Once you've researched, chosen, and paid good $ for a great leather bag, i know you want it to look great for many years to come.

(Like i want for my beautiful bag at the right from *Saddleback Leather*.)

Conditioning the leather is one practice that will help you keep your beautiful leather bag looking great.
But I want you to get it right when you condition your leather. Cheap conditioners, improperly applied can make the leather feel greasy or sticky, changing sheen or color when you don't want it to change and actually harming the leather over time.

So in this article, I'm going to share from my 20 years in the leather business to help you understand why you need to condition your leather bag, how you do it and what products you should use.

*This article deals mainly with aniline, semi-aniline and pull-up leathers which are more delicate, natural and affected by conditioning. Learn which kind of leather you own by reading this article.*

**Why should you condition your fine leather goods?**
So here are the 3 reasons I think you need to condition your leather bag to keep it looking great:

1. A good conditioner will lubricate the leather fibers.

Picture the cross-section of a tanned leather hide. The fibers are randomly criss-crossed, fit together and flex in harmony. This is what makes leather such a uniquely
strong and flexible material. When those fibers dry out the harmonious flex becomes more like a bunch of little saws grating on one another. Not good!

So when you apply a good leather conditioner to your leather bag, the fibers will soak it up. They absorb the lubricating oils and moisture which keep the fit and flex
moving like a glove (a leather glove).

But conditioning enough but not too often is also important. The leather fibers only need to absorb so much lubrication. At more than 25% moisture content the fibers will run out of room to absorb, swell up and can damage your leather.
2. A good conditioner will protect the surface of the leather from stains.

Many fine leather bags have very little finish protection on top of the leather. The beautiful feel, smell and look of natural leather comes from letting the natural beauty show
through without much surface color. The problem is that most exposed leather fibers are very absorbant. (Use a leather shammy to dry your car?)

So, adding a good leather conditioning product to the
surface will also create a barrier of protection for the absorbant leather fibers.

In fact, some beautiful leathers are made by spraying or rubbing a wax or oil (like in a good conditioner) to the surface of the leather. Such leathers, called pull-ups
need to be re-waxed/oiled over the years so the fibers remain protected.

In my years in the leather industry, it kills me to see a beautiful pull-up leather that has not been properly maintained. It could age so nicely except that the owner doesn't
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Written by Chris Repp
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know to condition it and eventually it gets destroyed!

3. The right conditioner can change the patina of your leather.

Finally, a good leather
conditioner or conditioning oil can deepen the color of your leather creating a beautiful patina. Because there are many conditioning products you can use, your bag can have a look created uniquely by you. While
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protecting the fibers from damage.

So check out this video where I test 5-6 different leather products for you to show how they patina a leather bag. If you try
it with your bag I'd love to see how it looks.

Send me your pix to Chris@leatherhelp.com

How and how
often should you condition your fine leather goods?

What kind of conditioner?

I will explain 3 broad categories of conditioning.
products you may use to condition your fine leather. They are conditioning cremes, conditioning oils and wax-based conditioners.
Conditioning creams will nourish and moisturize your leather with minimal color change to the leather fibers. (Yet your should always
pre-test the color change by applying a little of the product and letting it sit for 1 hour to observe the changes in color. A good conditioning cream will both
condition your leathers fibers and provide a moderate degree of protection to the surface of your leather bag.
Conditioning oils will soften and nourish many fine leather goods. They provide less surface protection for your leather. The wrong oil can make your leather
feel oily or slick and even become rancid in your leather fibers. Therefore, I suggest you stay away from home-remedy type oils such as olive oil
or human skin oils.

Some time tested conditioners used for leather goods are neadsfoot oil, mink oil or lanolin.
While each of these oils has been used to nourish and soften leather over centuries, they all have unique properties. The smell, coloring effect and surface
qualities of each are unique.

I buy each of these leather conditioning oils from
www.tandyleatherfactory.com Except for the lanolin which you can get at a sporting goods store in the baseball gloves section.
Wax conditioners will not absorb as deeply into your leather but are great at protecting the fibers from liquids and soil. As
earlier mentioned, some leathers are waxed in the factory and benefit greatly from re-waxing 1-2 times a year. Other leathers without wax can be given a unique patina by
waxing them yourself.

How should it be applied?
Keep a few things in mind when applying leather conditioner:

- Place the conditioner onto a soft, lint free cloth
not directly onto your leather.

- Use a circular motion to rub the conditioner evenly over an entire panel or section of the leather.
- Follow the conditioning with a brisk buffing of the leather surface with a soft, dry cloth.

- Allow the
leather to air dry for a few hours before using the bag.

How often should you
condition it?

Normal leather conditioning needs done 2 times a year. There are a few important exceptions:
- **Dry heat** - If your bag is often in the sun, in a hot car or anywhere it is dry and hot you will need to condition it more often than normal.
3-4 times or more as the leather seems dry will help keep the moisture content level and the bag safe and supple for many years.
- Pull-Up leather - The waxes and oils added to the surface of pull-up leather will wear off as you use your leather bag. Once they are
gone, the leather fibers are exposed to wear and soil. Therefore, using a good conditioner to re-wax the leather is imperative to keeping pull-up
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leather protected
and looking great.

Thanks to Saddleback for
providing me with leather samples for some of my conditioner testing. Check out there beautiful bags here.
*All links are affiliate links so if this info is helpful to you please click through my links to buy your Saddleback products so I will get commission
from the sale...
Thanks!!