

## Five Tips to Extend the Life of Your Shoes

When most people think of an investment they usually think of a credit union or a bank, etc. But your shoes are an investment. Here are some tips to help you get the most from your investment.

### 1. Start a home care program.

Your home shoe care regimen should consist of the following four steps: 1) Clean your shoes with leather cleaner. 2) Condition the leather to restore oils that are lost through wear. 3) Polish your shoes to restore the color and shine and to seal out dirt. 4) Weatherproof your shoes to protect them from water and oil. Run through this shoe care regimen each month.

### 2. Store your shoes in cedar shoe trees.

You have thousands of sweat glands in your feet -- all of them pouring moisture into your shoes. That is why it makes sense to rotate your shoes and, on their days off, put cedar shoe trees in them. Cedar's unique wicking action absorbs moisture, acid and salt, thereby reducing cracking and deterioration of leather. Cedar shoe trees also add comfort by smoothing out linings and insoles, and enhance appearance by maintaining the shape of the shoes.

### 3. Protect your soles.

A relatively recent innovation in the shoe repair industry is the protective sole. This is a very thin rubber sole that is applied over the sole of the shoe to make it longer wearing. The rubber is so thin that it doesn't change the feel or the appearance of the shoe. It also comes in both light and dark colors to match the existing shoe bottom. Protective soles also make shoes more slip resistant. This is great for safety, but you may not want to put them on your dancing shoes.

### 4. Practice preventative maintenance.

*Repair your shoes* before wear turns into damage. Ladies, don't wait for the rubber tips to fall off of your high-heels. Replace them before they get to that point to avoid more significant damage to your heels. The same goes for flats and men's shoes. Replace the heel before it wears into the heel base or the sole of the shoe.

### 5. Do the math...

In an average day, a man will take about 8,000 steps. If he weighs 170 pounds, the daily force that accumulates on his feet is 1,000 tons. It makes sense to spend a few extra dollars for shoes that will give you the support you need. Shoes made with better quality materials are better for your feet. They are longer lasting and, with the proper care and maintenance, can last for years. Let Best Shoe Repair protect your investment.

## Caring for Suede and Nubuck

The key to keeping suede and nubuck in top shape is preventative maintenance. Before you wear the shoes, protect them with a water and stain repellent designed specifically for suede and nubuck. As soon as you notice that water isn't beading up, spray them again.

Use a plastic or rubber-tipped brush regularly to restore the nap and remove surface dirt before it sets in. Be gentle brushing nubuck. It is softer than suede and is easily damaged. With oiled nubuck, you need to use a conditioner to put back some of those oils on a regular basis. Don't use products designed for smooth leather on oiled nubuck. They can damage the leather. If you get a stain on suede or nubuck, try to remove it immediately. Solvent-based cleaners work like dry cleaners to remove oil stains. Oil absorbing blocks are also available. These blocks abrade the leather to bring back the nap and remove stains. Use a less aggressive block with nubuck because of its more delicate nature. If you have a serious stain, you might be better off taking the shoe to your *(Best) Shoe Repair* professional.

Finally, if you need to restore color to these items, suede and nubuck renovators are available in basic colors. Your *(Best)* shoe repair shop also offers suede and other dyeing services. Always go from a lighter color to a darker color when dyeing shoes.

## **Keep Your Athletic Shoes in Top Shape**

A little bit of care can keep your athletic shoes looking new. If you have shoes with fabric or suede on the uppers, protect them before they get dirty. Spray them with a water and stain repellent when they are new and, as soon as you notice the water isn't beading up anymore, spray them again. Leather uppers are much easier to clean. Sneaker shampoos with scrubbing applicators are available to remove stains and dirt from the leather surface. If the shoes become scuffed, you can use shoe whitening products to restore the original color. Your shoe repair shop can use a white spray dye that will give a very good, almost original finish.

The biggest problem in caring for athletic shoes is controlling odor. The 125,000 sweat glands in your feet can deposit up to 1/2 cup of Perspiration into your athletic shoes each day. Because these shoes are constructed with foam and other man-made materials, they are ideal places for bacteria to live and grow. Several deodorizing products are available including insoles, powders and sprays. You need a product that absorbs the odor-causing bacteria and counteracts it. A product that simply masks the odor will not solve the problem. Finally, you can keep your athletic shoes looking and feeling new with replacement parts. New laces do wonders for the appearance and new insoles are often better than the originals. Like dress shoes, your athletic shoes represent a significant investment. A little time spent on shoe care goes a long way toward protecting that investment.

## **Proper Fit**

Ninety-five percent of consumers don't wear shoes that fit properly. The age-old reason? Fewer than 10 percent of shoe salespeople have even basic training in foot anatomy or shoe sizing. (*Best Shoe Repair*) experts can provide you the knowledge you need when purchasing shoes, just ask an expert. Shoes that don't fit can cause a variety of problems from blisters, corns and calluses, foot, leg and back pain. Here are some tips on finding shoes that fit.

First, quality shoes come in sizes and widths. Some brands come in medium widths only. People with narrow feet buying shoes with a medium width have to fit the shoes short to keep them on their heels. When you take a step, your foot elongates by 1/3 of an inch. That is a full shoe size. If your shoes are fit short, your toes have nowhere to go when you walk and you end up with toe problems. People who have wide feet buy medium width shoes extra long in order to fit their feet. When this happens, the shank, designed to be under the arch or the foot, is actually under the ball. The shoes don't bend easily and they slip at the heel.

When you are trying on shoes, make sure the wide part of your foot sits in the wide part of the shoe. Allow 3/8 to 1/2 inch of free space in the toe area. Try on shoes at the end of the day when your feet are the largest and, if you are like most people who have one foot slightly larger than the other, fit your larger foot. Check back soon for more tips and cares for your investment...

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