

ZEITRAUM



LEATHER
CHARACTERISTICS
AND CARE

LEATHER IS A MATERIAL THAT SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE SENSES

Leather is a material that appeals to the senses directly. It has a unique smell, it is delightful to the touch and beautiful to look at. Leather gets through the use of a patina and developed its own character. Each hide is unique. The quality of the leather depends on the breed of cattle. Traces the life of the cattle are still partially visible in the leather.

EXPENSIVE LEATHERS ARE MORE DELICATE

Leather is unusual: When it is higher in quality and therefore more expensive, it is usually much more delicate. That is because leather is strengthened by any protective treatments during the manufacturing process (for example when pigment coating is applied).

Natural leather to which no pigment has been applied is the most luxurious and most expensive leather. It is the most agreeable to touch. But it can dry out, bleach out, or fade more quickly. Contact with the skin can clearly be seen at places where contact is most frequent, spots are more difficult to remove, and this leather requires more care than other types. Natural leather must therefore be protected against direct exposure to the sun or uv light.

LEATHER MANUFACTURING

Most hides that will be used on leather furniture come from cattle culled in slaughterhouses and are thus secondary utilization. This means no animals are slaughtered just to produce leather upholstery.

The hides are sent to the tannery, where they are cleaned and then limed or bucked, two chemical methods for removing hair. Now the rawhides are split, producing the less valuable split leather (the lower side) and the higher quality top-grain leather (the upper side). Top-grain leather is used for good-quality leather upholstery.

Text source:

After more cleaning, the hides are tanned in a drum. Tanning preserves the protein fibers of the hide and keeps it from rotting. Some leathers are tanned with plant-based solutions (butt and nubuck leather), but most are tanned using chromium salts.

After tanning, the leather is dyed and then dried and mechanically milled to make it soft and smooth. The tanned hide then undergoes further processing, depending on the type of leather. When the surface is sanded or buffed, it is referred to as nubuck leather. In contrast, leather to which a layer of color is applied is called pigmented or coated leather.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEATHER

Nappa leather – Aniline, Semi-aniline and pigmented (natural leather) generally have a clearly-visible grain pattern, even if the water-soluble pigments have penetrated all the way through the hide. No pigment is applied to the surface of the leather, so all natural variations in structure and color are visible. Natural leather breathes well, but it also easily absorbs perspiration, body fat, cosmetics, and soil and can also fade. Regular cleaning and care are necessary.

Aniline leather: Jepard | Semi anilin leather: Elmotique, Baltique | Pigmented leather: Elmosoft

Nubuck leather is top-grain leather (from the “outside”) that has been buffed. It has similar characteristics to natural leather. It is soft, warms up quickly, and is very delicate. Nubuck leather takes on a typical patina as it is used.

Nubuck leather: Melano, Nevada

BUTT leather is a full-grained cowhide leather in which the grain side is waxed and then polished. It is primarily used to for the seats and backs of chairs.

Butt leather: blank leather

TYPES OF LEATHER AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Type of leather	Characteristics	How delicate	Required care	Tanning process	suitable for
Nappa leather (Jepard, Elmosoft, Elmotique, Elmobaltique)	soft, warm, luxurious, smooth, actively breathes, quickly warms to body temperature, highest quality	Subject to soiling, fades, can become greasy (patina) over the years	Regular care (about twice a year)	Mineral tanning	a high level of comfort, careful use
Nubuck leather (Melano and Nevada)	soft, warm, smooth, quickly warms to body temperature, very good quality	subject to soiling, fades, can become greasy (patina) over the years	Regular care (two to three times a year)	Mineral tanning	Not suitable for surfaces subject to regular use
Butt leather (Blank leather)	good light resistance, warms slowly, breathes	less sensitive	not very much	plant-based tanning	often used as self-supporting leather (without padding) for the backs and seats of chairs

NATURE MAKES ITSELF NOTICED

The animals whose skins are ultimately used for upholstered furniture lived under very different conditions. The lives of cattle are particularly easy to trace on large upholstered items of furniture: battles to dominate, parasites, injuries incurred in barns or pastures, scratches from thorns and hedges, brand marks, and neck folds will sometimes be seen on the upholstery.

There will be more features if the animal primarily lived in the wild (outdoors in a pasture instead of only in a barn). That's why a distinction is made between leather from domesticated animals (kept in barns) and leather from the wild. Those differences in how an animal lived do not affect the durability of leather furniture. Creasing of the leather that is used is inherent to this natural material.



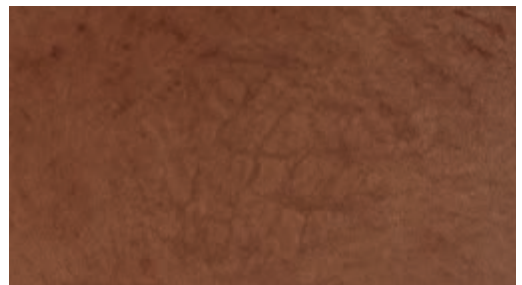
Small rot and insect bites, these dark spots on the hide are not dark spots in terms of quality.



Mast wrinkles, occur in the neck area of the hide and give the leather a pithy, rustic appearance appreciated by connoisseurs.



Scarring, also one of the many leather features.



Dung spots, mostly on the belly area of the skin, indicate stabling. The colouring becomes slightly irregular.



Fork stitches, can vary in depth, so that usually only covered leathers can be made from these hides.



Bar and hedge cracks are typical, posture-related scars.



LEATHER CARE

Leather is a living material that matures beautifully if treated properly. You should therefore consider the following: Never place leather furniture closer than 20-30 cm to a radiator or in direct sunlight. Vacuum clean leather often with a soft brush and, when necessary, clean any exposed surfaces, such as armrests and headrests. For stains that are water-soluble, dampen the area and dry using a paper towel.

For the best possible care of your leather furniture, Elmo has developed a water-based leather care programme with a cleaning and a protective component. Leder Reinhardt recommend the Prestige brand of leather care products, also consisting of Cleaner and balm. If you should get a stain that cannot be removed, never experiment with strong solvents or chemicals. Contact the manufacturer for the correct advice.