

SAINT CRISPIN'S™

GENUINE HAND SEWN WELTED SHOES

Shoe care - shoe cleaning

First a few basic principles: Almost every leather has a specific percentage of grease worked into it, adjusted according to the specifics of the tanning process. The fat content of the leather should on no account be increased by the addition of dubbin or oil. This fat is deeply embedded in the leather and it does not disappear. What may disappear is the fat on the upper surface of the skin and a little thereunder. Shoe cleaning should be limited to keeping this upper surface supple. For this purpose the fat contained in saddle soap is entirely sufficient.

For proper shoe cleaning you will need the following: a small household sponge, rubber gloves, a smooth, often washed cotton rag, cotton wool, a shoe brush and an old toothbrush. It is best to work on a low stool and to cover your lap with an old towel.

Washing

Wash your shoes four times a year with water and saddle soap and every time they have become wet or abnormally dirty. In order to do this, insert the shoe trees into the shoe, use the moistened household sponge to take some saddle soap from the tin, squeeze the sponge a number of times until a lather appears and then rub the shoe vigorously. Neither the edge of the sole nor the sole itself should escape this treatment. Now, without removing the lather, let the shoe dry for about 15 minutes and brush away the remains of the lather.

Cleaning

Saddle soap alone is often not enough in order to remove the old, thick layers of wax. For this purpose use naphtha (lighter fuel) or better still pure spirits of turpentine. Both of these are available in art supply shops. Put a few drops of naphtha or spirits on a ball of cotton wool and rub the shoes vigorously. Do not starve the cotton ball! Oil and grease stains can usually be removed using this method. Please do not ever use acetone or paint remover to clean your shoes.

Care and Polish

After cleaning and washing we recommend a first application of "Saphir, Medaille D'Or", a soft care wax (in glass containers). This washing cream is not water-soluble and it also contains a soft beeswax so that it can be applied quickly and easily. For the joint between the sole and the upper use the old toothbrush. Now your shoes are clean, the leather is cared for and the colour is refreshed. After one or two applications with a drying interval of around ten minutes a start can be made on the shine.

For this you will need a hard shoe polish in a tin such as "Kiwi" or "Saphir".

1) Tear the cleaning cloth into strips approximately 12 to 15 cm wide and about 30cm long. Palm upwards, stretch index and middle finger upwards and lay the strip of cloth across both fingers. Take hold of the two hanging ends and turn them until the material is taut over the fingers. Hold of the now intertwined ends as a ball between the thumb and forefinger of the same hand.

2) Put a little water into the lid of the shoe polish tin and dip your rag-covered fingers into it. The cotton should be moist but not dripping wet.

Shine elixir cleaning water!

We are always being asked what liquid can be added to the water to get an even better shine. Myths tell of everything from champagne and lemon juice through to vodka and grappa. Our employees add 20 – 30% pure alcohol to the water when polishing. The added alcohol reduces the hardening time of the thin layers of wax that are applied one after another when polishing. The high gloss shine appears faster.

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3) Put a little shoe polish on the rag and rub in onto the leather using circular movements without using a lot of pressure. The area should not be larger than a diameter of about 5cm. Rub on the same spot until you feel a change, a solidification, of the wax. Now a somewhat greasy, spotty shine should slowly begin to appear. If this is not the case after about 15 seconds of regular circular rubbing, take a little more wax, dip your fingers in enough water so that two small drops stay on the fingers and repeat the procedure.

If the wax still remains soft and if you still cannot feel an increasing resistance, then wait for 30 seconds, take a little more cleaning water and re-work the same spot. You will only understand the principle when a shine begins to appear. The circular movements are decisive, not too much pressure and the correct mixture of water and wax.

When a shine has finally appeared in one spot, begin with the next. When you have covered the whole shoe in this manner, then lay the next layer over it using more water, less wax and even less pressure. In order to remove the last fine smears the shoe is lightly rubbed with a damp cloth. Almost all smooth leathers can be polished to a high gloss shine using this method. For your first experiment it is best to use a pair of old shoes made of smooth, black leather. New shoes are the most difficult to polish. We need about one hour per pair for the first polish. This effort will lessen to about 15 minutes as the shoes get older. Once you have worked up a perfect shine it will be enough to polish it up with an old tie or satin cloth for some considerable time.

Care of velour or suede

1) With brushing you can never go wrong. After a time unsightly long hairs may appear but these can be burned off using a lighter.

2) Wipe off the surface using a damp household sponge. Dark colours can be refreshed a little by adding a little concentrated lemon to the water. Otherwise the velour spray obtainable in the shops at least does not damage the shoes.

Saddle soap, wax shoe polish e.g. "Saphir" or "Kiwi" (in tins – hard – not water soluble).