

Tips for Cleaning Light Finished Leather

Written by Chris Repp

Monday, 26 October 2009 15:32 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 January 2010 22:55



I wish it weren't true, but light colored leathers do get dirtier than darker colors. But don't let that keep you from buying them if they are what you want. Just keep a few prevention and cleaning tips in mind. (I'm speaking primarily to finished leather in this article)

Light leather dirt and stain prevention tips:

- Newspaper print is a big culprit in staining light leathers. Try not to throw the paper next to you on the seat of your white leather sofa.
- Dye transfer is the enemy! One of the worst problems we face on light colored leathers is a transfer of dye from a blanket or clothing onto your leather sofa seat. Most times a dry fabric will not transfer dye onto your leather. It must be wet or bleed because of a chemical spilled onto the fabric and the sofa. Just be careful of wet fabric, especially unwashed fabric, on your light colored leather sofa.
- Professional routine maintenance is a form of prevention. Most of the time you can clean and maintain your leather furniture with a good cleaning/ care product. Light leather may be the exception. I have worked with many consumers with light leather who have a pro, me in this case, come out every 1 or 2 years to professionally clean and protect your light leather.
- Try to rotate the prime seating area. I can face the sofa and the wall and always tell

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where the best T.V. viewing seat is located. Why? Because it is the dirtiest and most worn seat. Try to either rotate the pillows or move the furniture to change the wear pattern.

- Watch out for the soot from a wood burning stove or fireplace. Dark airborne soot will settle into the grain of light leather.

Light leather dirt and stain cleaning tips:

- You will need to clean your light leather set more often than a darker leather. If you clean a darker leather sofa 2 times a year, clean a lighter one 4 times a year.

- Dust particles will settle down into the grain of your light leather over time. So, be sure to keep it dusted off with a soft, dry cloth or soft brush attachment to a vacuum.

- Once the dirt settles into the grain, cleaning only with a cloth and good leather cleaner will not do the trick. You need exfoliating gloves, a short bristled brush or ultrafine/no scratch scotchbrite pad to get at the dirt in the cracks. Be sure to watch our finished leather cleaning video to learn the best techniques.

- Many food, dirt and even oil based stains will wipe off of even a light finished leather. Just don't let them sit for long or dye may transfer into the leather.

- Sometimes dirt hides scratches, fading or minor cracks in light colored leathers. Once you give it a good cleaning scratches or small cracks may appear. A good leather pro will be able to restore the color and finish on the leather.

I'll close with a picture of part the way through cleaning a light colored leather sectional. So don't shy away from light leather if it's really what you want, it can stay beautiful too.

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