

# How to Clean and Care for Your Leather



# How to Use this Leather eBook

This book is your guide to navigating the fascinating world of leather. If you're reading this, chances are you have a prized leather piece of your own and you want to make sure it stays that way. When taken care of properly, leather is more than a fashion statement, it's a lifetime companion.

Throughout this eBook, you will find revealing tips that provide helpful information that will enable you to create a leather care process that's right for you. There are many types of leather, ranging wildly from vegetable tanned to chrome tanned, full grain to suede, finished to aniline dyed, cowhide to ostrich skin. Virtually limitless variables can contribute to the inner workings of your leather, so it stands to reason that they all can't be treated the same way.

Chamberlain's leather care recommendations and leather education 101 described below are not hammered in stone, but are flexible, and meant to give you direction. The most important rule of leather care is discovery. When in doubt, test first. Now with all that out of the way, let the leather adventure begin!

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# Our Story

Chamberlain's story begins with Chamberlain's Shipping Inc., a shipping and fulfillment company for quality leather items out of Fort Worth, Texas. Dennis and Patricia Chamberlain began shipping and fulfilling Saddleback Leather Company orders in 2007. As Saddleback grew, so did the shipping company. Because they were also handling quality control for Saddleback, they wanted every Saddleback piece to be lightly conditioned before being shipped out. The Chamberlain's scoured the market looking for the perfect leather conditioner to use. They wanted something that was natural to ensure the health and safety of their employees as well as the environment. They also wanted something that wouldn't change the leather. After searching high and low and coming up empty, they decided to develop their own leather care recipe, and Chamberlain's Leather Milk was born!

Our flagship product, Chamberlain's Leather Milk, has been used to rejuvenate and recondition old leather and soften and protect new leather for several years. As time went on, at the request of our customers, we decided to add to our product line with the addition of Straight Cleaner, Water Protectant, Auto Refreshener and Furniture Treatment. Together with our product applicators, we're pleased to offer our customers a complete leather care system.

## Chamberlain's Leather Milk Videos

**Chamberlain's Leather Milk – for the Trails Ahead**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-psh2uxZJU>

**Chamberlain's Leather Milk – Restoring Leather**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmIMK-b6Gto>

**Leather Care Liniment No. 1 – Leather Conditioner**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l41r\\_f5uiE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l41r_f5uiE&feature=youtu.be)

**Straight Cleaner No. 2 – Leather Cleaner**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwewKc7yftg>

**Water Protectant No. 3 – Leather Protector**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZelRaK4owz8>

# Chamberlain's Leather Milk

## Recipes No.1, No.2, No.3, No.4, No.5

### How Much Do I Need?

There's one thing in common with all of our Leather Milk products, a little goes a long way, so you probably don't need as much as you think. While it certainly depends on the age, condition and type of leather, there's only so much product leather can absorb. If too much is applied at once, it clogs up the pores going down, and the rest forms a sticky residue on the outside. Even with careful application, too much can be used. If your leather stops absorbing one of our Leather Milk products and becomes "tacky" then you know you've gone too far. Apply No.1, No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5 in THIN, EVEN layers across the entire surface of your leather item. Apply additional layers as needed. Applying the recipes in this way reduces the risk of over-conditioning and makes sure any change in color is uniform. Apply No. 2 generously into

your leather and rub it in gently. Allow the leather to fully soak it in and wait for it to dry. Follow up with a leather conditioner.

## Restoring Over Conditioned Leather

If your leather becomes tacky after being conditioned or treated, this just usually means too much product has been used. This is usually easy to reverse, especially when it is treated quickly.

- Dab up the leather surface's with a damp cloth to pick up residual oils.
- Apply Chamberlain's Straight Cleaner No.2 (This may take multiple sessions over a few days. Make sure the leather doesn't get too dry during this time).
- You can also apply a sprinkling of baking soda or cornstarch between cleanings, when the leather is completely dry. Let the powder sit overnight, and if it turns yellow the next day, dust it off and repeat. Cycle between this and your leather cleaner, and try to give the leather as much use as possible, until the stickiness disappears.

### *Restoring Over Conditioned Leather Cont*

- Apply more Chamberlain's Leather Milk conditioners and treatments if you feel your leather needs it, but only as much as naturally absorbs, to avoid over-conditioning. Lots of contact with sunlight can also cause leather to grow tacky. This is both due to the excessive heat, and harmful ultraviolet rays which break down your leather on a chemical leather. It goes without saying, try to avoid giving your leather prolonged exposure to excessive heat and strong sunlight. You might try placing a windshield cover over your car, covering your sofa with a blanket, or even give your leather a UV protectant, like Auto Refreshener No.4.

## How Often Should I Condition, Treat & Clean My Leather?

Leather is extremely porous and will absorb anything it can, from dust, water, snow even to mold. Regularly keeping your leather's surface clean can prevent these contaminants from taking root. It is a good idea to clean and condition your leather at least 2-3 times a year. This may change depending on the amount of use your leather gets and the weather it is exposed to. If you live in a heavily snowy or rainy environment, you may want to add Water Protectant No.3 and condition your leather every 2 months. If your leather furniture sits near a window with direct sunlight, you may find that our Auto Refreshner with UV Ray protection would work best. If your leather is mainly going to be indoors and away from sunlight, twice a year may be all that your leather needs with Leather Care Liniment No. 1 or No. 5 if it's furniture. You should always condition your leather after you have cleaned it, but you can condition without cleaning if it is not significantly dirty and you have brushed off the surface first. For routine cleaning, try to dust off your leather every week with a damp cloth, and attend to any spill or other incident as soon as possible. If you are restoring older or malnourished leather, you may want to clean it several times first, and follow up with 2-3 conditionings per week until its supple nature is restored. In

general, you will know it is time to re-apply if the surface of your leather begins to look chalky or feels dry to the touch.

## Will I Need Any Additional Materials When Applying Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes?

- All Chamberlain's Leather Milk formulas include a FREE reusable cotton terry leather conditioner applicator pad.
- It's always handy to have some plastic or newspaper to protect whatever surface you choose to use.
- Kill any existing mildew. We like to use a combination of apple cider vinegar and water.
- If your leather is really dirty, you will need to clean it with Chamberlain's Leather Milk Straight Cleaner No.4 before conditioning and/or treating.

# How Do I Apply Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes?

- Use your FREE reusable cotton terry leather conditioner applicator pad that came with your purchase.
- Test all products in a small, discreet area of your item first. This is important – because leather is a natural substance, each piece is unique and thus may react differently to conditioners and cleaners.
- If it is really dirty, clean the surface of your leather with Chamberlain's Leather Milk No.2 – Straight Cleaner. Apply No. 2 generously into your leather and rub it in gently. Allow the leather to fully soak it in and wait for it to dry. Follow up with one of our leather conditioners.
- Chamberlain's Leather Milk No.1 (Light Conditioner and Cleaner) – Apply THIN, EVEN layers across the entire surface of your leather item. Apply additional layers as needed

## *How Do I Apply Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes? Cont*

- Chamberlain's Leather Milk No.3 (Water Protectant and Deep Conditioner) – for use in harsher weather conditions – apply THIN, EVEN layers across the entire surface of your leather item. Apply additional layers as needed.

- Chamberlain's Leather Milk No. 4 (Light Conditioner and Cleaner with UV Protection Added) - for use when leather is exposed to direct sunlight as in your automobile and/or furniture near sunlit windows – apply THIN, EVEN layers across the entire surface of your leather item. Apply additional layers as needed.
- Chamberlain's Leather Milk No.5 (Light Conditioner and Cleaner) – for use on indoor furniture not in direct sunlight – apply THIN, EVEN layers across the entire surface.

## How Long Does Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Last On The Shelf?

There really is no shelf-life for our Leather Care products; at least we haven't discovered one yet. Since some of our recipes are water-based formulas, the water can evaporate leaving behind the oils and conditioners and causing the formula to thicken. Usually this only happens when the bottle isn't secured properly or the leather recipe is exposed to the open air. But luckily there's an easy fix! Simply add about 1/3 water to 2/3 formula and shake it really well. That should re-hydrate and make the formula highly absorbent again. If you'd like the formula even

more fluid, just add water as desired. Another tip - if you're going to mix any of our products, add to a spray bottle for easier application, another option, ultimately up to you.

## Will Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Darken Leather?

Chamberlain's Leather Milk recipes will deepen the lighter shades of naturally tanned leather, but it very often comes back to its natural color except for Water Protectant No.3, which will typically darken lighter color leather pieces and not recommended for use on suede or extremely soft leather types.

Please note that any leather conditioner that actually works will slightly change the color of naturally tanned leather, because it fully penetrates the pores. This is one reason why we suggest spot-testing by applying a small amount of Chamberlain's Leather Milk to a hidden area on your item. As mom says, it's always better to be safe than sorry. We've found that most customers don't notice a change in color – and those who do often like the slightly deeper tone better!

# Can I use Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes On Colored Leather?

Absolutely! Chamberlain's Leather Milk formulas do not interfere with the dyes or change the color of dyed leather. However, Water Protectant No.3 Conditioner will slightly darken some leather, so be sure to test it on a small "hidden" area if you are concerned.

## **As a reminder:**

- It's always the safest route to contact the manufacturer or company that sells or makes your particular leather item and ensure it is okay to use a water-based conditioner/cleaner (No. 1, No. 4, and No. 5), an alcohol-based leather cleaner (No. 2), or an oil/wax based conditioner/protectant (No. 3) on their particular type of leather.
- Always test an inconspicuous area of your leather item first to ensure you like the result before applying the leather care product to the entire surface of the leather.
- Apply leather conditioners in THIN, EVEN layers. This is to ensure you don't over-condition the leather and that any change in color (darkening) will be uniform. You can always add additional thin layers as desired.

- Chamberlain's Leather Milk recipes are not recommended for soft, suede, vinyl or simulated leathers.

It's always the safest route to contact the manufacturer or company that sells or makes your particular leather item and ensure it is okay to use a water-based conditioner/cleaner (No. 1, No. 4, and No. 5), an alcohol-based leather cleaner (No. 2), or an oil/wax based conditioner/protectant (No. 3) on their particular type of leather.

## Is Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Safe For All Leathers, Including Exotic?

There are all types of leather out there, vegetable and chrome-tanned, napped, suede, soft, vinyl and simulated etc., even leather from alligator, reptile, eel, lizard, snake or ostrich. Over the years, we've had many customers buy our formulas for all different types of leather, even exotic leathers with positive results.

## Why Are Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Not Recommended On Extremely Soft Leather?

It's pretty simple...we covering our “you-know-what” AND helping you out! Soft leather types are easy to distort. Unless you're really careful, it's easy to over-condition the leather or create discoloration by not evenly applying our recipes. It's not so dire if your soft leather item has a protective finish and not a natural finish. Specialty leathers like nubuck and suede also fall into the category of soft leathers. Specialty leathers like nubuck and suede need conditioning products specifically designed for nubuck and suede. You should also stay away from using Leather Milk on "suede-like" finishes. If you do decide to try Leather Milk on really soft leather, make sure you test the Leather Milk on an inconspicuous area of the leather item to ensure you like the result before applying it to the entire item.

# Will Chamberlain's Leather Milk Break-In My Leather For Me?

Our leather care recipes contain a variety of natural oils and conditioners that help the softening process. Depending on how absorbent and thick your leather is will most likely determine how quickly it will soften with treatment. Regular use over time is always the best breaking in method. We don't recommend you purchase Leather Milk expecting to use it as a leather softener.

# My Leather Is Expensive!

## How Do I know Chamberlain's Leather Milk Won't Ruin It?

Stay on the safe side. Just like your mother taught you, it's always better to be safe than sorry. Test the Leather Milk recipe you purchased on an inconspicuous area of any leather item you intend to treat to ensure you like the result before applying it to the entire item. Leather comes in many finishes, textures and tanning processes, so it's important to test, test, and test. If you're unsure whether or not you can use our recipe on a particular type of leather, contact the manufacturer or seller of the item to see what type of treatment they recommend. Here's what to tell them you're thinking of using:

- No. 1 - Water-Based leather conditioner
- No. 2 - Alcohol-Based leather cleaner
- No. 3 - Wax/Oil-Based leather conditioner/protectant
- No. 4 - Water-Based leather conditioner
- No. 5 - Water-Based leather conditioner

# Chamberlain's Leather Milk Straight Cleaner No.2

## **Will Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Remove Stains?**

We like to describe No.1 (Leather conditioner), No.4 (Auto Refreshner), and No.5 (Furniture Treatment) as 95% conditioner and 5% cleaner. These recipes (with a few variations) work splendidly at cleaning the surface of your leather. If the dirt, grime or substance is on the surface, Leather Care Formulas No.1, No.4, and No.5 will clean it. This is usually all that is needed for regular leather upkeep. For stains and dirt embedded in the pores of the leather, you'll need to first start with Straight Cleaner No.2 that is specifically a cleaner.

## **Dig Deeper - What Is Straight Cleaner No.2?**

Straight Cleaner is a blend of natural alcohols and other natural cleaners. If you need to put your leather through a more thorough cleaning, Straight Cleaner is a gentle way to do that.

*Chamberlain's Leather Milk Straight Cleaner No.2, Cont*

While Straight Cleaner will lift a lot of dirt and stains from the pores of your leather, it is a natural cleaner and thus it can't necessarily compete with the strength of chemical-based leather cleaners. The catch is that chemical-based leather cleaners are much harsher on leather.

They have to be to lift those really set-in stains! We recommend trying our gentle leather cleaner before graduating to solvents, saddle soaps or synthetic chemical cleaners.

### **When Should I Use Straight Cleaner No.2?**

Straight Cleaner is for those times you want to give your leather a more thorough cleaning or when you need to lift a stain that has set into the leather fiber. You don't need to use Straight Cleaner every time you condition your leather item. Most of the time a surface cleaning with is all you need.

## **Chamberlain's Leather Milk ~ Water Protectant No.3**

### **Dig Deeper - What Is Water Protectant No.3?**

Water Protectant No. 3 contains a blend of heavier, natural oils and conditioners as well as a blend of natural waxes. This recipe was formulated for the harshest of weather conditions like rain and snow storms. While Water Protectant works great in harsh conditions, it also works well for your every day city rain shower or that accidental coffee spill. Water Protectant will not completely waterproof every type of leather. It is formulated in such a way as to deeply

condition leather while making it very water-resistant. Some more finished leathers will be much more water-resistant after application while more natural finished leather will absorb more of the recipe and become a bit less water-resistant. As the oils in the leather evaporate and the waxes wear off the leather over time, the leather will become less water-resistant. How long that is depends on the exposure conditions and type of leather you have.

### *Chamberlain's Leather Milk ~ Water Protectant No.3*

#### **Will Water Protectant No. 3 Completely Waterproof My Leather?**

Water Protectant will not completely waterproof every type of leather. It is formulated in such a way as to deeply condition leather while making it very water-resistant. Some more finished leathers will be much more water-resistant, even waterproofed, after application while more natural finished leather will absorb more of the recipe and become a bit less water-resistant. As the oils in the leather evaporate and the waxes wear off the leather over time, the leather will become less water-resistant. How long that is depends on the exposure conditions and type of leather you have.

#### **Will Water Protectant No.3 Clean Leather?**

Water Protectant does not have a cleaning component in the recipe. It's best to wipe off your leather with a damp cloth if your leather is not heavily soiled or use Straight Cleaner No.2 before applying Water Protectant No.3.

# What is the difference between Leather Care Liniment No.1 ~ Auto Refreshener No.4, & Furniture Treatment No.5? Do I need all three?

The short answer is yes and no. All three leather care recipes are similar and can be used for general leather conditioning/cleaning with few differences. For example, you'd be just fine using Auto Refreshener on your leather sofa or Leather Care Liniment on your auto leather. But Auto Refreshener and Furniture Treatment are tweaked a bit to work better on auto and furniture leather. So if you are conditioning and cleaning your auto and furniture leather in addition to your other leather items often, it may be worth it to you to invest in No. 4 and No. 5.

# Chamberlain's Leather Milk ~ Ingredients, Toxicity & Allergies

## **Are Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Toxic?**

Chamberlain's Leather Milk recipes are natural and non-toxic. As with all of our leather care products, our formulas are made from all natural ingredients and contain no saddle soaps, solvents or synthetic chemicals. However, we do use nut extracts and oils, which some people are allergic to. Click [HERE](#) to view our product Material Safety Data Sheets.

## **What Are Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Made Of?**

Chamberlain's Leather Milk is a family invention, much like Grandpa Dennis's Chili recipe, and we prefer not to reveal all of the contents, for obvious reasons. However, if you have specific questions about the contents, please don't hesitate to email and we will be happy to share what we can.

## **Will Chamberlain's Leather Milk Recipes Trigger My Allergies?**

Our leather care formulas do contain some nut extracts. If you have a severe nut allergy, we do not recommend you use Leather Milk.

# Chamberlain's Leather Milk ~ Shipping Information

## **Where is Chamberlain's Leather Milk located, where can I buy it, and how is my order shipped?**

Chamberlain's Leather Milk is a family owned business and our formulas are manufactured, bottled and distributed In-House, in the Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area.

We are located deep in the heart of industrial Fort Worth, Texas! Our offices are located at 5501 Egg Farm Rd, Suite #150, FW TX 76244. We don't sell Leather Milk at the door, but don't worry! There are plenty of vendors all around that keep their shelves stocked aplenty with our favorite recipes. You can find Leather at any one of these vendors (which you can locate on our website, at "Find Leather Milk in a Store Near You"), or via our website, Saddleback, Amazon, eBay, and numerous other online retailers. Orders purchased through our website and eBay are shipped by us personally, as are Amazon orders if purchased via "Seller Fulfilled." Amazon fulfilled orders and Saddleback orders handle their own shipments. Before Leather Milk is shipped off, we personally inspect each of our bottles, package them snug and sensibly, and ship them off with USPS, all the way to your front door.

## **Does Chamberlain's Leather Milk ship outside of the United States?**

We do! Due to our limited resources we have had difficulty shipping to some locations. On some occasions, we've had to temporarily stop until we can arrange a more reliable system for ensuring our customers receive their purchase on time and in good condition. We are constantly expanding, so if Leather Milk is not yet available near you, take heart! We're doing everything we can to bring Leather Milk back to a store near you.

Please see list of countries we currently ship to ~ Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Russia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States, and the Vatican.

If your country does not appear on the list, you might be able to purchase Leather Milk through Amazon or Saddleback Leather Company. We have a variety of vendors that carry our products. You can also check our "Find Leather Milk in a Store Near You" feature to home in on any local vendors.

# Who can I contact if I'd like to carry Chamberlain's Leather Milk in my store or become a distributor?

We are always looking to expand our retail network. We'd love to get to know you better and see if your store or website would be a good fit for our products. Please contact Aaron Snow our *Director of Business Development* ~ [aaron@leathermilk.com](mailto:aaron@leathermilk.com) ~ for further information on stocking and distribution.

Chamberlain's Leather Milk ~  
Custom Leather Repair Shop

## **Do You Know A Good Place To Repair or Restore My Leather?**

Yes We Do! Chamberlain's Leather Milk has an In-House leather repair shop with seasoned Leather Repair Experts. If you have a serious repair, or just want a professional to restore your leather product, then you made it to the right place. Here is how the process works:

1. Send us a picture of your repair/restoration need to [repairs@leathermilk.com](mailto:repairs@leathermilk.com), title the subject "Repair" and you will receive a free evaluation and estimate.
2. If you agree to the estimate, we can charge you through our secured shopping cart for the project.
3. Ship your item to our secured location at 5500 Egg Farm Rd. Suite #820, Fort Worth, TX 76244.
4. The shipping back to you is on us! The scope of work will determine the length of time before we can finish and send it back to you. We should be able to estimate this time period from the initial evaluation.

# Leather Tips & Education 101

## **What is Leather?**

Under a microscope, leather is a vast tangle of fibers weaving together to form a strong, flexible material. You probably know this material better by the name "skin." This term is helpful because treating leather skin is not at all unlike treating human skin. Like human skin, leather is

strong and flexible, supple and healthy when it contains oils (or conditioner), and needs occasional care to remain healthy. Unlike skin, leather lacks the advantage of being alive. Leather, by its very nature, is dying.

## **Tannage**

Using a trick known to man since the days of the hunter-gatherers, leather crafters infuse rawhide with preserving chemicals that prevent decomposition almost indefinitely - a process known as tanning. Most tanned leather you will encounter today will be either chromium tanned or vegetable tanned, although countless other tanning agents have been used across the ages - even chicken droppings! Happily, science has afforded us more pleasant alternatives.

What's important to know about Vegetable Tanned Leather is that it faithfully preserves the most natural qualities of leather; it will have a distinguishing scent, a suppler texture, live longer, and grow luxurious patina more easily than any other leather. The downside is that it will likely require more care than chrome tanned leather, and is more vulnerable to staining and moisture. Chrome Tanned Leather is vegetable's mirror reflection. It has more resistance to the elements and requires less maintenance, but has a slightly shorter lifespan and lacks the natural qualities of vegetable tanned leather. Both types have their perks, so it's best to determine which one suits your lifestyle before purchasing.

## **Cut**

Tanning isn't the only thing that sets leathers apart; thickness and vitality are affected by how a tanned strip of leather is cut.

There are five primary styles of cut leather:

**Full Grain** isn't cut like other leather. Apart from the icky stuff pulled out before the tanning process, this leather is left to behave in much the same way as it did when it was living skin. You'll see all the inherent scars and patterns you'd have seen on the animal donor, and because it retains this outermost layer of the skin, where the hide is thickest, it is the sturdiest of all leather cuts.

**Top Grain** is the second most durable cut. Animal skins with ugly scars or a tarnished appearance are most likely to get this treatment. The strongest, most outer layer of the hide is removed for esthetic reasons. Even then, some hints of the leather's former life remain, and the cut is altogether very durable, making it a highly competitive choice.

**Suede** removes the top grain layer, and subsists of the weakest, most porous layer of leather. While not as durable as most leather, it requires little maintenance and has an uncanny softness that makes it a popular choice for luxury products. Suede leather is not designed for rough activities, and should see mostly casual use.

**Nubuck** is a close cousin of suede. Instead of using the fleshy layer of suede, nubuck uses a sanded down top grain. The leather is buffed and trimmed until it develops a napped, velvet-like texture. It's a little stronger than suede, slightly less strong than top grain, and has a tactile proclivity to die for.

**Bonded Leather** is an inferior grade cut. It's what happens when leather that's considered too low quality to sell is shredded up like paper and glued back together. Because it's glue - rather than natural fibers - that are holding the leather together, bonded leather lacks durability and longevity. Bonded leather can usually be found very cheap, and has a leather-like appearance.

## **Finish**

All leather contains pores. These pores are responsible for letting your leather breathe, receive conditioner, cleaner, and anything else small enough to sink into it. To prevent harmful substances from absorbing, and to give a nice esthetic quality, many leather producers will lace your leather with finish. Leather can be finished in two primary styles, or it might remain unfinished.

**Unfinished Leather** is leather closest to its natural state. It will have the look, texture and smell most like its animal donor, and is colored with aniline dyes. Due to a lack of finish, it has less protection from the elements (but more resistance to scratches), and will require more maintenance. Don't go spilling your drink around it. Despite this, unfinished leather is of the highest natural quality, and if well cared for, you won't find its equal.

***Semi-aniline leather*** includes a mixture of aniline dyes and a light covering of protective pigments. These pigments will provide some protections against spills and weather, while retaining some of the leather's more natural qualities. This type is the bridge between finished and unfinished leather - an excellent choice for anyone caught in the middle between quality and security.

***Finished Leather*** is imbued with a barrier of highly protective pigments that ward away harmful elements. While it won't keep fluids from getting through, it will give you more time to deal with them before they absorb. Same with any treatment given to it - cleaners and conditioners will remain on the surface longer before absorbing, prompting some people to over-condition. Finished leather is highly protected and easy to maintain, but it can scratch more easily, and lacks the depth of appearance, texture and smell of natural leather, taking on uniform traits similar to plastic. Regardless, finished leather maintains excellent quality balanced with a stylish simplicity.

### **Animal Donor**

Animal donors may be the single most important factor in determining leather's temperament. They may include cowhide, crocodile, lambskin, toad, or even shark. There are infinite varieties, but most commonly these breeds can be pegged into three categories.

Cattle Leather is leather just like you'd expect. The most common varieties are sheepskin, goatskin, pigskin, and ubiquitous cowhide. These leathers are fairly easy to maintain and very forgiving, with straightforward care routines. On top of that, they're also sturdy, long-lasting, plentiful (with an affordable price to match), and possess lovely natural qualities. There's good reason this breed is chief of the pantheon.

**Soft Leather** can look like cattle, but tends to behave like suede and nubuck. Calfskin, kidskin and lambskin all belong to this category. Soft leathers possess more delicate textures and naps, and will require delicate treatment. While easier to maintain, they are more vulnerable and less durable than cattle leather. These breeds are famous for their lovely scents and textures, even without getting cut down to suede or nubuck.

**Exotic Leather** is most often procured for its unworldly beauty. You can find endless varieties of exotic leather: snake, stingray, deer, caiman, eel, ostrich, chicken foot, and even sharkskin have special places in the spotlight. The downside is that these special leathers will need different and more cautious forms of treatment, and will usually not last as long as cattle leather. There are, of course, exceptions: stingray leather is essentially a mass of solid, pearl-like beads fastened impenetrably tight, such that early Japanese culture found it useful for armor and sheaths. Even better, exotic skins tend to have special perks. Deerskin (or buckskin), for example, is a favorite leather in Native American culture; it's light, flexible, cozy and breathes in a way that retains warmth in winter and keeps cool in summer. It's practically impossible to give a concise

summary of what to expect from exotic leather - they're a wild card. The point is to enjoy its unique beauty, and treasure it as long as it lasts.

### **Endangered Species**

As wonderful as exotic leather is, it is important to respect the creatures that sacrificed to give you this gift. An estimated 10,000 animal species undergo extinction every year, and part of that problem is due to illegal poaching and trading of exotic skins. Most wildcats, including many subspecies of tigers, lions, jaguars and leopards, are on this list. Purchasing these leathers is a violation of international law, and ethically irresponsible. If you are unsure whether an animal belongs to an endangered species, please visit <http://cites.org/> for more information.

### **How Leather Works**

Now that you've got a good idea about how much variety there is in leather, it's easy to understand that the piece you are holding is one of a kind. There's no other leather exactly like it, and therefore, there's no best answer for how to maintain yours. Raising leather is all about trial and error. In these next sections, I'll focus on some general advice that'll point you in the right direction, including how to clean and condition, how to store and protect your leather, and how to magic away those pesky stains.

But first, I'm going to condense the really important stuff down into five trusty tenets. If you read anything in this eBook, make it this.

## 5 Leather Care Commandments

### ***Rule 1: Know Your Leather***

Knowledge is power. If you know your leather's tan, cut, finish and animal donor, you can get a pretty good idea how it's going to behave even before treating it. When you purchase leather, ask the vendor what type it is, check the manufacturer's description or even look the leather up online. If you can't find what you need, you can often deduce the type with some hands on touch. How thick is the leather? Does it feel strong and tensile, or thin and slack? Is the surface soft, or plastic-like and smooth? What does it smell like? Is the color uniform, or distinct? Some leather, such as Pull Up, will actually change color when you flex or apply pressure to it (due to the impregnated oils). Use your senses!

### ***Rule 2: Know What's Moving Into Your Leather***

Short of knowing your leather's type; be smart about what's going on it. Test anything you intend to treat your leather with before using it. Try to anticipate what it will be exposed to, be it weather, dust, or messy toddlers with a penchant for spilling soda everywhere. You might want to keep a bottle of cleaner on hand if the latter. You don't have to keep a constant vigil. Leather's natural durability can take many beatings without pulling a stitch (some even take advantage of this to give their leather a personalized, rugged esthetic). Just try to keep your

leather in mostly safe places, and pay attention to the weather. If you get lots of snow, it might be a good idea to use a leather conditioner or protector before taking it out of the house.

***Rule 3: Follow the Instructions***

This rule can't be stressed enough. Be it from the leather briefcase's manufacturer, the vendor who sold you your purse or the back label on the conditioner bottle you are about to use - if rules are given, follow them. Do your research first. Priceless leather merchandise has been ruined with incompatible leather treatments. If you're going to treat your leather, try to go in with some knowledge, even if it is as simple as "This bag is soft and supple. It may already be conditioned. I'm going to go easy with this leather conditioner." Don't rush.

***Rule 4: Don't Feed Your Leather More than It Can Swallow***

Enthusiasm is a virtue, but don't get carried away. There's only so much conditioner leather can swallow. If too much is applied at once, it clogs up the pores going down, and the rest forms a sticky residue on the outside. Even with careful application, too much conditioner can be used. If your leather stops absorbing conditioner, stop conditioning. You can always apply more recipe, but it's hard to apply less. Check the "Tacky Leather" section if you suspect you've used too much conditioner.

***Rule 5: Treat Your Leather Sooner, Not Later***

You can't go back in time. If you walk into a rainstorm with unprotected leather, it can be damaged. If you leave that splash of mud on your leather all day, it can leave a stain. If you let your leather sit out in the sun without protection, it can fade and crack. Treat your leather

sooner rather than later. Treat the spill now, and it won't set. Give it protection now, and it won't be soaked away by an unexpected storm. This rule isn't just important for your leather. When you take initiative now, you take control - not merely react.

## **Treating Leather**

Armed with these tenets, you are ready to get started; everything from here on out deals with the daily know-how of practical leather care. Let's get our hands dirty!

### **Routine Treatment**

Leather is a porous animal, and will greedily absorb anything it can, from dust, water, snow even to mold. Regularly keeping your leather's surface clean can prevent these contaminants from taking root. Failing this, unfettered debris will begin to clog up pores going down, and prevent your leather from breathing - a vital rhythm allowing for the exchange of oils and moisture. If leather cannot breathe, oil and contaminants on the inside will slowly rot structural fibers away, or else the lack of moisture and lubrication will dry it to ashes. This process may take a while, mind, but it's still important to clean and condition every now and then if you want your leather to go the distance. For routine cleaning, gently brush off any visible contaminants with a lightly damp cloth until everything looks cleansed.

### **Deep Cleaning & Conditioning**

Every now and then, your leather will need a stronger punch to pull out the muck and restore the luster. This can occur when you begin to see the color fade, the texture roughen, the surface become abnormally dirty, or allow enough time to pass that you feel your leather is due for a refreshing. This is the time for deep cleansing and conditioning, the backbone of leather care.

Deep Cleaning usually precedes conditioning. While many cleaners, such as mild soap, will remove contaminants at or near the surface of your leather, you will need deep cleaners to pull out substances that have had time to settle. Alcohol-based cleaners, such as Straight Cleaner No.2, are exceptionally good at this.

- Read the leather cleaning recipe's instructions before using. Check the leather manufacturer's recommendations for product maintenance, if possible.
- Test your leather cleaner in a discreet area of the leather with a white, lint-free cloth. Check for excess color rub off, discoloration, or any other negative effects after it dries.
- When ready, gently massage your leather cleaner evenly and thinly across the leather's surface. Allow the cleaner to set naturally - do not use too much pressure when applying.
- When the leather appears clean, wipe off any excess residue, and allow drying completely.
- Don't use commercial cleaners not designed for leather. These cleaners usually have an incompatible pH range that could deal significant damage to your leather later on. Leather's pH is balanced around a 7, sitting neutrally between acid and alkaline.

Conditioning has a close parallel to its human counterpart. Like skin conditioner, leather conditioner lubricates and nourishes leather, strengthening its fiber bonds and giving limited protection. Without conditioner, leather will eventually dry out and wither, unlike human skin, which produces its own oils. When conditioning, follow the same rules as you did cleaning.

- Read the leather conditioning recipe's instructions before using. Check the leather manufacturer's recommendations, if you can.
- Test your leather conditioner in a discreet area of leather with a white, lint-free cloth. Check for excess color rub off, discoloration, or any other negative effects after it dries.
- Gently massage leather conditioner evenly across the leather's surface (uneven spread can lead to splotchy dry). Use a little at a time, only giving as much as will absorb, and allow the conditioner to set naturally. Do not use too much pressure when applying.
- When the leather conditioner stops absorbing, buff off any excess residue and allow the leather to set overnight for best results.

Not all leather conditioners are the same. Some conditioners may be specifically designed for a certain leather, like exotic or suede conditioners. Other conditioners may be designed for a wide variety of leather, such as Leather Care Liniment No.1. Pay attention to what you purchase.

## **Testing Recipes**

Testing leather treatments is essential. Using an incompatible conditioner on your leather may permanently darken it, or flatten its nap, or cause endless other calamities. Even if you are using a conditioner that is recommended for your leather, it is still a good idea to test it first to get an idea how it will respond. Once you know how your leather will react, it is easier to adapt to its needs and maximize your treatment's effects. If your satchel is made from multiple types of leather, or your backpack has an uneven texture, you might even try testing it in multiple places to make sure it will have the same, balanced effect.

### **Frequency**

It is a good idea to clean and condition your leather at least 2-3 times a year. This may change depending on the amount of use your leather gets and the weather it is exposed to. If you live in a heavily snowy or rainy environment, you may want to add conditioner or protecting formula every couple months. If your leather is mainly going to be indoors and away from sunlight, twice a year may be all that your leather needs. You should always condition your leather after you have cleaned it, but you can condition without cleaning if it is not significantly dirty and you have brushed off the surface first. For routine cleaning, try to dust off your leather every week, and attend to any spill or other incident as soon as possible. If you are restoring older or malnourished leather, you may want to clean it several times first, and follow up with 2-3 conditionings per week until its supple nature is restored.

### **Watch Your Leather Grow**

Most leather will last years and years without care if left to its own devices. That doesn't mean it'll look the same as it did fresh out of the tannery. Your leather's health depends entirely on how much work you put into it. So keep an eye out. Does your wallet have a rough, dry texture? It probably needs more conditioner. Has dust been sitting on your duffel bag? - Maybe it's time for some deep cleaning. Is the color fading on your couch? - get it out of the sunlight. If your leather is squeaky, it's drying out. Likewise, if leather is supple and flexible already, it probably doesn't need any more treatment. Keep track of the time that passes before you need to condition again until it becomes a rhythm.

### **Storage and Protection**

Where and how your leather is handled can have a big effect on its health. This next session will give you a few pointers about good places to store your leather and ways to handle it that will minimize risk for harm.

### **Things that Harm Your Leather**

Leather's built to be tough, but too much exposure to the wrong types of things can have a pernicious effect, whittling your leather's lifespan down one worn out fiber at a time. Chief among these is water: it's plentiful, frequent, and hard to avoid. Dust and dirt can also be a close contender in the right amount, but its effects take time to show, and some exposure can even be healthy. Excessive debris can build up inside your leather, choking its pores from the inside.

Heat and UV rays can age your leather prematurely and possibly cause it to dry out and crack. Mold can grow when leather is left in places dark, warm and moist. Even using the wrong types of leather cleaner or conditioner for your leather can lead to unexpected results. In the remedies below, we'll talk about how to deal with some of these problems. But in the meantime, just make sure you give your leather the occasional check up now and then.

### **How to Handle Your Leather**

It's a good idea to have a place you can keep your leather when it's not in use. Ideal places will be kept safe from excess dust, heat, moisture, and the possibility of spills. Common places include wooden boxes and dust bags, whose breathable nature gives leather air but keeps it dry. To help your leather keep its shape, you can also try filling it out with newspaper or packing paper. Even if your leather is too large to fit in a box, you can cover it when not in use, like laying a blanket over a sofa. As a general rule, just try to make sure your leather is in a dry, clean place away from too much heat.

### **How to Protect Your Leather**

When leaving the safe confines of your home into the harsh elements, you can't go wrong with a bit of preparation. Know your environment, pay attention to the weather, and consider what you're going to use your leather for. If your leather's going to participate in a rough activity, give it some leather conditioner beforehand. If it's snowing, up that to a leather protector, like Water Protectant No.3. Even using artificial leather protectors like silicone spray is better than no protection at all, but use these sparingly, as they may dry your leather out. Be prepared.

## **Remedies & How To**

You've got the basics down for leather care. In this next section, I'm going to share several leather care tips with you using both home remedies and professional treatments to get your leather back in pristine shape. There are a variety of ingredients lying around the house you can use to restore your leather. For more efficient and lasting treatments, however, it is usually best to purchase a leather care recipe specifically designed to treat your leather.

### **Body Oils**

Body oils are one of the most common problems you will encounter with leather furniture. Prolonged exposure to oils in the skin can leave couches and armchairs plagued with unsightly spots. You usually find these around the top, where the headrests, but body oil stains can appear anywhere. As a rule, they have a harder time penetrating finished leather, so if you are dealing with unfinished leather, try to lay down a blanket or apply a protective conditioner early on. There are a few ways to remove body oil stains. One common method is baking soda or corn starch.

- Sprinkle the baking soda over the affected spot, and let it sit overnight.
- In the morning, if the powder has turned yellow, it has removed some oil. Dust the powder off.
- Repeat steps 1 & 2 until you are satisfied or until the powder stops turning yellow.

You will also likely need to give the leather several treatments of alcohol-based cleaner. Make sure that the leather does not get too dry after several treatments. If the leather does begin to feel dry, or after you are finished cleaning, apply a leather conditioner. You can also apply the baking soda or cornstarch in between cleanings, when the leather is completely dry.

### **Darkened/Faded Leather**

Darkened leather cannot always be cured conventionally. Leather will often grow dark after it has accumulated body oils or too much leather conditioner is applied. The best remedy for this is prevention. Spot dust regularly to pick up oils and debris on the leather's surface. Clean and condition 2-4 times a year, or whenever the leather gets excessively dirty. To prevent using too much conditioner, test it first on your leather and only use as much as absorbs naturally.

If leather darkens, use a leather dye to restore its color. Consult "Re-dye Leather" section for more information about this.

Using sunlight to fade the color of your leather is not recommended. While sunlight can lighten up leather, sunlight's inherent UV rays will do even more damage to leather on a chemical level.

### **Dye Rub Off**

This will usually happen when a leather product is being cleaned or conditioned for the first few times. Loose dyes riding the surface will get picked up as a cleaner or conditioners rids the surface of other loose contaminants. This should usually lessen upon subsequent

cleaning/conditioning routines. If it does not, and you notice a distinct change in color, you may want to switch leather recipes or consult a local leatherworker.

## **Grease**

If fresh, blot up grease with a cloth. Don't rub or smear it, or you'll push it further into the pores. Treat sooner rather than later. When you've picked up all the grease you can, apply a leather cleaner.

- Treat grease stain with leather cleaner, and allow drying completely.
- After leather has dried, sprinkle corn starch or baking soda over the stain, and allow sitting overnight. If the powder turns yellow in the morning, it has absorbed some of the grease. Dust off and repeat.
- 2-3 times a week, apply cleaner, and in between sprinkle corn starch or baking soda. Repeat this process until stain disappears.
- Apply conditioner. If the leather begins to feel dry before this stage, apply conditioner at your discretion, and resume treatment again.
- You may also try wrapping or stuffing the affected area with newspapers or packing paper. The more opportunity grease has to absorb elsewhere, the better.

## **Mold**

Mold thrives in dark, moist, and warm climates. If leather is being kept in these conditions, it is more likely to contact mold and mildew. If leather develops mold:

- Health is your primary concern. Whenever working with mold, take care that you are well protected and in a safe cleaning environment. In this case, you should be wearing gloves and a mask, and working outdoors to prevent breathing in toxic fumes, or allowing them to spread throughout your house.
- Use a soft, bristle brush to brush away the mold (away from people or animals).
- Clean thoroughly with an alcohol based cleaner. You may need several cleaning sessions over a few days to fully remove mold. Keep an eye on the texture to make sure it doesn't get too dry.
- Wash hands and thoroughly clean or safely discard anything used to clean mold.
- Practice safe storing methods to prevent future mold growth on your leather. (See “How to Store Leather” section).

## **Mud**

Usually comes in two varieties: brown and red. Brown mud is fairly easy to remove. Red mud is more difficult, and may leave a permanent tint if not treated swiftly and carefully. When treating either:

- Try to clean mud before it dries. When you clean, do not rub with force - blot it up instead.
- If mud has dried, first remove as much as you can with a soft bristle brush, or very gently wipe off with a damp cloth.
- Dampen entire surface next with a slightly wet rag, going from seam to seam. Do not soak - the goal is to provide enough moisture to lift excess mud out of the pores.

- Buff with dry cloth to remove excess moisture.
- Follow up with leather cleaner, and condition the leather after the stain is lifted.

## **Odor**

Bad odors can be caused by numerous problems, including smoke, cigarette smoke, prolonged wetness, bad manufacturing, bad leather treatments, body fluids, and many other variables. Leather is porous and will absorb scents quickly. If your leather has had prolonged exposure to smoke, it may endure permanent chemical damage that can only come out with time. Here are a few tricks:

- Clean and condition your leather. Dry outside on windy day (but avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight and direct heat). Repeat this treatment over the course of several weeks.
- If this fails, place leather inside pillow case with liberal portion of baking soda and leave sitting overnight. Additionally, you could wrap newspapers around scented area for a time. Baking soda, cornstarch and newspapers can pull odors out of leather.
- Lastly, try allowing the leather to age naturally, and give it lots of use and time outdoors breaking in. Leather takes in everything around it and adapts to its environment. Plenty of exposure to pleasant environments makes for pleasantly scented leather.

## **Growing Patina**

Patina is a collage of beautiful colors and patterns that may or may not grow naturally overtime on your leather. It more frequently occurs on natural leathers such as vegetable tanned and

aniline dyed leather. The changes in your leather as patina grows may be drastic or subtle, but they usually possess a lovely blend of honeyed hues and wavy motifs that breathe an air of antiquity.

Growing patina is an art in the leather world. Patinas can be encouraged by allowing leather less protection and more exposure to elements with only enough cleaning to keep it in shape. Using strong conditioners and protectants will delay patina. Patina is inevitable for some natural leathers as they oxidize, and can only be delayed. If you want your leather to grow a patina, the best way to do so is let it see the world. Give it lots of use, and while it is important your leather receives enough protection so as not to be ravaged by a hostile climate, don't be afraid to let it breathe and soak in the nature around it. In all things, moderation and patience is the key.

### **Re-dyeing Leather**

Re-dyeing leather is usually a task for a professional, but it can be managed without one if you know what you're doing. Try to consult a professional's advice (be it in person or even via a tutorial video online) before you begin. This process can be tricky. If you feel confident you can tackle this task, take advantage of whatever advice below is applicable to your situation.

You will first need to acquire the right kind of leather dye for your project. Bring your leather patient (or a picture of the leather) to a local leatherworking store, and get a color match. Ask to see the dye in action on a strip of leather similar to the piece you own.

Once you find the ideal match:

- Clean your leather. Ensure there is no dust or waxy residue; this will impede the dye's ability to absorb and may leave it splotchy after it dries.
- Place a newspaper around your work area and put masking tape over any part of the leather you don't want dyed.
- Test the leather dye on a discreet area of your leather with a cotton bud, and allow drying. If it dries well with no discoloration, it's safe. If the leather bubbles or flakes, stop immediately and consult professional care.
- Use long, overlapping strokes to dye your leather's surface. Work on one side at a time. If the leather streaks, repeat the process. Coat until the dye is even and color matched.
- Allow your leather to dry and the dye to set overnight. Apply a coat of leather conditioner when completely dry to protect your new dyed finish.

## **Scratches**

Scratches occur more frequently with protected and finished leather, such as chrome tanned and pigmented leather. Light scratches on vegetable tanned and aniline leather can usually rub out. Fixing a scratch may take some time - the best way to minimize a scratch or cut is to maintain the leather's health around it, and allow the fibers to strengthen their bonds naturally. You can help this along with the following:

- Use an art gum eraser or a soft bristle brush. Gently rub in direction of the scuff until it begins to fade.
- Clean and condition the leather. Several treatments may be necessary. If one conditioner isn't un-making the cut, try upgrading to a heavier conditioner, or a leather paste.
- Scratches do not disappear – they are only covered up. If a scratch is deep enough, it may not be able to be covered up, and will require a professional. In this case, seek out a local leatherworker.

### **Salt Stains**

Salt stains usually occur in snowy or very wet environs. Since salt is used to prepare leather, it rises back to surface when leather becomes excessively wet. This results in an unsightly white stain, which is most visible on darkly colored leathers. The most efficient way to remove these stains is a thorough cleaning and conditioning regimen. There is also a common substitute, involving a touch of vinegar:

- Mix cold water with white, distilled vinegar in a bowl.
- Dab a lint-free cloth into the vinegar brew and gently dampen the salt stain.
- Dry up any residue and allow drying.
- After the leather has dried completely, follow up with a leather conditioner.

### **Stains**

Generic stains can usually be treated with a simple cycle of cleaning and conditioning. If the stain is fresh, gently blot up as much as you can with a slightly damp cloth (don't rub or smear), sooner rather than later. If you don't have a cleaner or conditioner handy, temporary cleaning substitutes such as white, distilled vinegar or rubbing alcohol may serve as substitutes, so long as they are tested first. As for conditioners, coconut and olive oil can be good substitutes to get your leather back on its feet, but may not be ideal for all types of leather. As always, test first. Not all stains should be treated the same way. If possible, discern where the stain came from, and treat with an appropriate remedy.

### **Tacky Leather**

If your leather becomes tacky after being treated, this usually means too much leather conditioner has been used. This is usually easy to reverse, especially when it is treated quickly.

- Dab up the leather surface's with a damp cloth to pick up residual oils.
- Apply a leather cleaner. This may take multiple sessions over a few days. Make sure the leather doesn't get too dry during this time.
- You can also apply a sprinkling of baking soda or cornstarch between cleanings, when the leather is completely dry. Let the powder sit overnight, and if it turns yellow the next day, dust it off and repeat. Cycle between this and your leather cleaner, and try to give the leather as much use as possible, until the stickiness disappears.
- Apply more conditioner if you feel your leather needs it, but only as much as naturally absorbs, to avoid over-conditioning.

Lots of contact with sunlight can also cause leather to grow tacky. This is both due to the excessive heat, and harmful ultraviolet rays which break down your leather on a chemical leather. It goes without saying, try to avoid giving your leather prolonged exposure to excessive heat and strong sunlight. You might try placing a windshield cover over your car, covering your sofa with a blanket, or even give your leather a UV protectant, like Auto Refreshener No.4. Leather can also become sticky if a stain has set in, or if harsh chemicals have been in contact with it. Cleaning and conditioning can usually reverse these problems, or you can consult the remedy section of this book or a leather professional for more specific advice. Frequent exposure to body oils may suffocate leather's pores and cause a build-up of oils on the surface, resulting in sticky residue. See the "Body Oils" section for a remedy to this pesky problem.

### **Wetness/Water Stains**

The best remedy for water stains is prevention. You can protect your leather with powerful weather repellents, such as Water Protectant No.3 It's nigh impossible to be prepared for every situation, however. When your leather has been soaked without the proper protection, it is best to treat the leather before the water has had time to run its course and leave an unsightly stain.

When the leather is freshly wet:

- Absorb as much moisture as possible with a lint-free cloth, but do not smear.
- Allow your leather to dry in a cool, clean area. Do not use heat to dry (i.e.: sunlight, blow dryer).

- After you have cleaned the moisture up and the leather has dried, apply a leather conditioner.
- If your leather has been wet for some time and has developed water stains, it can be difficult to treat, and may not have the ability to be cured conventionally. In this case, it is best to seek a professional leatherworker. First, you might try your own hand:
- Wet the entire surface of your leather with a cool, wet cloth, starting from the edge of the stain. Be gentle about it, as too much pressure can harm your leather.
- Slowly work outward with the cloth, working seem to seem, using less moisture the farther you get from the water stain. Your goal is to get the water stain just wet enough to release its spot, while allowing the leather to dry naturally and uniformly.
- Allow your leather to dry in a cool, clean place away from sunlight and direct heat.
- Follow up with a cleaning and conditioning session. You may need to perform multiple session over the course of a few weeks. Keep an eye on the leather's texture, and give it more conditioner if it feels like it's getting too dry. Your water stain should disappear more with every treatment.

## **Wrinkles**

Wrinkles are usually caused by rough use, age, or pressure (i.e.: the leather is stuffed into tight spaces or piled under heavy objects). They can also occur while wearing apparel that is too loose, so that the leather is flexed frequently. Heat or alcohol are the primary remedies, but be

warned - they will cause permanent changes to your leather. If you are dealing with excessive wrinkling, it may be best to see a leather professional rather than trying to tackle this yourself.

***Using Heat (shrinks leather to remove wrinkles):***

- Clean up your leather with a leather cleaner before you begin, and allow it to dry completely. Place a newspaper or packing paper over the wrinkles you will be removing.
- Heat will be applied using an air dryer. Turn it to its lowest heat setting, and hold about a foot away from the news papered wrinkles. Keep it blowing there for around a minute, but make sure the leather doesn't get too hot. Afterwards, try to rub the wrinkles out with your palms or with a spoon. Repeat this process a few times if you need to, but do not let the leather get too hot.
- After you're finished with the heat, try to stuff and fill out the leather as much as you can. You can fill it with packing paper or newspaper, or even squeeze a shoe tree inside. You don't want excessive pressure, but you want to help your leather find its shape as it settles back in.
- Allow your leather to dry in a cool, clean location away from sunlight and excessive heat.
- Restore the oils and lubricants lost during this process with a leather conditioner.

***Using Alcohol (stretches leather to remove wrinkles):***

- Use an alcohol-based cleaner on your leather. Make sure to test it first in a discreet area - alcohol is a potent cleaner, and can be used to make it more pliable (lucky for us).
- Stretch your leather wrinkles after they have been moistened with alcohol.

- After the leather's been stretched, fill or brace it with something to help it keep its new shape. The most common ways of doing this are to fill the leather with newspapers or a shoe tree.
- Allow your leather to dry in cool, clean location away from sunlight and heat as it sets.
- Follow everything up with conditioner to restore the lubricants lost from cleaning.