



## Shoe Care Tips

### Tip #1 Use Cedar Shoe Trees

Did you know during a normal day your feet produce over a 1/4 cup of moisture and up to a 1/2 cup when active? Cedar shoe trees can extend the life of your leather shoes up to three times their expected life span. They draw moisture out of your shoes; re-awaken the shoe's natural structural memory; and prevent the leather from wrinkling and cracking.

Aromatic Cedar shoe trees have three basic functions:

#### **The original shape of the shoe is maintained**

Using shoe trees daily prevents shoe upper leather from curling and cracking. Leather shape is maintained by the tension of the shoe tree. NuShoe shoe trees are designed to fit properly and easily to nearly all shoe styles on market. Our spring action and split toe design allows the tree to fill the natural shape of your shoe.

#### **The unfinished cedar absorbs moisture**

Feet typically perspire an eighth of a cup of moisture everyday. Left unchecked, this moisture is absorbed into the linings of shoes permanently, thus decreasing the life of shoes. By placing shoe trees into shoes every night, moisture is absorbed into the shoe tree from the shoe.

#### **The aroma of cedar deodorizes shoes naturally**

Shoe odors are naturally negated with the powerful scent of aromatic cedar.

### Tip #2 Rotate Your Shoes

Shoes need a day off. If you want your fine leather shoes to last longer, never wear them for two consecutive days.

### Tip #3 Protective Soles

Adding a rubber sole protector prolongs the life of your shoes. Stylishly thin, this rubber top sole protects the outer sole from wear and tear. Water resistant and skid proof, protective soles will greatly increase the life of leather soled shoes.

### Tip #4 Use a Shoe Horn

Always use a shoe horn when putting on your shoes. This saves the heel collar and counter from unnecessary wear

### Tip #5 Maintenance

We highly recommend cleaning your shoes on a regular basis, depending on frequency of use. The cleaning method depends on the shoe's material. Leather can be polished and conditioned with a leather lotion applied with a soft cloth (see steps below). Suede looks best when brushed; although special suede brushes are available, a clean toothbrush works just as well. Fabric should be sprayed with a stain guard.

#### **Polishing Smooth Leather in a Nutshell**

1. Clean the shoes with leather cleaner to get the grime off the top. Never use any type of cleaner that contains an acid or a detergent as both are damaging to fine leather and will age the shoe. When necessary, use saddle soap and water for a better cleaning. Be sure to rinse away all of the saddle soap. Residual saddle soap will damage leather, just as dried soap left on your skin will damage and cause excessive drying. Never use a detergent--it destroys the natural oils. Always use a proper leather saddle soap for cleaning.
2. Condition the leather to soften. While the leather is still slightly moist after a good cleaning, apply a leather conditioner to replace the leather's natural oils. We recommend Lexol conditioner or any good quality conditioner containing lanolin. Set your clean and treated boots aside for 24 hours to dry. It's always a good idea to use shoe trees so that your boots maintain their shape. Later, apply boot polish or wax, and buff to a shine.



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3. Use paste, wax or cream polish to shine your shoes. Make sure the polish matches the shoes. Use a cream a shade lighter than the shoe to cover scratches. Neutral is the "color" for light colored shoes. Other colors may have to be matched by taking one of your shoes with you when you buy polish. Cream or Paste polish moisturizes fine leather, keeps it flexible, and soaks into the leather to allow leather to breathe. Wax polish shines leather better than cream, but it seals the leather and causes it to dry out. Avoid liquid polish, although it puts a fast shine on your shoes it can dry out and crack the leather. You can apply the polish with a soft, clean polishing rag; old socks will work fine. Wrap the corner of the cloth around your first and second fingers of your dominant hand. Twist the remainder of the cloth to tighten the portion around your fingers and hold that part in the palm of your hand. You can also use a horsehair brush dauber instead of a cloth; if you use a dauber, you'll need a different one for each color of polish you use.

4. Allow the shoes to dry (about 10 minutes) then buff the shoe with a polishing brush-- preferably horsehair -- and use a soft clean cloth to bring out a high luster.

5. Weatherproof your shoes. A protective spray is an excellent way to protect your shoes from water, snow, mud, and spills. The best way to protect your shoes is to wipe the leather with a damp cloth, following the instructions on the protector spray. Spray your shoes before wearing, and on a regular basis thereafter. Mink oil will waterproof and preserve leather, but it can darken lighter shades of leathers. A water and stain protective spray for leather, provides water protection, and doesn't alter the color.

**Suede** can be cleaned with a clean soft brush (like a toothbrush), or you can buy special erasers (suede bars) to remove stains and dirt. Raise the nap on suede by applying steam from a steam iron from about 10 inches away. Also special brass-bristle brushes are available to raise the nap after cleaning. A protective non-silicone finish (like Scotchgard or Meltonian Water and Stain Protector) sprayed on new suede shoes will help repel water and stains.

**Nubuck** – (brushed leather similar to suede, but with a finer nap) treat the shoes with water repellent, use rubber-bristle brush (not nylon) or a suede bar. Use the bar damp to clean and condition, and use the brush to lift the nap

### Tip #6 Avoid Heat

Always keep shoes away from direct heat to prevent the leather from drying out. Leather should always dry naturally. It's important to avoid drying them near a fire or heater. This overheating will literally cook the leather and cause it to become stiff and brittle. The best technique is to ensure that dry, room temperature air can circulate inside the boots.

**Note: What should you do if your shoes or boots get wet?** The first thing to consider is that shoes should be waxed or oiled so that they tend to repel water. The less water absorbed by leather, the longer it will last and the more comfortable you'll be. Wet leather will stretch and weaken, shrinking and becoming brittle as it dries.

Once your shoes are wet, however, they should be dried as soon as possible with room temperature, dry air (Between 70-95 degrees Fahrenheit or 20-35 degrees Centigrade). If you're in a situation where you can't properly dry your boots, wear them in a dry area until they can dry out a bit before you take them off.

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If you let the boots sit in a wet condition for days without drying out, they can become moldy. This isn't good for the boot, and mold or mildew is nearly impossible to get rid of.

### Tip #7 Shoe Bags

When traveling, use shoe bags; this will prevent the soiling from getting in touch with your clothing. If you turn a shoe bag inside out, you can use it as a shoe mitt.

### Tip #8 Shoe Care for Special Shoes and Situations

Cordovan shoes (real shell cordovan, made from horse hide, not just shoes that are burgundy color) need some special care. Neutral cream or paste polish tends to leave a white film on Cordovan leather. Alden recommends using cordovan color paste wax polish, and not shoe cream. Also beware that the shell cordovan creases are usually lighter, not darker, in color.



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Cordovan leather is vegetable tanned instead of the modern method of "chrome" tanning. Since cordovan leather already contains a large amount of oil/wax, the polishing requirements are different from calfskin.

Use a damp soft cloth for cleaning shell cordovan shoes.

The most common mistake in shining cordovan shoes is using too much polish. The excess polish creates a layer of build-up, which has three negative effects:

1) it covers the natural beauty of the leather, 2) it creates a grainy texture in the creases of the shoes, 3) and the build-up of polish scuffs easily and attracts dust.

To avoid these effects, use only the thinnest film of polish when polishing your cordovan shoes. Just a very small amount, spread very thin over the shoe, is all that is needed to restore the color and luster. You should not have to polish your cordovan shoes frequently, and often all that is needed is to brush and cloth them in order to remove scuffs and restore the shine.

After the polish is applied, let it dry, then brush it off with a horsehair brush. Next, wipe the final film of polish away with a soft buffing cloth.

### Here are the "don'ts" of shell cordovan care:

Do not use "neutral" polish

Do not clean cordovan shoes using saddle soap

Do not attempt to clean cordovan shoes using petroleum distillates or cleaning fluids

Do not use any spray shines or aerosol type waterproofs

Do not attempt to dry wet shell cordovan shoes with heat or a heater. Wipe them dry, and allow them to dry naturally

Do not attempt to polish shell cordovan shoes while wet

Spewing, a natural milky residue of wax will often form on new shell cordovan shoes. This is a normal residue from the tanning of the leather. Wipe it off with a soft cloth or brushing. To remove the wax in difficult areas, such as between stitches, use a toothbrush.

Exotic skins can be treated like calfskin, or with special conditioners that keep the leather from cracking. Take extra care when brushing to prevent scratching the surface.

Fabric shoes can be cleaned with a mild spray fabric cleaner. Let the cleaner dry to a powder and brush off the residue with a stiff brush. You can also use Woolite.

Patent leather can be cleaned with a damp cloth using lukewarm water and plain soap or Windex. Shine with a smooth soft cloth. Don't get any of the fabric wet (like the ribbon bow).

**Salt on shoes** – Damaging white salt marks should be rinsed off immediately with a 50/50 mixture of white distilled vinegar and water. Wipe dry, and follow the directions for wet shoes.