

Washing leather clothing – step by step

Leather jackets, motorcycle suits, leather trousers? With the right detergent, all types of leather can be washed without issue. This article shows how, and what matters.

The most important thing first

[Colourlock Leather & Fur Wash Concentrate](#) is suitable for all suede and smooth leather types, by hand or in the washing machine. At the correct temperature and with proper use, the leather becomes clean, remains soft and does not shrink.

Points to note beforehand

- Pre-treat heavily soiled areas such as collars, cuffs and lapels in a hand-wash bath: work in a little wash concentrate carefully with a soft brush.
- Never wash two differently coloured items together, except where the colour and leather are the same. For sets, always wash all parts together so that the shade remains even.
- Secure buttons, buckles and appliqués, or turn them inwards.
- Some leather is already faded or has signs of use before washing. Such pre-existing damage can become more visible after cleaning. This is not a detergent problem.
- Some types of leather have dyes that are not sufficiently fixed, or were coated with oils and fats. Washing makes this leather clean, but its surface may change.

Take particular care with:

- **Lambskins with a completely white reverse:** some have a washable tannage and become hard when washed. Always cut off a small piece and test-wash it first.
- **Exotic leather, old individual items, fur:** these may carry the risk of not being washable. If in doubt, [ask us first](#).

When do I need Leather Fixative?

[Colourlock Leather Fixative](#) fixes tanning agents and dyes in the leather and prevents bleeding during washing.

Fixative is necessary for: leather combinations of different colours, leather-textile mixes, light lining fabrics with differently coloured leather.

Not necessary for: lining fabrics of the same colour or black.

Test for plain-coloured leather:

Rub a slightly damp light-coloured cloth on a concealed area several times, ten times. If the cloth does not discolour, the fixative can be omitted. If the fixing bath does not discolour during the first wash, it can be omitted in future washes.

Application:

Do not use in the washing machine, but in the bath. Add half a bottle to 5–10 litres of hand-warm water (a whole bottle for complete motorcycle suits). Place the leather item in it, soak for at least 60 minutes and move it occasionally. Then allow it to drip

dry and put it into the washing machine without rinsing.

CAUTION:

Wear gloves.

Fixative causes skin irritation. In case of eye contact: rinse immediately with water for several minutes and remove contact lenses.

Hand washing

Add half a bottle of wash concentrate to 10–15 litres of water (max. 35°C); use the whole bottle for large items such as motorcycle suits. Place the leather item in it and soak it for around 30 minutes. For heavy soiling, use a soft brush to help.

Remove from the wash bath, allow to drip dry and rinse once with clean water. Detergent residues contribute to the softness of the result. Do not rinse too thoroughly.

NOTE:

Surface washing with a cloth, sponge and brush is suitable for pigmented smooth leather, but not for open-pore leather.

Quick test: What kind of leather do I have?

Rub a drop of water into a concealed area. If it beads up: pigmented smooth leather, more robust and easier to clean. If it is absorbed: open-pore leather (aniline leather or suede leather), more sensitive and requiring greater care.

Machine washing

Add half a bottle of wash concentrate to the machine compartment (a whole bottle for motorcycle suits or large coats). Use a wool or delicate cycle at a maximum of 35°C. At the end, spin only briefly if adjustable.

Drying:

Take the leather out of the drum, shake out the folds well and dry it hanging up at room temperature. Lay heavy items on dry towels. Never use a tumble dryer with heat and never dry in the sun. Large items can take several days to dry.

While the leather is still slightly damp, knead it soft occasionally with your hands; this is easier than when it is already completely dry.

After-treatment:

After drying, the leather fibres are somewhat stuck together. Pull the dried item lengthways and crossways and rub it thoroughly, or tumble it in a dryer on cold air without heat for 15–30 minutes.

Then brush up nubuck and velour leather with the [garment brush](#).

Product recommendations

Note:

(Clicking on products adds them to the shopping basket, after which they can be ordered)

Leather clothing

- [Leather & Fur Wash Concentrate](#)

For mixed items or light linings

- [Leather Wash Set](#)

