

Caring For Your Footwear

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARE & CLEANING

How to care for your footwear

Aftercare is as important as buying your footwear in the first place and can help prolong the life of your footwear. Footwear is especially prone to deterioration as they are exposed to the elements and the terrain upon which they are designed for. Mud, sand, water, gravel, grass, grit, snow, peat and lime are just some of the corrosive elements boots are subjected to. The corrosive natural chemicals such as acids and alkali's that can be found in Lime and Peat for example will work their way into the fibres of material and start to slowly rot them, weakening the overall strength of the boots and damaging any waterproof linings or membranes that are inside them.

Following is a short summary of what you should be doing in terms of aftercare and the products you can buy to do so.

After Use

Maintain your product by cleaning regularly. Dirt and mud should be brushed off once it has dried naturally. Wipe with a clean damp cloth if necessary.

Wet footwear should be dried slowly using natural air circulation. Paper can be used to stuff the product in the drying process to help adsorb moisture and maintain the shape of the product. Your footwear should not be subjected to a direct heat source.

A simple and effective way of cleaning your footwear is to take them under a flowing tap, with a boot or a soft nail brush and just brush them clean. Then leave them to dry NATURALLY. Do not under any circumstances put them on a radiator or in the sun.

If dirt is being stubborn, then you can use Nikwax footwear cleaner or Granger's Dirty scrubber or G-Max footwear cleaner which will help to clean them more effectively and rid them of any dirt particles stuck in the fibres.

Never wash in the washing machine. Immersion in and exposure to detergents can attack the stitching and bonding agents within the product

Full Grain Leather

Looking after leather product is very important, leather is skin and will therefore dry out if it is not properly looked after. Full grain is the easiest to maintain as water and dirt are quickly repelled off of the smooth surface.

To treat leather you need to clean it first as described above then when the leather is still damp you need to apply a conditioner to moisten the leather again and make it supple. To do this you need something like Nikwax conditioner for leather or G-wax from Grangers. Both will condition the leather and leave it 'hydrated' and supple, keeping your feet well supported and comfortable.

You can also aid the natural water repellent nature of leather by applying a DWR (Durable Water Repellent) finish to the surface using a variety of products. All will do roughly the same job, but if you don't mind getting your fingers dirty, the creams, pastes or waxes available are more effective as you can work them into the fibres of the leather meaning that the coating will last longer and provide slightly more protection.

Nubuck & Suede

Nubuck is still full grain leather but has a slightly different finish. This gives a 'felt' like look but does not alter the performance of the leather in any way. There is no major difference between leather and Nubuck, though Nubuck does give an extra water repellent finish to start off with. It is a completely personal choice on which you would choose.

To treat Nubuck, you have to give it the similar care to leather but you have to use a specific cleaner and conditioner for Nubuck available from Nikwax or Grangers. Over time and use, the 'felt' effect will wear away and a smooth surface will start to form, this is completely normal and will not affect the performance of the footwear. The colour may also darken slightly when a treatment is applied.

Suede is 'split' leather. This has many benefits one of which being lighter weight and more flexible and second of all the product will look cleaner as the surface of the Suede is more 'natural' as it has come from the middle of the hide where it has been split.

To treat Suede you have to make sure it is clean first and foremost. Cleaning Suede is probably more important than the others as dirt, mud, sand and other debris will work its way into the fibrous part of the Suede and start to cause abrasion, wearing the product down over time and eventually causing it to weaken and tear.

To proof the Suede, again Nikwax proofer for Nubuck and Suede is perfect to use or the universal water proofer from Grangers which will both form a DWR finish helping to repel moisture and dirt and to help keep a better appearance for longer.

Synthetics & Fabrics

These are becoming more accepted in outdoor footwear and are an alternative option to leathers but still need looking after.

Rinsing under the tap with a soft nail brush will clean them easily, but it may be beneficial to use the Nikwax or Grangers footwear cleaner to rid the fabrics of any dirt particles that may be trapped in between the fibres and to help protect the materials.

In terms of proofing, there are synthetic proofers available and with any other proofers for footwear, these enhance the DWR finish to the surface of the product. Again the best way to proof them is to clean them first and whilst the fabric is still damp, apply the proofer, wiping off any residue afterwards and this will ensure the treatment is absorbed more effectively.

i-shield

With frequent use, the surface of the materials may become blocked with dirt and may require cleaning to ensure the technology retains its functionality. To remove any dirt or liquids that do not easily come off, gently apply a soft, water-damp cloth to the area. A gentle dabbing action should remove the foreign particles and fully drying the product in a warm area (not too hot) will regenerate the liquid repellency.

Do not use any alcohol based fluids/chemicals as this will impede the i-shield technology. Please do not machine wash.

Going back to the beginning of the aftercare, the most important thing to do with your footwear is to keep them clean! They will last longer, perform as they should and will keep your feet dry and comfortable.

There are numerous different types of aftercare available, Nikwax and Grangers are just a couple of them that we would recommend, if in doubt ask the retailer from where you purchased your products.