



LUDWIG REITER



SHOE CARE - A PRIMER

17 TIPS

for a long shoe life



CHERISHED RITUAL OR TIRESOME DUTY?

For most people, shoe-maintenance is located somewhere between these two extremes.

An old truism says that regular cleaning and treatment with suitable care products contribute significantly to extending the shoe's life. Over the years, the leather acquires a beautiful patina and, with the right care, remains supple, soft and smooth.

Well-cleaned shoes simply belong to a sophisticated appearance and are an expression of self-respect and appreciation.



Model "Erzherzog Johann" in the Ludwig Reiter 'Schulz' store, Vienna.

TIP 1

SHOE CARE STARTS WITH THE PURCHASE

One should choose shoes carefully, take enough time to try them on and seek good advice. Poorly fitting shoes cause suffering not only for the feet but also for the shoes. Shoes that are too tight as well as those that are too loose put strain on the leather, causing either excessive stretching or wrinkling.



TIP 2

SUITABLE UPPER LEATHER

The upper leather should be chosen according to the intended use of the shoes.

Fine boxcalf, sporty suede, robust Russia leather, elegant Cordovan, durable Scotch Grain - these are just a few examples of the leather types Ludwig Reiter shoes are made of.

An individual consultation in our stores will tell you which is the most suitable upper leather for your desired purpose.

The leather storage hall in the manufactory in Süßenbrunn Manor, Vienna.



The Maronibrater with non-slip all-terrain soles suitable for winter.

TIP 3

THE RIGHT SOLE

The sole is also chosen according to the requirements of the shoe.

Leather soles are very breathable and don't leave marks, but are slippery at first and never completely waterproof.

Rubber soles are waterproof and, depending on the tread, slip-resistant, but they can leave behind marks and are not breathable. This can lead to increased perspiration and faster wear of the shoes.

A combination of rubber and leather sole, the “all-weather-sole”, has the attributes of a leather sole, is non-slip and is water-resistant.



TIP 4

SLIP INTO SOMETHING COMFORTABLY

When putting on the shoes, untie the shoe laces or open the buckles as wide as possible and use a shoehorn. This avoids damage to the heel cap and heel lining.

When taking the shoes off, be careful not to step on the heel cap. A so-called bootjack can help to take off the shoes very gently.

Trying on the Norwegerin with a shoehorn in the Ludwig Reiter Store in 'Drei-Mäderl-Haus', Vienna.



The cork layer contributes significantly to the comfort of welted shoes.

TIP 5

THE INDIVIDUAL FOOTBED

Feet and shoes have to get used to each other. Good leather is adaptable and the natural cork layer of our welted shoes, which is inserted under the leather insole, molds to an individual's footbed over time.

Welted shoes can be tough at first, but they develop their comfort gradually. Therefore, it is best to wear in new shoes a few steps at a time: First only one hour a day, then two, then half a day, etc.



ECHT KAMMERGÜTEL
WIEN
LUDWIG REITER
1885
MADE IN AUSTRIA

TIP 6

INGENIOUS LEATHER SOLES

Thanks to their elegance and lightness, leather soles are very popular for welted shoes. Our Leather soles are always made of vegetable tanned cowhide.

To ensure durability, it is recommended that shoes with new leather soles are initially worn only on dry days to prevent the leather from swelling due to wetness and thus premature damage. With time, the outer layer of the vegetable tanned leather soles harden through pressure and moisture and, if worn-in properly, acquire a natural protection against abrasion and wetness.

Our natural vegetable tanned sole made of cowhide.



TIP 7

LET THEM BREATHE A LITTLE

The inner lining of Ludwig Reiter shoes is entirely made of leather or lambskin and offers the feet a particularly high level of breathability. Nevertheless, perspiration can be very aggressive and can reverse the tanning process, resulting in cracks and tears in the leather.

We recommend never to wear the same shoes on two consecutive days, because even shoes need to be aired. If possible, the shoes should even be changed during the course of a day. Ideally, the shoes should rest twice as long as they have been worn to allow full airing.

Shoes airing in a well organised shoe closet.



TIP 8

REST AND RELAX

If the shoes are not worn, they should always be stored in a dry, airy place. Use shoe trees made of uncoated, absorbent wood so that the shoes keep their shape. The shoe trees should above all prevent the sole from bending upwards. They need not to fill the shoe completely. Under no circumstances should the shoe tree overstretch the shoe.

Penny Loafer in Cordovan with shoe trees made from alder-wood.



TIP 9

DRYING WET SHOES

If the shoes are soaking wet or very sweaty, you should air them out well before you put in the shoe trees. Drying can be accelerated by stuffing the shoes with newspaper, as it absorbs the moisture very gently.

Never dry shoes too close to a radiator or other source of heat, as this dries out the leather and causes it to become brittle.

A Budapester in Scotch Grain drying after a rainy walk around Süßenbrunn Manor, Vienna.



FULL-GRAIN LEATHER CARE

Full-grain leather is leather whose natural surface has been preserved, e.g. smooth leather such as aniline, box calf and Russia leather. The following recommendation also applies to embossed leathers (e.g. Scotch Grain), although these are not full-grain leathers in the technical sense of the term.

These leathers should be treated once a month with good shoe polish. This not only gives them a new shine, but also makes them supple and durable.

A good polish can be freshened up in between with a horsehair brush or cleaning cloth.

If the leather is very dry it can form stains when applying the polish. To avoid this it is advisable to first dampen the leather, then apply the polish very sparingly and spread it immediately before it is absorbed. Too much shoe polish is not beneficial because the leather will then become encrusted and can no longer breathe.

The 'Viennese' in boxcalf (11 years old) being polished in Süßenbrunn, Vienna.



TIP 11

SUEDE LEATHER CARE

Shoes made of suede - where the leather is turned with the rough flesh side outwards - are particularly easy to maintain. Scratches are hardly visible, dirt and chafed areas can be brushed out easily - for example with a special brass bristle brush.

A certain degree of weather resistance can also be achieved with a water-proof spray: Apply it damp - not wet - and after it has dried brush the nap of the leather.

Greasy spots can be cleaned up with a suede eraser.

Heavily soiled suede shoes can even be washed with saddle soap. It is recommended to wash not only the stained area, but the entire upper leather of both shoes with saddle soap to avoid colour irregularities afterwards.

A little scratch on the suede Chukka Boot is simply brushed off with a brass bristle brush.

LUDWIG REITER
WIEN 1895



CORDOVAN CARE

Cordovan is a precious rarity, which is elaborately produced by hand from the croup of horse skin. The tanning process stems from the Moors in Cordoba and gives the leather its incomparable shine. The essences used in this process result in a very high fat content, which makes it impossible to glue together and therefore it can only be used for welted shoes. Therefore Cordovan can be polished - especially in the beginning without using any care products. The fat content can cause whitish efflorescence, especially after longer storage. These can easily be wiped clean with a cloth.

For the care of Cordovan use shoe polish. Small scratches as well as swellings caused by water drops can be polished away with a folding bone or a similar smooth rounded object.

The Penny Loafer in Cordovan being polished with shoe paste.



TIP 13

PATENT LEATHER

Patent leather can be wiped with a damp cloth and does not require any special care. Usually it is not leather, but a patented synthetic material, because only with this material the distinctive artificial shine can be achieved. If you wanted to obtain this with real leather, you would have to polish it for a very long time, and yet this would only come close. Under no circumstances should one try to force this with self-shine polishers, because these contain mostly aggressive solvents that damage the structure of the leather. In addition, these self-shine care products form encrustations that cannot be removed.

The Derby in patent leather is wiped with a damp cleaning cloth.



LUDWIG REITER
WIEN 1885

LUDWIG REITER

LUDWIG REITER
WIEN 1885

TIP 14

SOLES AND WELTS

The leather outsole of Ludwig Reiter shoes is always made of vegetable tanned cowhide. To prevent the leather soles from drying out and becoming brittle and to keep them weather resistant and flexible they should be treated with leather grease once in summer and twice in winter.

The same treatment should be applied to the welt of the shoe and its seam.

Take special care when wearing freshly greased soles, they can be slippery and leave marks on floors.

The leather sole of a 4-year-old riding boot is treated with leather grease.



LUDWIG
with

TIP 15

SOAP vs. SALT AND DIRT

Unremoved dirt and salt can permanently damage the leather.

Soiled shoes or shoes encrusted with shoe paste should be cleaned with a boar's hair brush.

In case of heavy soiling, wash the shoe with water and saddle soap. Saddle soap is lathered with a little water and then applied to the upper leather. Then the foam is wiped off again with a cloth. It is recommended to wash not only the stained area, but the entire upper leather of both shoes with saddle soap to avoid colour irregularities afterwards.

The upper leather is washed with a sponge and saddle soap.



TIP 16

PRAISE FOR THE PATINA

Sensitivity to mechanical damage from the outside world is not a lack of quality in elegant leather shoes. On the contrary, it is a sign of the natural characteristics of the leather. Small damages can usually be concealed with shoe polish. Incidentally, one should not worry about slight signs of wear on long worn shoes, as long as they are always properly cleaned.

Where else would the much praised patina of fine leather shoes come from?

Despite small scratches and wrinkles, a calfskin 'Viennese' has a beautiful patina after 11 years, thanks to good care.



TIP 17

REPAIRS

With proper care, a welted shoe can be worn for many years. However, soles and heels are wearing parts that have to be renewed every few years, depending on the wear and tear.

One of many advantages of the welted shoe is that it can be disassembled into its individual parts again. This makes repairs easier than with ordinary shoes. Particularly the modular sole and the heel can be easily renewed. The shoe is then as good as new again.

A Polo boot is repaired with a new sole in the manufactory in Süßenbrunn, and looks as good as new afterwards.



TIP 17

In the case of welted shoes, a skilled craftsman can separate the sole from the welt and sew on a new sole, so that the shoes are almost as good as new and fit a little tighter again afterwards. Attention: Newly soled shoes must therefore also be worn in again!

Improper repairs should be avoided, as these can significantly impair the overall functionality of the shoe, especially with a Goodyear-welted structure. Also, if the correct material and original lasts are not used for the repair, the fit of the shoe can change so much that increased wrinkling and cracking of the leather will be the result.

You can bring your Goodyear-welted Ludwig Reiter shoes to the Ludwig Reiter stores and have them repaired by our craftsmen in Vienna. Alternatively you can send them directly to our manufactory in Süßenbrunn, Vienna (see last page for addresses).

Above: The leather sole and welt is carefully removed.

Below: A new welt is sewed onto the shoe, to make way for a new sole.

SHOE POLISHING GUIDE

1. PREPARATION

Put on your cobbler apron to protect your clothes.

Remove the shoe laces and insert suitable shoe trees into the shoes. Place the shoes on old newspaper or another non-sensitive surface.

Use the boar's hair brush to remove dust and dirt from the shoes, welt and sole. Wipe the shoes with a damp shoe polishing cloth.



The best tools for a proper shoe care ritual.

SHOE POLISHING GUIDE

2. APPLICATION

Apply a coin-sized amount of shoe polish per shoe very sparingly to the application brush and spread it over the upper leather in circular movements. Use only the dark application brush for all dark shoe polishes and only the light application brush for all light polishes.

Don't forget to apply leather grease to the welt and the leather sole, if you have one. This works best with the small application brush.

Allow the shoe polish to absorb for one to ten hours, depending on the dryness of the leather.

Shoe paste is worked in sparingly with the small application brush.



SHOE POLISHING GUIDE

3. POLISHING

After at least one hour of the shoe polish absorbing, polish the shoes in long circular movements with the polishing glove or polishing brush until the desired shine is achieved.

Finally, tie the shoe laces back in and place the shoes in the shoe bags to protect them from dust and damage. The shoe trees remain in the shoes.

Penny Loafer in Cordovan (8 years old). Left - after polishing, right - before.



LUDWIG RETTER
MADE IN GERMANY



HOW LONG DO LUDWIG REITER SHOES LAST?

In general, the durability of footwear is highly dependent on its treatment and care. It is also a matter of the make of the shoe. For example, welted shoes last much longer than glued or flex-sewn shoes. In contrast to these, welted shoes can be resoled and thus the lifespan can be extended considerably.

But even with good care, the upper and lining material will eventually be worn out. In any case, material fatigue can be expected after about 3,000 “operating hours”.

One should give a long-worn shoe, despite great care and repairs, a worthy end and then treat oneself to a new pair.

For a personal consultation, our colleagues in the Ludwig Reiter stores will be happy to advise and assist you.

Clickers in the Ludwig Reiter shoe manufactory in Vienna, ca. 1960.



LUDWIG REITER

Our stores offer a repairs service for your Ludwig Reiter shoes and a personal consultation on shoe care:

LUDWIG REITER STORES

AUSTRIA

Vienna I, Mölkersteig 1	+43 1 533 42 04
Vienna I, Führichgasse 6	+43 1 512 61 46
Vienna XXII, Weingartenallee 2	+43 1 2559 300-61
Salzburg, Goldgasse 3	+43 662 870 580
Graz, Sackstraße 12	+43 316 825 416
Kitzbühel, Bichlstraße 26	+43 5356 65004

GERMANY

Berlin, Kurfürstendamm 50	+49 30 886 81 776
Hamburg, Hohe Bleichen 19	+49 40 357 12 930
Düsseldorf, Grabenstraße 1A	+49 211 323 91 10
Frankfurt, Schillerstraße 14	+49 69 282 066
Munich, Burgstraße 8	+49 89 943 01 370
Stuttgart, Münzstraße 3	+49 711 722 318 38
Cologne, Ludwigstraße 2-6 (Franchise)	+49 221 272 496 05

SWITZERLAND

Zurich, Wühre 9	+41 43 497 24 94
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Ludwig Reiter in the Drei-Mäderl-Haus, in Vienna's 1st district.

WWW.LUDWIG-REITER.COM