

11 Little-Known Ways to Keep Your Shoes Looking Brand Spankin' New!



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Keeping leather shoes clean has been a classic common sense problem. Keeping your shoes in their best condition is a concern for most people and, something particularly important to sales people, the military and every day people.

The following outlines some simple shoe care tips that have been gathered over the years to address the problem of keeping your shoes looking their best. Enjoy!

1. **Toothpaste** can be used to clean leather shoes.
 1. Put a dab of toothpaste on a washcloth or old toothbrush.
 2. Gently rub the stains with the toothpaste.
 3. Rinse.
2. **Mildew** can be removed from leather shoes by:
 1. Mixing:
 - 1 cup of rubbing alcohol
 - 1 cup of water.
 2. Sponge the solution onto your shoes and work it into the leather well.
 3. Allow to air dry.
 4. Clean, condition, and polish.
3. **Petroleum jelly** is reported by some to be a good cleaner and protector for leather shoes.
 - Apply jelly to a smooth, clean, lint-free cloth.
 - Rub in the jelly using a circular motion.
 - Let them rest a little while.
 - Wipe off the jelly using a clean cloth.
4. **The inside of a banana peel** has been reported to work for smooth leather shoes.
 - Test in an inconspicuous area like the tongue of the shoe.
 - Rub the banana peel all over the shoe.
 - Clean with water and a clean cloth.
5. **WD40** is used by some to clean and protect their leather work shoes.
 - Remove any obvious dirt, mud or other debris.
 - Spray the shoes with WD40.
 - Gently buff using a lint-free cloth.
6. **Furniture polish** is used by some to keep their leather shoes in good condition. This is not recommended for white shoes, but if you can find white furniture polish it may work.
 - Clean very dirty shoes with a household cleaner.

 - Spray the polish lightly over the shoe.
 - Wipe away any excess polish with a clean cloth. The polish helps seal in moisture so leather shoes don't dry out and crack.

7. **Olive oil** or **walnut oil** may also clean and protect smooth leather.
 - Test the oil in an inconspicuous spot like the tongue of the shoe to ensure color fastness.
 - Work a small amount into shoe using a soft cloth.
 - Polish with a soft cotton cloth.
8. Use **lemon juice** to remove regular dirt spots from leather :
 - Mix: 1 part lemon juice; 1 part cream of tartar
 - Work the paste into the spot with a soft cloth.
 - Let it sit for a few hours, if needed.
 - Come back and apply a little more paste.
 - Work it in and then wipe clean.
9. **Ink spots** can be removed in two ways:
 - Dip a cotton swab into **rubbing alcohol** and rub the spot.
 - Use a non-oily cuticle remover.
 - Leave it on overnight and wipe off with a damp cloth

NOTE: "Cuticle" remover, **NOT** nail-polish remover.

Keep leather **supple**, using the following homemade mixture of **vinegar and oil**:

 - Mix: 1 part white vinegar; 2 parts linseed oil
 - Pour the solution into a jar with a lid.
 - Shake well and apply to the leather with a soft cloth.
 - Let it sit for 12 hours and buff.
 - Change cloth as needed
10. **Water spots** can be removed from leather by:
 - Moistening the area with a little water.
 - Let it dry or gently blow dry. Never place leather in the sun to dry.
11. **VO5 hair conditioning gel** is reported to be a good leather cleaner.
 - Remove most of the dust and obvious dirt with a damp cloth or brush.
 - Rub a little dab of gel over the surface and wipe with a soft cloth to a shine.
 - A little gel goes a long way, so don't use too much.

Tips

- Leather should be kept out of direct sunlight.
- The next time you buy a pair of leather shoes, condition them before ever wearing them. This will help insure that your shoes are protected from the start, and will save time on future cleanings.
- Always rotate your shoes if you can.

Cautions

- Rags or cloth that comes in contact with shoe polish should be discarded immediately.
- **Remember:** When removing spots from leather, always test any cleaning method on an out-of-the-way spot first.
- Don't try to use shoe polish to change the color of your shoes. If you need your shoe color changed, consult a shoe repair shop.