

Leather Care 101 ½
the long-anticipated follow-up to Leather Care 101
WITH
Tips on how to
clean and store your leather equipment

The leather item in your kit which receives the most abuse is your footwear. After each event, clean off dirt carefully using a soft cloth or brush. Get into all the tight spaces where dirt likes to hide. Pay particular attention to “rough-out” boots, as the nap tends to want to retain dirt. Fine dust that is allowed to penetrate the leather can prematurely weaken the fibers themselves. Grit left in your seams is worse still, and can act like sandpaper, ruining the stitching.

Your other leather items probably won't suffer as much hardship as your bootees, so likely will not need as frequent or as vigorous a cleaning. For items not terribly soiled, wipe them down with a well wrung damp cloth. Use saddle soap as necessary for deeper cleaning. Allow items to dry naturally and slowly, avoiding exposure to outside heat sources and direct sunlight.

Most of your items will probably do well with a light oiling just prior to being stored for the off season. I use a gun patch saturated with warm pure neatsfoot oil and well wrung out. The next morning wipe off any oil that has not been absorbed, and buff with a soft rag for a dull shine. If you find that your gear needs another oiling or two during the season, do so, but, as I've stated before, there is such a thing as too much oil, so be sparing.

Always keep your leather in a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight, and with a free flow of air all around them.

At least, that's what works for me ...

Humbly submitted by Sgt Jones



Tintype of cobbler, ca. 1860s-1870s.