

A photograph of a brown leather sofa and ottoman in a modern kitchen setting. The sofa has two patterned cushions and a wooden tray on the ottoman. The background shows a kitchen counter with various appliances and a wooden stool.

leather

did you know?

...that 'real' leather
isn't all the same!

All you need to know about leather

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If you see a 'real leather' label it's easy to assume the quality of the product will be the same in every store. Not so! In fact, there are various types of leather available and it's important that you choose the type that best suits your lifestyle. The care instructions in this leaflet will help you to get the best from your new leather furniture.

Leather is of course a natural product and is made up from millions of fibres which enable air to circulate freely, thus allowing it to breathe. The touch and smell of genuine leather has no equal and its comfort and durability is without question.

There are many different types of leather and the characteristics and price of each type will ultimately depend on the source of the leather and the processes through which the hide has passed.

Characteristics of Leather:

The appearance of genuine leather cannot be reproduced as no two hides are exactly alike. Leather will always bear the marks of its natural origin because it is real animal hide.

These marks may appear as scars, bush marks, creases or bites and in no way detract from or weaken its wearing qualities. In fact they are considered to enhance its appearance and distinguish leather from imitations.

As a result of more advanced tanning and finishing processes leather now has a softer, glove like suppleness which is maintained throughout the life of the furniture. The natural beauty of real leather is something that you will appreciate for many years and is actually enhanced with age.

Over time leather will mature and age, and it will have a tendency to stretch, crease and soften - this can be particularly noticeable in the seating areas where cushion interiors 'relax' over time. This can create a 'puddling' effect of the leather on seat cushions particularly if the seat is made from one piece of leather.

The inevitable variations in grain, texture and natural markings are not faults but actually illustrate the uniqueness of the product. The following guide will help you to choose the right type of leather to suit your needs.



As a general guide we have categorised them into 5 main types as follows...



Full Aniline is the highest quality of purest leather. It is taken from the most carefully selected hides. The dye is lightly impregnated into the skin, and the surface is left without an artificial finish. It is the softest and the most natural looking leather with all the variations in shade and markings showing clearly. However, it is more delicate and absorbent than any leather with a surface finish.



Semi-Aniline leather is luxurious and soft, and similar to aniline leathers but with a light surface coat that provides some stain protection, while still retaining the suppleness and classic feel of a untreated hide. These leathers are often recommended for those



who want the natural look coupled with a measure of practical durability.



Corrected Grain is the most durable and suitable for heavier domestic use. This type of leather is exceptionally resilient. The surface is fully pigmented to remove most imperfections, before it is sealed and a decorative grain pattern is then embossed into the surface. This is sometimes referred to as pigmented leather.



By-cast leather is generally produced from the lower split leather by melting a type of glue on the surface, then applying a film of coloured polyurethane. By-cast leather is characteristically harder than other leathers, can lighten when stretched and tends to show more scratches.



Pull-up leather has similar characteristics to suede or nubuck giving it a luxurious feel and look and is more absorbent, much like a full aniline leather. It can have a wax or oil added during the finishing process and therefore no protective coating. This natural look will show markings and colour variations. These colour variations are enhanced with time and use and are an inherent characteristic of this type of leather.

There are several other types of leather that can be used in Upholstery but are less widely available due to the relatively high maintenance required. These include Nubuck, Suede and Waxed Leather and will have specialised instructions with each type.

Faux Leather is an imitation leather finish which gives the appearance of leather and is sometimes used on dining chairs.

Maintaining the Natural Beauty of Leather:

Leather upholstery in a normal domestic environment should require little maintenance, however regular care and cleaning will ensure lasting quality and durability. The following is a general guide to

maintenance, but please pay particular attention to any manufacturers' guidelines supplied with your purchase:

Accidental Damage:

Accidents will happen and whilst we cannot avoid them we can help prevent them becoming disasters. We can advise you in store about Accident and Protection Plans that will cover your upholstery against accidental spills and stains or accidental damage such as rips tears and burns (subject to terms and conditions).

Leather Care Kits:

There are a number of Leather care kits on the market. Whilst many can improve the appearance and durability of leather it is essential that they are compatible with the type of leather on your upholstery and are used according to manufacturers' instructions.

Please note: The incorrect use of these kits can cause damage to the leather and invalidate any guarantee that may apply. Always test leather care kits on a small inconspicuous part of the sofa first to ensure that it will not cause any damage. We can advise you of the suitability for your particular purchase from Roomes, please do not hesitate to call our showroom and speak to one of our experienced sales team.

Spillages:

Blot excess liquid immediately with a clean absorbent cloth or sponge. Gently wipe the

area with a damp cloth using clear, luke warm water cleaning entire area where the spillage occurred. Wipe with a clean dry cloth and allow to dry naturally. Do not use a hairdryer or apply direct heat.

Colour Transfer:

The current dyes and dyeing processes used in the production of many modern fabrics and garments increasingly result in products that are not totally dye fast. This is especially true of many dark colours and denims, particularly when a fabric is new. Such dyes can be transferred and 'bleed' into the surface sealant of your leather furniture.

If it occurs it is likely to be more noticeable with very light coloured leathers. Care should always be taken to avoid continuous contact between clothing of this nature and your leather furniture. Depending on the dye types used colour transfer can be very difficult to remove by normal cleaning methods.

Human perspiration and products such as hair gel attack the finish on leather and must be removed quickly, wiping the area with a damp cloth and allowing to dry naturally. If left they can cause colours to fade, colour transfer and dirt to accumulate thus spoiling your sofa's appearance.

In the event of an accident, or to obtain specific advice, please contact Roomes Furniture or an upholstery leather specialist.

Cushion Care:

Because lifestyles have changed your upholstery today will probably get more use than ever before and will therefore need more careful maintenance.

Seat cushion interiors will generally be constructed of high resilient foam or a mixture of high resilient foam and polyester fibres. Loose seat cushions and backs should be interchanged where possible to even out wear. However you need to be aware that many leather models will have fixed seat cushions, which will limit the amount of maintenance you can give the cushions, beyond dressing or plumping up.

Model styles with seat cushions using foam and polyester fibre mixture are designed to offer a soft, comfortable feel and casual appearance. In use the polyester fibres will settle and the seat cushions require a regular dressing ie: 'plumping up' to maintain their fullness. Back cushions and arm pads (if fitted) use interiors of all polyester fibres although certain styles will include a small amount of high resilient foam where design structure requires.

Effectively, these fibres are a modern equivalent of the traditional Feather and Down interiors and have a number of advantages. They require less maintenance, easy to clean and are non allergenic. No special maintenance is required beyond daily dressing of the cushions to ensure fullness of the cushion interiors.

It should be noted that, if this dressing is not practiced the interiors will gradually flatten, causing a reduction in the comfort and appearance of your furniture. Fibre interiors that have been allowed to flatten considerably will inevitably be more difficult to dress back to their original condition.

It is to be expected that even with regular care cushions will soften and flatten over time with the use that they receive - this is not a fault. Please bear this in mind if you choose a sofa with fixed seat cushions, as if you tend to sit in one seat of a settee you will find that it may feel softer than the ones that do not receive such use.

General maintenance guidelines:

- Vacuum and dust regularly with a soft cloth, preferably once a week, to keep the leather pores free from dust particles.
- Never place your leather furniture too near a radiator or similar source of heat. Make sure there is a minimum distance of 20-30cm between your furniture and the heat source.
- Protect your leather furniture from direct sunlight.
- Clean furniture with a soft damp cloth, be careful to avoid soaking the leather. If necessary use a mild soap solution (not a detergent) and gently rub in a circular motion.
- Never use polishes, waxes or saddle soap.
- Avoid using detergents, bleach or other chemicals as they may damage the leather.

- Keep pets away from the furniture as animal coats contain oils that may dull the leather.
- Avoid contact with sharp objects which may puncture the leather.
- Avoid sitting on the edges of cushions or the arms which may cause permanent wear and distortion of the padding and leather.
- Full Aniline leathers should only be wiped down with a dry cloth.
- Take care when opening and closing recliner mechanisms. Please note, where recliners are present in sofas, it is normal to see gaps between them, as this allows free movement and avoids excessive abrasion.
- Human perspiration and hair gels must be removed quickly, wiping area with a damp cloth and allowing to dry otherwise you may damage the finish on your sofa. Please pay particular attention to vulnerable areas such as arm and back cushions.

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