

HC

HONEST CRAFTERS

ESSENTIAL LEATHER CARE GUIDE

A Must-Read Guide
For Every Leather Bag Owner

- Usage
- Storage
- Common Problems & Remedies
- Cleaning

By Grace Guo

Not for sharing - this is for our select clients only

Hello!

Hey there, my name is Grace and I want to officially welcome you to my world.

About fifteen years ago, I started a business selling leather bags in Singapore. Since then we have expanded to 3 different countries and leather products have become a hobby (some say obsession) of mine.

Along the way, I have worked with countless types of leather and gained my very own insights on how to properly take care of and restore leather products especially handbags, wallets and shoes.

Like you, I love buying and wearing pretty handbags and wallets but I just hate it when they have ugly stains or become damaged.

Honest Crafters was created to help you with just that.

My goal is to share all my knowledge on leather products with you and help you properly take care and maintain your leather bags, wallets and shoes while you enjoy wearing and collecting them.

What you are about to read is based on the experience of my team over a period of more than 10 years of learning and restoring leather at Honest Crafters.

Many of the methods are also exclusively developed by my team as we experimented on (and destroyed... ouch!) many of my personal handbags.

If this is the first time you are reading about our story, I urge you to sign up at the link below to receive our email updates and exclusive offers. (Just so you know, this guide is meant only for our email subscribers and existing clients. If you have not signed up yet, you can do so soon to get all our updates and tips earlier than anyone else!)

Sign up here:

honestcrafters.com/leather-secrets

With Love.
Grace Guo

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1. Usage

For those who know me, they know that I like to switch my bags around a lot.

Apart from matching my outfit, there is a reason why I like to switch my bags around.

Leather bags should not be used on a daily basis for an extended period of time.

If you use your leather bags on a daily basis, try to switch to another bag every 2 months.

This is because leather bags are stretchable and daily usage (especially if you carry heavy items like laptops and binders) may cause the leather to over-stretch with time and eventually crack, peel or even tear.

When you switch to another bag, you are letting your bag “rest and recover” and maintain its elasticity.

This way you keep your bags in shape and also prevent them from spoiling so easily.



Proper usage with switch
overs every 2 – 3 months



Daily usage over extended
period of time

1. Usage

Apart from switching your bags every 2 months, the way you use your bags affects the lifespan of your bags too.

As much as possible, use a dry cloth to wipe your bag everyday after use. This is to remove any sweat residue, moisture or other dirt which may be harmful to your bag.

Make sure the cloth is dry. It is important to always keep moisture away from your bags.



You may use a gentle brush as well if your bag has many grooves/small gaps.



If the bag is still wet...

If your bag is still wet after wiping with a cloth, you may also use a hairdryer to dry the bags.

Make sure to move the hairdryer around and use sparingly as excess heat may damage the leather.

Normally the above should be enough to keep your bag reasonable clean and in good condition.

For more serious cases such as food/cosmetics/lotion contamination, make sure to quickly send in the bags for professional cleaning.

1. Usage

Other than keeping your bags clean, it is also important to make sure you do not “abuse” the bags.

What’s “abusing” the bags?

It is when you put excessive strain/force on certain parts of the bag.

This process would stretch and weaken the leather over time, leading to loss of shape or even tearing.

One example I see happen a lot is when ladies try to find items from their shoulder bags. They would try to sling it on one shoulder and frantically search the bag with force.

As much as possible, place the bag down instead of slinging it on one strap. If you really have to, make sure to hold the bag up with one hand while you search with the other hand.



There are many more ways in which we may unknowingly “abuse” our bags.

A helpful method I use personally is to always imagine my bag to be a \$70,000 Hermes exotic leather bag. Somehow I would immediately and magically treat it the right way!

Now that you know how to properly use a bag, we will take about storage.

2. Storage

While you use and maintain your bag properly, it is also important to properly store away the bags which you are not using.

With proper storage, you are protecting your bag from mould, colour loss and damage of shape.

First, make sure to identify if your bag is structured or semi-structured.

Structured bags usually have well-defined shapes and can stand on their own while semi-structured bags are usually flat and cannot stand on their own.



Structured
Bag



Semi-Structured Bag

For structured bags, keep them in a box before storing them away. This prevents the loss of the structured shape of the bag and allows you to stack them up.

For semi-structured bags, hang them up when you store them away. This is because they are not able to stand and by laying them down, they would lose the 3 dimensional semi structure over time and also form wrinkles in the leather.

For both structured and semi-structured bags, make sure to stuff them properly before storing them away.

2. Storage

What then should you use to stuff your bags with?

We recommend using tracing paper!

Whenever you unbox your new clothes, bags, or shoes, they usually come with those translucent tracing paper that wraps around the item.

Keep them and use them to stuff your bags. You can mash them together to form different shapes and sizes, to fit all your different bags.

More importantly, they are able to absorb moisture which helps protect your bag against mould.

The paper is also very neutral and will not cause any odour or colour transfer onto your bag which is important.



Tracing Paper



Before
Stuffing



Stuff in the Paper



Nice and puffy!

2. Storage

After you stuff your bag, put them in a dust bag before storing them away.

This is important as it not only helps keep the bag clean and free of dust, it also helps prevent colour transfer with other bags or clothes.

Even for structured bags which you are keeping into a box, it is still recommended to keep them in a dust bag first.



(Don't just hang it, keep it in a dust bag at the very least)

Store the bags in your wardrobe and keep them away from direct sunlight exposure.

Every 3 months, take your bags out and air them for at least 3 hours. This help to clear off any moisture or dirt built-up which may cause mould to form on the bag.

Every 6 months, send your bag for professional leather moisturizing and polishing to help maintain the leather natural oil and keep the colours fresh.

It is like your dental health, regular maintenance pays off in the long run!

2. Storage

The methods you have read are how I personally store my leather bags. Many of them have been with me for decades and are still in very good condition.

Quick Recap

1. Stuff your bag with tracing paper
2. Place the bag into a dust bag
3. For a structured bag, put it into a box. For a semi-structured bag, hang it.
4. Every 3 months, take out the bags for airing
5. Every 6 months, send the bag for moisturizing and polishing
6. For your daily bag, make sure to switch to another bag every 2-3 months

One Time Offer

If you have been storing your bags for well over a year and haven't been moisturizing them, the leather may become too dry and prone to cracks and mould. We recommend sending them in for moisturizing and polishing!

The usual price for leather moisturizing and polishing is \$69 but for all readers of this guide, you can flash this page to us and enjoy it at just \$49 per bag or just \$39 per bag if you send in 5 bags or more.

This is a one-time only offer, so WhatsApp us at 9787 9271 to get started!



Dry and Cracking
(Before)



Moisturised and
Polished
(After)

3. Common Problems & Remedies

In this segment, I like to share with you some common problems of leather bags, how to identify them and what steps to take when you encounter them.

Sounds good? Let's get started!

i) Mould / Mildew

First, I like to talk about mould. Mould is one of the most common problems when it comes to leather bags. The leather surface is like a "sponge" which easily traps dirt and bacteria. Given the right conditions, it is like a paradise for mould to grow!

To identify mould, look for whitish powder-like spots on the leather surface. When they first start growing, they are usually circular spots and appear in patches or colonies.



Once you discover this, don't panic.

Take a dry cloth and dry unwanted toothbrush and try to gently clean off the mould without scratching or damaging the leather surface.

Make sure the cloth and toothbrush are completely dry as water may cause the mould to grow even further or even cause stains/marks on the leather.

3. Common Problems & Remedies

... i) Mould / Mildew (cont)

If the mould is not serious, you should be able to completely get rid of it just by using the cloth and toothbrush.



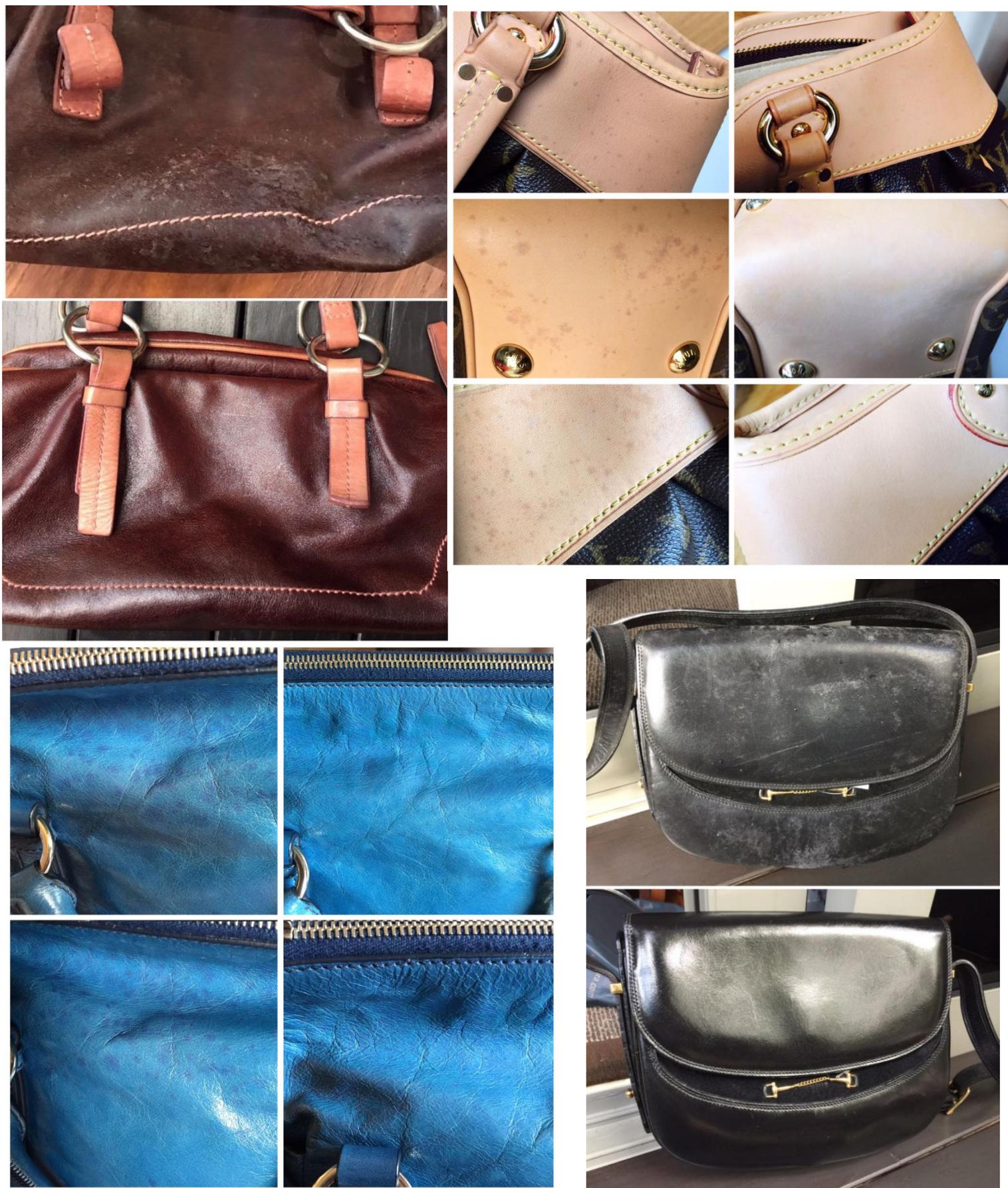
However, if the mould is very serious, unfortunately the only way is to send them in for professional help. This is because once the mould has penetrated into the leather surface, it can only be resolved via a professional mould removal process followed by a colour touch up.

Here are some photos of our work done to give you a better idea.



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... i) Mould / Mildew (cont)



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... i) Mould / Mildew (cont)

If you suspect your bags are mouldy, make sure to separate them from other leather products. Next, try to clean off the mould or send them for professional treatment as soon as possible. The earlier you discover and treat the mould problems, the better the chances of saving your bag!

If you like my team to help, WhatsApp/ email us or drop by our store directly. Act now before the mould problem gets out of hand!

For bags and shoes services, you may get in touch via the following methods:



Whatsapp / Email

Send us the following for a quote:
(Mon - Fri, 10am to 7pm)

1. Brand of Bag
2. What is the problem?
3. Material of Bag (if you know)
4. Photos (at least 2 to 3 photos including a full shot of the entire bag and a close up shot on the problem)

Whatsapp: 97879271

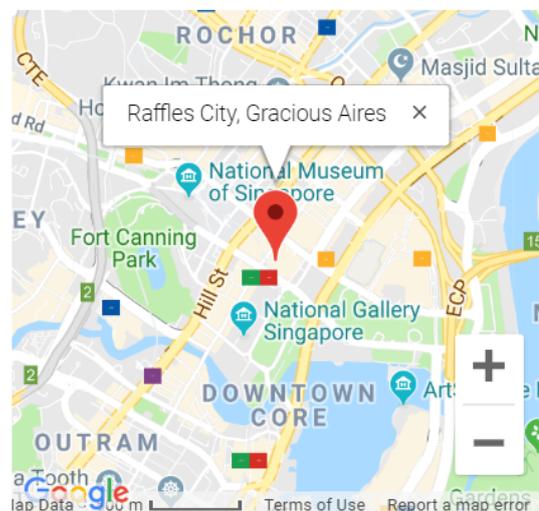
Email: hello@honestcrafters.com
(Mon - Fri, 10am to 7pm)

*For assistance on weekends, please drop by our store directly



Drop By

Gracious Aires
Raffles City Shopping Centre
#02-08/8A. Singapore 179103
Mon - Sun, 1030am to 10pm



3. Common Problems & Remedies

Next let's talk about another very common problem with leather bags – stains

The best thing anyone can do for leather stain is to avoid getting the stains in the first place.

ii) Stains / Discolouration

Stains on leather is similar to tattoo/ scars on your skin. It's almost impossible to remove.

If you see any cleanser or chemical that can help “clean” stains off your leather products, please be careful. Chances are they will remove the top coat and base colour of the leather as well and leave your bag with a bigger patch of bald spot.

So then what's the remedy for stains? There is only one way. You cover it up!

We call this colour touch up where you cover up the stains/ discolouration with leather dye of the appropriate colours. Here are some examples.



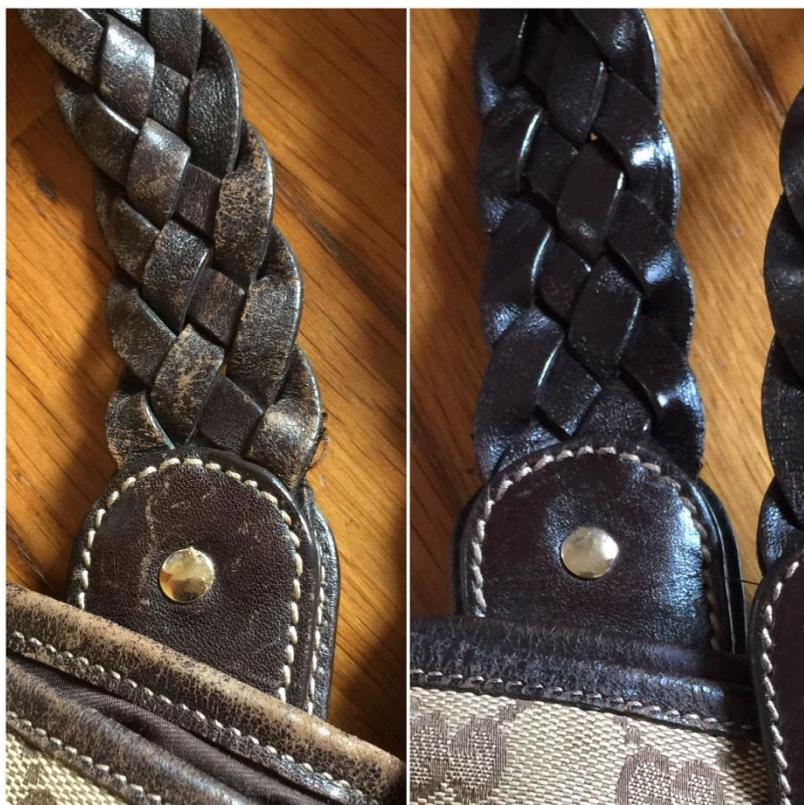
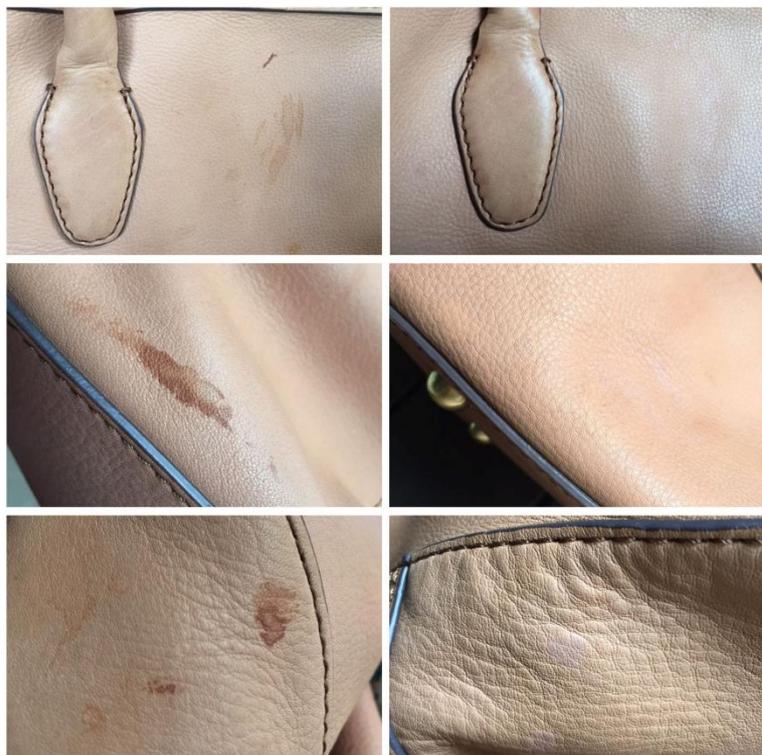
3. Common Problems & Remedies

... ii) Stains / Discolouration (cont)



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... ii) Stains / Discolouration (cont)



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... ii) Stains / Discolouration (cont)

If you know my story, you would know that I used to be at the mercy of other leather crafters previously.

For most leather crafters, they do not offer the service of colour touch up. They would usually advise to dye the whole bag to a darker colour (usually black).

This is because not all crafters are able to do a partial colour touch up on leather evenly. Also, dyeing whole bag means charging a higher fee.

At Honest Crafters, I make sure my team has dedicated crafters working on colour touch up cases to perfect the art.

This way we bring savings to you and also make sure you get to retain the current colours of the bag.

If you want help from my team, get in touch with us:

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3. Common Problems & Remedies

Another really common problem is faulty zips.

iii) Faulty Zips

For zip problems, they can either be repaired or if not, the entire zip must be replaced.

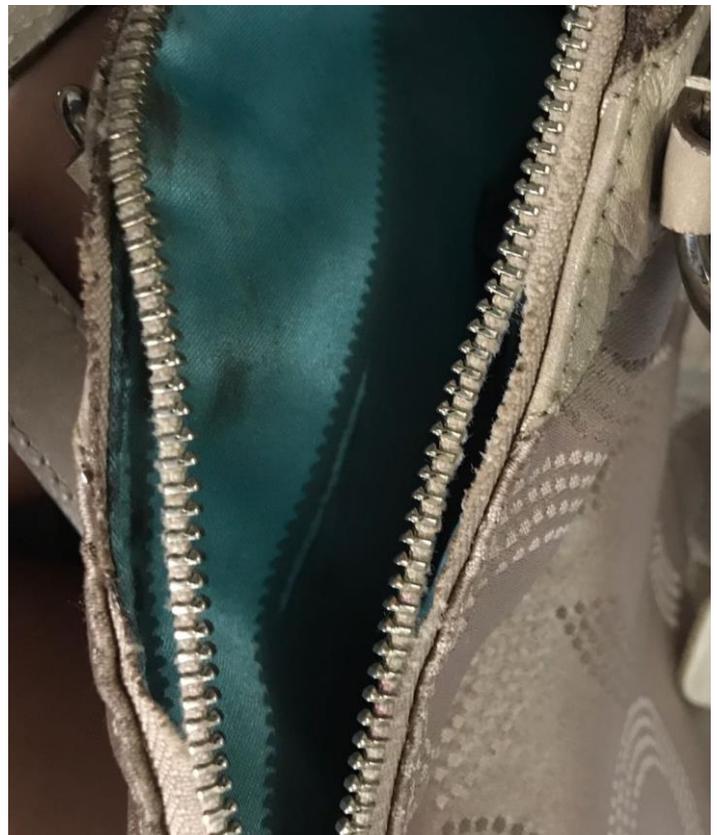
If the zip pull is stuck or the zip teeth don't hold together after zipping, these problems can be repaired.



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... iii) Faulty Zips (cont)

However, if the zip fabric (the part between the zip track and the stitches to the bag) is torn, unfortunately a repair will not be able to help as it may prevent the zip pull from sliding or it may tear up again. The only way is to replace the entire zip.



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... iii) Faulty Zips (cont)

Got a zip and need help? Get in touch with us:

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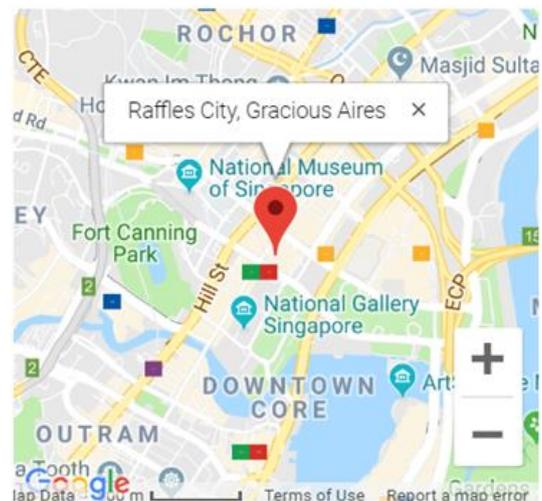
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3. Common Problems & Remedies

The next common problem we will go through is broken strap holders.

iv) Torn Strap Holders

Strap holders or handle holders are small strips of leather stitched to form a loop to attach the bag body to the straps or handles.

For those who carry heavy items in their leather bags, torn strap holders will be a very common problem for them.

As mentioned earlier in the guide, for those who use their bags daily over an extended period of time with no regular switching, this will be a common problem for them too.

For such cases, we can do a repair and reinforcement on the broken strap holder. However for some cases, we will do a replacement if the strap holder leather has become too soft and weak to repair.



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... iv) Torn Strap Holders (cont)



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... iv) Torn Strap Holders (cont)

If your strap holders or handle holders are torn or are tearing up, get in touch with my team.

For bags and shoes services, you may get in touch via the following methods:



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3. Common Problems & Remedies

... v) Damaged Edges/ Edge Painting (cont)



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... v) Damaged Edges/ Edge Painting (cont)

For some damaged edges/edge painting, there is no need to quickly get it resolved. However if you realise the edges are becoming sticky and the peeling is not stopping, you may wish to get in touch with my team as soon as possible:

For bags and shoes services, you may get in touch via the following methods:



Whatsapp / Email

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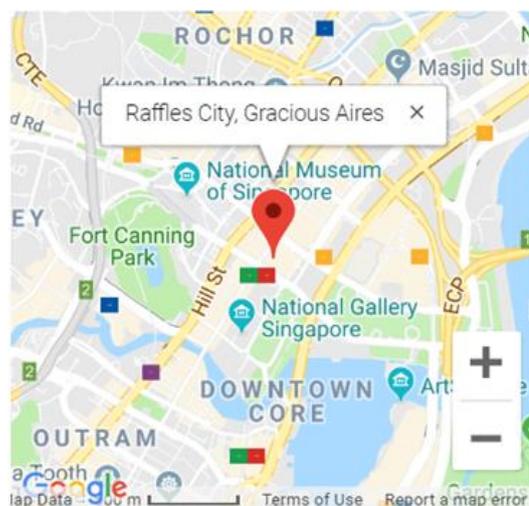
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3. Common Problems & Remedies

vi) Noteworthy– Louis Vuitton

I have decided to include this into the guide because this is a very common problem for LV bags. Many people ask my team about this on a daily basis and I hope by including this into the guide, we can make things easier for you.

For LV bags, LV uses a type of leather called the Vachetta leather for the handles, straps, trimming and pipings. The body is usually made up of the monogram canvas.



Vachetta Leather
(light beige when new,
dark brown when it gets
older)

LV monogram
canvas

3. Common Problems & Remedies

... vi) Noteworthy– Louis Vuitton (cont)

For LV bags, the monogram canvas is very durable. Hence, when there are problems with the bag, most of the time its on the vachetta leather.

The vachetta leather gets stained easily, can become very darkened in colour and torn at multiple parts.

As vachetta leather changes colour over time, unfortunately colour touch up is not a very good option as that may cause the colours to darken unevenly over time.

The best way to resolve such a problem is to replace all the vachetta leather parts with new vachetta leather.

The bag becomes almost brand new after the replacement.



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... vi) Noteworthy– Louis Vuitton (cont)



3. Common Problems & Remedies

... vi) Noteworthy– Louis Vuitton (cont)

Don't the bags look as good as new after the replacement?

Yes if you like to give your LV bags a new life, send them in to my team for a replacement of the vachetta leather.

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4. Cleaning

Finally, I like to talk about cleaning.

First, I think its important for you to know that whatever leather products you have (especially those you have on you daily) are probably much dirtier than you imagine.

If you think they are dirty, multiply that by at least ten times.

The leather surface is like a “sponge” which easily traps dirt and bacteria. It is like a giant petri-dish for bacteria to grow!

Isn't it awful?

By MICHELLE CASTILLO | CBS NEWS | May 20, 2013, 1:58 PM

Handbags may contain more germs than average toilet flush

Comment /  Share /  Tweet

Washing your hands after using the toilet is a key part of preventing the spread of germs, but not many people do it. In fact, according to a new study, the average person's handbag is dirtier than a toilet seat. Washroom Hygiene, perhaps the

Researcher with the hygiene and health department at the University of North Carolina found the dirtiest parts. Twenty percent of handbags had bacteria on their surfaces - reported.

While Dr. Josephine

Hospital-

How dirty is your handbag? Chances are, it's pretty grim

You could be risking your health every day as tests show handbags are dirtier than toilet seats and that make-up is a breeding ground for germs.

 Comments 4

     0

 Print this story

Women's handbags contain more bacteria than the average TOILET

- The dirtiest item in average handbag is hand cream - it carries more bacteria than the average toilet seat
- Leather handbags carry the most bacteria because the spongy texture provides 'perfect growing conditions'
- Women should wash hands regularly and use antibacterial wipes to clean their bag and its contents

By EMMA INNES

PUBLISHED: 12:32 BST, 14 May 2013 | UPDATED: 12:49 BST, 14 May 2013

 61

ached your handbag?

ieve your mobile, clutching it to you in

) on the dinner table, or even on your

ording to a UK study for hygiene group

4. Cleaning

We clean our clothes and bathe ourselves on a daily basis but somehow we don't seem to have the habit of cleaning our bags.

It is no wonder our leather products are insanely dirty.

For bags and wallets which you use frequently, please please please send them for cleaning!



4. Cleaning

I would like to also clear a misconception many people have about cleaning their bags.

Cleaning your bag does not necessarily make it look nicer and newer.

Imagine someone with acne or freckles on his face.

Cleaning his face would only make it cleaner, but will not resolve the acne and freckles.

To resolve the acne and freckles, you will need to put on multiple layers of foundation and make-up on the face to cover up all the blemishes.

For leather goods, that is the equivalent of a colour touch up.

So apart from cleaning, if you like your bag to also look newer and nicer, you have to do a colour touch up on the bag as well.

Cleaning alone is mainly for hygiene purposes. It does not necessarily restore the outlook.



This prada wallet went through cleaning AND colour touch up. Cleaning alone will never be able to achieve this result.

Congratulations!

Good job, you have come a long way!

By reading up to this point, you are already more educated about leather bags than 90% of the general population!

Most people do not know how to take care of their leather products and simply throw away or banish their leather goods away after a short use.

It is a huge shame.

If you have found this guide to be useful, keep it and refer back to it whenever you have to.

If you like to share this guide with your loved ones or friends, please share this link and tag your friends.

Share this link: <http://bit.ly/2uzF1ri>

Please do not circulate this guide around.

This is because this guide is meant for our faithful subscribers only. I made a promise to share these knowledge only to an inner circle who appreciates and wants to be part of our Leather Secrets.

What's Next?

If you own a genuine leather bag or wallet or shoes, take good care of them and I promise you they will serve you well for many many years to come.

If you like to know more about leather and read more free tips and guides from us, make sure you have subscribed to our mailing list. I promise there will be no spams, just the good stuff from us.

Sign up here: www.honestcrafters.com/leather-secrets

Apart from useful tips and guides, we also share some interesting stories related to leather bags with everyone on our Facebook page and Instagram so make sure to follow us there as well!

Facebook: www.facebook.com/honestcrafters

Instagram: @honestcrafters

Talk to you soon!



With love,
Grace Guo