece of cloth in the paste and then apply it on the stained area gently. And wait for some time.

Wipe Off the Surface with a Dry Cloth

After that, use a dry cloth and wipe off the surface properly to remove the grease stain as well as any residue of the homemade solution.

Removing the grease stain on leather is not as difficult as it seems. All you need is the right cleaning supplies and knowledge of how to clean the leather surface. The ways mentioned here will help you to clean grease stains without any hassles. If you don't want to take any chances with your expensive leather belongings, go for end of lease cleaning in Sydney. They have experienced professionals who can tackle even the worst stains.

HOW TO CONDITION LEATHER AROUND YOUR HOME

Leather is a luxurious and durable material found in many homes, from furniture and clothing to accessories and car interiors. To maintain its beauty and longevity, conditioning leather is essential. Without proper care, leather can dry out, crack, and lose its natural appeal. Here's a detailed guide on how to condition leather around your home effectively.

Why Condition Leather?

Conditioning leather restores its natural oils, keeping it soft, flexible, and resistant to cracking. Over time, exposure to sunlight, air conditioning, or daily wear can deplete the natural moisture in leather, leading to dryness and deterioration. A wellconditioned leather surface not only looks good but also lasts longer.



Steps to Condition Leather at Home

1. Prepare the Leather Surface

Clean the leather first: Use a damp cloth or a leatherspecific cleaner to remove dirt, stains, and oils. Conditioning a dirty surface can trap debris and damage the leather.

Allow it to dry: Leather should be completely dry before applying any conditioner. This prevents streaks and uneven absorption.

2. Choose the Right Leather Conditioner

Select a product designed for leather: Use a highquality leather conditioner or cream specifically formulated for the type of leather you are treating (e.g., fullgrain, nubuck, or bonded leather).

Check for compatibility: Test the conditioner on a small, hidden area to ensure it doesn't discolor or damage the leather.

3. Apply the Conditioner

Use a clean, soft cloth: Dampen the cloth slightly, if needed, and apply a small amount of conditioner.

Rub in circular motions: Gently work the conditioner into the leather, ensuring even coverage. Pay extra attention to areas prone to cracking, such as seams or heavily used spots.

4. Let It Absorb

Leave the conditioner to sit: Allow it to penetrate the leather for the time specified on the product instructions (typically 1030 minutes).

Buff the surface: Use a dry, soft cloth to remove any excess conditioner and buff the leather to a smooth finish.

Tips for Conditioning Leather

Condition regularly: Depending on usage and exposure, condition leather every 36 months. Highuse items like sofas or shoes may require more frequent care.

Avoid overconditioning: Too much product can leave a sticky residue or damage the leather.

Protect from elements: Use a leather protector spray to shield your items from water, UV rays, and stains.

Common Leather Items to Condition

Furniture: Sofas, chairs, and ottomans can benefit from routine conditioning to keep them soft and supple.

Clothing and Accessories: Jackets, handbags, and belts need conditioning to maintain their color and prevent cracking.

Car Interiors: Leather seats and steering wheels should be conditioned to prevent dryness caused by sunlight and heat.

Conditioning leather is a simple yet vital step in preserving its quality and beauty. By regularly cleaning, applying the right products, and following proper techniques, you can keep leather items in your home looking their best for years to come.

WHAT SHOULD YOU NEVER DO WHEN CLEANING LEATHER?

Never assume that the bigger the stain or mess, the more product you'll need. A common refrain from each leather professional I spoke with was that less is more. And that's because there's no standard of care, whether you're cleaning a couch or a jacket.

Gershon points out that unlike textiles, there's no labeling law for leather, which can make it hard for at-home cleaning. "The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) governs the labeling of textile garments sold in the United States, telling both owners and fabric care professionals how to clean them," he says. "With leather, on the other hand, the FTC only requires labeling that discloses the type of leather, but no care instructions besides 'clean by a leather professional.'"

As you can imagine, leather care pros have seen it all. Here are some things to avoid so that you don't damage the leather you're trying to clean.

- Never put leather in the washing machine.

- Never saturate leather with water. Excess moisture can create darkening and rings.
- Never use a soaking wet cloth. It should only be damp or dry.
- Avoid any and all harsh chemicals, such as alcohol and acetone, which damage finishes and can pull up color.
- Avoid any products or tools that could damage the top coat of the leather. This will not only compromise the protective layer of your leather, but could also cause you to lift color from your leather.
- Avoid placing leather in direct sunlight for prolonged periods.
- Never spray protective products that are propelled by aerosols directly on your leather goods. The propellant can spray out first and stain your leather. Always check directions and begin spraying away from the leather item.
- Never attempt to put water on vintage leather. According to Gershon, it will dry “rock hard” because of decreased lanolin in the leather.
- Never blow dry your leather to get it to dry faster, Gershon cautions. Blowdrying can burn the leather, creating dark spots and cracking.
- Be aware that lighter colors may be more prone to darkening when using certain cleaning products or methods, while darker colors are more resistant to these effects.

LEATHER CARE: MYTHS VS FACTS

Leather is a prized material known for its durability, elegance, and timeless appeal. However, many misconceptions about leather care can lead to improper maintenance, shortening its lifespan or damaging its natural beauty. Let’s debunk some common myths and highlight the facts about proper leather care.

Myth 1: Leather Doesn’t Need Maintenance

Fact:

While leather is durable, it’s not invincible. Over time, it loses natural oils, leading to dryness and cracking. Regular cleaning and conditioning are crucial to keep it soft, supple, and longlasting. Think of leather care as skincare—routine maintenance enhances its longevity and appearance.

Myth 2: All Leather is the Same

Fact:

Leather comes in various types, such as fullgrain, topgrain, bonded, and synthetic. Each type has unique characteristics and requires specific care. For example, nubuck and suede need special brushes, while fullgrain leather benefits from regular conditioning. Using the wrong products can damage the material.



Myth 3: DIY Cleaners Like Vinegar and Olive Oil Are Safe

Fact:

DIY remedies like vinegar or olive oil may seem convenient, but they can harm leather. Vinegar's acidity can dry out the leather, while olive oil can leave stains and a sticky residue. Always use leatherspecific cleaners and conditioners designed to nourish and protect.

Myth 4: Water Damages Leather Beyond Repair

Fact:

Although leather isn't waterproof, water exposure doesn't mean irreversible damage. If leather gets wet, gently blot it with a clean towel and let it air dry naturally. Avoid using heat sources like hair dryers, as they can cause cracking. Applying a waterrepellent leather protector can prevent future damage.

Myth 5: Conditioning is Only for Old Leather

Fact:

Conditioning isn't just for restoring old leather; it's preventive care for new leather items too. Regular conditioning keeps leather hydrated and prevents premature aging. A simple routine every 36 months can make a significant difference in your leather's appearance and durability.

Myth 6: Leather is Self Healing

Fact:

While leather can stretch and adapt to use, it doesn't heal itself. Scratches, stains, and cracks need proper attention. Minor scuffs can be treated with leather balms, while significant damage may require professional repair.

Myth 7: Leather Furniture Can Handle Direct Sunlight

Fact:

Prolonged exposure to sunlight can fade and dry out leather, leading to cracks. To prevent this, keep leather furniture away from direct sunlight and use UVprotective sprays. Alternatively, rotate cushions and covers to distribute wear evenly.

Myth 8: Synthetic Leather Requires the Same Care

Fact:

Synthetic leather, often made from plastic, doesn't require conditioning as it lacks natural oils. However, cleaning is still essential to maintain its appearance. Use gentle cleaners to avoid peeling or discoloration.

Understanding the myths and facts about leather care is essential for maintaining its beauty and durability. Avoid DIY shortcuts, choose appropriate products, and commit to regular upkeep. With proper care, your leather items will remain a source of pride for years to come.

CONCLUSION

Proper leather care is more than just a routine—it's an investment in preserving the elegance, durability, and longevity of your cherished leather items. From understanding the differences between genuine and synthetic leather to mastering cleaning, conditioning, and storage techniques, each step plays a vital role in maintaining leather's natural beauty. Dispelling common myths and relying on proven care practices ensures your leather remains supple, vibrant, and free from damage for years to come.



By incorporating the tips and strategies shared in this guide, you can confidently protect your leather possessions, whether they are furniture, clothing, or

accessories. Embrace these practices as part of your maintenance routine, and enjoy the enduring appeal of well-kept leather in your home and lifestyle.

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