

DOCKWALK

Captain & Crew News

Maintaining Leather: Tips from the Experts

To retain its beauty and other desirable qualities, leather requires frequent conditioning to replace the natural lubricants lost during normal use. With the proper care, however, leather can be protected from excessive dryness that can cause it to crack, and from moisture that may cause it to swell or mildew. Because unprotected leather is susceptible to spotting from water and other liquids, a newly purchased leather item should be immediately treated with one of the following procedures to help prevent permanent stains. Be sure to use only the proper protection for your particular type of leather.

The use of too much oil or wax can clog pores, causing leather to lose its ability to allow air in and moisture out. For the best protection, we recommend washing gently with a mild dishwashing soap. Ivory Liquid dishwashing soap is an excellent way to keep your leather clean and looking new. Use 1 part Ivory soap to 10 parts water. Dairy products that spill on darker dyed leather will leave a spot. After cleaning as described above, the oils in dairy products will eventually rise back up to the surface. Ideally, keep dairy products away from leather.

Lighter colored leather needs to be cleaned more often. Dirt, dust, and clothing, especially black and dark-blue dyed jeans, will leave traces on leather. Colored leather is treated the same as any leather is. Use the cleaning and conditioning tips recommended depending on the particular finish of the leather.

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Never use preparations made for smooth leather on suede or "rough side out" leather. Use only cleaners or preparations made specifically for suede.

It is important that all leather goods, including boat seats, footwear, clothing, furniture, and everything in between, receive proper care to enhance and extend the item's life.

To remove stains from leather seats, the seats need to be cleaned and conditioned on a regular basis, at least twice a year. As long as a stain is cleaned immediately so that it does not have time to set in, cleaning it with 10 parts water to 1 part Liquid Ivory soap should get the stain out. Once a seat is clean, it does need to be reconditioned. If the stain does not come out after cleaning, you should call a professional leather repair company to have the stained area re-dyed.

The best way to keep leather protected from the sun and other elements is to clean and condition it on a regular basis, at least twice a year. The conditioner puts a protective layer on the surface, which will help prevent sun damage. Vinyl repairs can be cleaned the same way as leather, minus the conditioner.

Yacht crews need to understand that they should only attempt to remove large, stubborn stains on leather at their own risk. Consulting a professional can alleviate a "botched" job and reduce additional expenses.

This information is brought to you by Creative

Colors International, one of the largest franchises in the repair, reconditioning, and color restoration of leather, vinyl, fabric, plastics, and carpeting. Go to www.creativecolorsintl.com for more information.

