



Boot Care Tips

Boots are not only a valuable fashion accessory, but are also a form of protection for your feet. For all that a great pair of boots gives you, it is well worth the time and energy to take care of them. Boots that are dull, scuffed or have rundown soles/heels can not only mar your overall appearance but can cause serious injuries to your feet. Below you will find care tips to help you keep your boots in tip-top shape to enhance their appearance, performance and life span.

Cleaning, conditioning, polishing and protecting your boots are the four steps in caring for your boots that will help keep them in excellent condition. Whether your favorite footwear is fashioned of leather, suede, nubuck or an exotic leather, there are special care techniques especially suited for your favorite pair of boots.

While the following are good general guides for boot care, please remember that these care tips may not apply to all boots. If your boots are not made of leather, suede, nubuck or an exotic leather, please refer to the care instructions given on your boots manufacturer's label. If you are not sure, please seek the advice of a professional. If you are using care products on your boots, you may wish to test the product on a small portion of your boot first.

Cleaning

The most important basic tip in boot care is cleaning your boots. Cleaning them properly on a regular basis will help you maintain that just-out-of-the-store look and will enhance their longevity. A clean boot also can help guard against footwear's biggest enemies: dirt and dust.



- **Leather Boots:** Using leather cleaner in the brand of your choice and either a damp rag, sponge or scrubbing brush, create a lather with the cleaner. Apply to your boots. (HINT: Remember to clean the inside of your boots too. Perspiration from your feet leaves salts and acids inside your boots.) Once you are finished cleaning your boots, remove the cleaner with a damp cloth, inside and out. It is best to allow your boots to air dry as leaving your boots next to a heat source to dry them may dry out the leather and could possibly damage them as well.
- **Exotic Leather Boots:** Exotic leather boots are crafted from the skins of animals such as ostriches, snakes and alligators. Using a cleaner made for regular leathers on these types of boots is not recommended as it can leave a residue around the base of the scales, causing the scales to crack and/or fall off. To avoid this, use a mild cleaner that is specifically designed for exotic leather. For exotic leathers that contain scales, start by first wiping off any dirt and dust with a rag. For other exotic leathers, you may simply use a soft brush or a dry cloth to gently scrub the cleaner onto the material. Since these materials have special membranes that keep the scales together, they should be cared for more frequently than products made of other animals.
- **Suede & Nubuck Boots:** Begin your cleanup by removing any stains using a solvent-based cleaner that is formulated for suede or nubuck. (HINT: One little trick you can try is to rub a pencil eraser very gently over the dry stains.) To keep suede and nubuck boots looking their best, use a plastic or rubber-tipped brush to restore the material and remove surface dirt on a regular basis. Be especially careful when brushing boots made with nubuck, as it is softer than suede and can easily be damaged. By cleaning dirt and dust off your boots regularly, you will be able to prevent the wear of the leather's microscopic fibers. Salts and perspiration from your feet and the street can damage all types of boots, including suede and nubuck. If your cleaning did not remove the salt from your boots, you may wish to try a salt remover product.

Conditioning

Conditioning is another important step in caring for your boots. By helping to soften and lubricate the material, conditioners make your boots more pliable and able to accept the abuse wearing inevitably inflicts upon them. Be sure to give the top crease of your boot where your toes flex some extra attention since this crease can crack if you do not treat it. Never use conditioners that are not developed for use on your particular type of leather.

- **Leather Boots:** It is best to apply the conditioner while the leather is still damp after cleaning. This way, the leather will more readily absorb the conditioner. Apply one light coat and wait 24 hours for the conditioner to absorb. You can then apply a second coat for added protection.
- **Exotic Leather Boots:** Use a mild conditioner that is specifically designed for exotic leather boots, preferably one that contains lanolin. Remember to condition these exotic leather boots more often than others because they contain special membranes.
- **Suede & Nubuck Boots:** To prevent the suede or nubuck from drying out, it is best to use a water-based conditioner. If your boots are made with oiled nubuck, use a conditioner made for nubuck regularly to replace the oils that wearing your boots takes out.

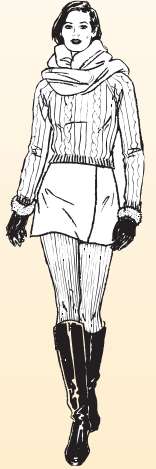
Polishing & Protecting

Last, but certainly not least, in caring for your boots is polishing and protecting. NOTE: Only boots that are made with finished leather should be polished.

- **Leather:** The most common material of which boots are constructed is finished leather. Finished leather, raw leather that has been processed with chemicals, has a smooth and usually shiny finish. (Unfinished leather, in contrast, is rough and dull in appearance; like a baseball glove.) Cream- or wax-based polish is the best choice for polishing your finished leather boots. Of the two, cream-based polish is preferable since wax based polish tends to attract more dirt and dust. Also, too much wax can clog the pores of the leather, causing it to dry out. By using a cream polish in a color that matches the leather, you can cover blemishes and scratches while adding a glossy finish. For some extra shine, you can use a patent leather finish spray.

And, of course, you must protect your leather boots from dirt, dust, salt, moisture and stains. For this layer of protection, a non-silicone protector works best to guard your leather boots from water and stains.

- **Exotic Leather:** The best defense for your exotic leather boots is the application of a water repellent. This will help protect the material from salt stains, water spotting and cracking.
- **Suede & Nubuck:** Before you even step into these types of boots, protect them by waterproofing them! Spray them regularly with a water and stain repellent. (HINT: Be sure to use a water and stain repellent that is made for suede or nubuck.)



Tip:

Cedar boot trees are excellent for storing your boots. These inner frames made of wood maintain the shape and form of your boots while you are not wearing them.



If you follow the boot care tips above, it will help your boots to remain looking brand new for a longer time. They also will be more resistant to wear and tear caused by dirt, dust, moisture and use.



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*The Divine Source for Boots*SM