

CARE OF YOUR FINE LEATHER FURNITURE

Leather Types

Before we can discuss caring for your leather, we must first determine it's type.

To properly use the products and achieve the desired results, it is important that the cleaner is able to identify the Leathers. ANILINE (A), NUBUCK (N), and PROTECTED (P).

The following is a definition of Leather types.

Leather Terms

A - Aniline - Also known as Natural, Pure, Naked, and Unprotected. These are Leathers that are coloured with transparent dyestuff. This means you are able to see the actual surface grain markings. These Leathers have very little or no protective treatments applied to them.

P - Protected - Also known as Finished, Semi Aniline, Everyday, Pigmented, and Painted. These Leathers have combined the best aspects of a natural product (Leather) and have utilized tannery technology to create a product that is more uniform in appearance and colour.

N - Nubuck - Also known as Chaps, Distressed, Bomber, and Suede. These are actually Aniline Leathers where the surface has been brushed, and have created a texture similar to velvet on Leather upholstery or fabric. Suede is the "flesh" side of a piece of Leather and Nubuck is an effect that is done to the grain side. Because Nubuck and Aniline Leathers are alike, it's sometime hard to tell them apart.

There is also another two sub-divisions of leather now being seen in Cairns of late. These are **Wax pull-ups & Oil pull-ups**.

Leather Should be professionally maintained. Leather is the Mercedes of furniture and it needs a skilled technician to properly care for it. Case in point, **if leather cleaning was easy there would be 100 leather cleaners in every city.**

Leather tanneries and manufacturers world-wide recommend proper cleaning and protection treatments every six months to extend the life of the leather and prevent premature cracking, peeling, and colour loss.

In the tropics, we recommend more regular care due to the humidity and constant mould problems.

Leather should be professionally maintained semi-annually. This includes cleaning, rejuvenating the moisture and fat liquors that have evaporated, and applying the proper protection.

Spot cleaning should be performed by the consumer with the proper cleaning agent. The pH of leather is approximately 4.5 and water is 7.0. It is highly suggested that only properly formulated water-based cleaning and preserving agents are used.

Without going into pH it will be sufficient to acknowledge that the pH range difference between 4.5 and 7.0 is 500 times stronger than that of finished leather.

Many sales people and deck tags indicate that you may dust the leather with a mild soap and water.

What is mild? Most likely, few of the cleaning agents at the consumer level are truly safe.

We have seen water rings, dye loss, rotting leather and cracking all from wrong cleaning agents.

Saddle soaps, mink oil and other products are not made for leather furniture and can damage some leathers. It is seriously recommended that the consumer purchase cleaning agents from a professional who specializes in leather furniture care.

WHAT TYPE OF LEATHER DO I HAVE ??

Protected leathers include Semi-aniline and Protected. These leathers have had a topcoat applied to give the surface more durability and cleanability. These are also the least expensive leathers to purchase and the least difficult for a professional to maintain. They are susceptible to finish problems related to pigment cracking do to improper maintenance, dogs and cats scratching and clawing, as well as pigments rubbing of due to inadequate adhesion.

Unprotected leathers include nubuck, suede and aniline. These leathers can become a nightmare. The unprotected leathers will readily absorb moisture and become stained. Oils and perspiration will also soak into these leathers many times causing dye displacement. Numerous types of stains discolorations of the leather fibers and can not, even with effort of the most skilled leather cleaner, be removed. These are the softest, most comfortable and most expensive leather. They are also high maintenance.

(A) Aniline:

Aniline leathers are top quality natural leathers in which the actual surface grain markings of the true leather (hide) are visible. They have very little or no protective treatments applied. Natural leathers can be classified as Natural, Pure, & Un-Protected and are usually colored with a transparent leather dye. A variety of clear finishes such as oil, wax, nitrocellulose and urethane protective coatings, which do not inhibit the softness or breathing of leather, are applied to the surface. These finishes allow the natural leather markings to show through the finish. Aniline leathers require different cleaning procedures than protected leather due to its porous nature. Aniline leather is prone to sun fading.

Very easy to scratch; water drops will darken the color and then dry back to natural color.

(P) Pigmented:

This is the most common leather type used in furniture, approximately 90% of the market. This leather has a uniform appearance and color. The leather has an intense color and a definite pattern (grain). You cannot see any natural leather markings through the top coatings, because a pigmented leather paint coat is applied to the surface. It is then sealed with a durable finish. Properly maintained, this finish will provide years of cleaning ability and durability.

Uniform color and grain patterns; will not scratch easily; water drops will not change color.

(N) Nubuck:

These are natural Aniline leathers that have been surface brushed or buffed on the grain side of the leather creating a nap and leaving a texture similar to velvet (softest of all leathers to the touch). Usually Nubuck has a natural finish, but may have a light protective coat and a transparent leather dye for color. This process increases the leathers surface exposure making it extremely absorbent to body oils and soil, and difficult to clean effectively.

Very soft to the touch, will scratch or scuff very easily; water drops will darken the leather but it usually returns to its original color after drying, but sometimes leaves a darker mark.

(W) Wax Pull-up: Contact Shorty

(O) Oil Pull-up: Contact Shorty

(B) Bycast: Contact Shorty

HOW DO I LOOK AFTER MY LEATHER

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(A) Aniline:

Weekly, the pieces should be vacuumed gently with a soft brush attachment, paying particular care to the crevices, seams, joins, etc; Cushions should be removed and the decking vacuumed and any objects removed. A light wipe over with a moist cloth should be all that is necessary to remove any build up of soiling.

Six Weekly, after vacuuming, and checking the decking, cleaning with a soft Leather Cleaner should be undertaken on the main body contact areas, to remove any oily residues. A light application of Leather Protection Cream should then be applied.

Six Monthly, the entire suite should be cleaned and Leather Protection Cream applied.

Yearly, contact your preferred Leather Professional to inspect, clean, apply Leather Conditioner and Leather Protection Cream.

(P) Pigmented:

Weekly, the pieces should be vacuumed gently with a soft brush attachment, paying particular care to the crevices, seams, joins, etc; Cushions should be removed and the decking vacuumed and any objects removed. A light wipe over with a moist cloth should be all that is necessary to remove any build up of soiling.

Six Weekly, after vacuuming, and checking the decking, cleaning with a soft Leather Cleaner should be undertaken on the main body contact areas, to remove any oily residues. A light application of Leather Protection Cream should then be applied.

Six Monthly, the entire suite should be cleaned and Leather Protection Cream applied.

Yearly, contact your preferred Leather Professional to inspect, clean, apply Leather Conditioner and Leather Protection Cream.

(N) Nubuck:

Weekly, the pieces should be vacuumed gently with a soft brush attachment, paying particular care to the crevices, seams, joins, etc; Cushions should be removed and the decking vacuumed and any objects removed. Special Nubuck Cleaning Cloths should be used for cleaning of the Nubuck. Do not rub, ask your preferred Leather Professional to show you how to use these cloths.

Six Weekly, after vacuuming, and checking the decking, for heavier soiling, you may need to clean with a soft Nubuck Cleaner before cleaning with the Special Nubuck Cleaning Cloths. When dry, apply the Nubuck ECO Protector to the pieces cleaned.

Six Monthly, the entire suite should be cleaned and Nubuck ECO Protection applied.

Yearly, contact your preferred Leather Professional to inspect, clean and apply Nubuck ECO Protection.

BIRO & PENS require special treatments, do not attempt to remove these or permanent damage may result. These products must be removed as soon as possible or they will also be permanent

If in any doubt whatsoever, contact Shorty.....**DO NOT EXPERIMENT.**

(W) Wax Pull-ups: **Contact Shorty**

(O) Oil Pull-ups: **Contact Shorty.**

(B) Bycast: **Contact Shorty**