



**STITCHED
BY WASH**
CAR UPHOLSTERY

YOU DREAM IT, WE STITCH IT!

LEATHER RESTORATION MANUAL

PART I

DISCOVERING YOUR LEATHER



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WHAT IS LEATHER ?

To choose the best Leather Restoration process and products, it is paramount to first understand the type of your leather its strengths and limits.

Leather is a byproduct of animal hide with closely packed fibers giving it robust and flexible features able to withstand tension. The crafting of leather into different products has been in existence before pre-historical times and has become a symbol of luxury over time.

Leather has revolutionized our way of life becoming part of us right from the closets, home furniture, and offices to the interior of our luxurious automobiles. Just like normal skin, leather is susceptible to drying, discoloration, and cracking. This is why leather has to be nourished and maintained for us to get a satisfying feeling from it.



CLASSIFYING LEATHER BY SURFACE TREATMENT

Leather upholstery mainly falls under two categories, Finished and Aniline leather.

Finished leather

Finished leather has a protective outer layer to increase resistance to wearing and tearing out.

Pigmented/Top-coated Leather

Pigmented or Top-coated Leather is a buffed version of the finished leather technique coated with opaque color pigments with a finish of a grain protective top coat.

Enhanced protection from water penetration, scratch marks, stains, and discoloration. Cracks only occur on the outer pigmented surface in rare cases. Pigmented leather is widely used because of its longer durability and affordability making it ideal for automotive upholstery. Pigmented leather is further divided into two categories as follows:

- **Two-tone pigmented leather:** two or more color pigments are used to give a more contrasting finish.
- **By-cast Leather:** has a uniform thickness across the surface. A coating of polyurethane or vinyl is added to hide the natural texture of the leather.

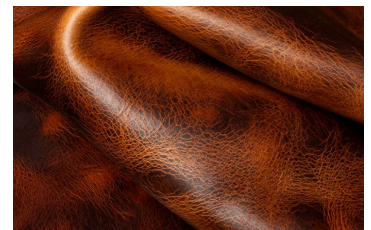
TYPES OF LEATHER

Aniline Leather

This is a natural soft leather with minimal protective layers. The leather surface is treated with aniline dye to offer more uniformity and durability. The downside of aniline leather in comparison to Finished leather is its vulnerability to easy scratching, stains, water penetration, and UV light.



- **Semi-Aniline leather:** coated with reduced pigmentation of semi-aniline dye. It has a more consistent appearance and a less soft feel with more visible natural grain patterns.
- **Pull-up leather:** a type of aniline leather treated with wax or oil to offer a more protective layer and a semi-gloss feeling. Wearing and tearing can be more obvious in pull-up leather but maintenance is easier. Often becomes lighter with a unique distressed look when stretched or pulled
- **Nubuck leather:** a sanded version of aniline leather giving it a fine soft velvet surface that offers slight water resistance properties. It has a suede-like appearance. Rubbing on a Nubuck leather leaves the effect of a mark on the surface. Should be kept in a dry environment to avoid permanent damage by water. It stains easily and is harder to maintain.

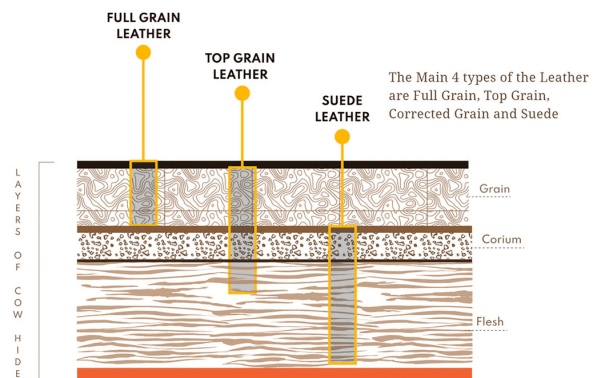


CLASSIFYING LEATHER BY GRADING SYSTEM

Another way to determine the quality of your leather is through the grading system which includes Top-grain, Full-grain, Split-grain, Genuine leather, and Bonded leather grades.

LEATHER GRADE GUIDE

Reference for Quality & Classification



CLASSIFYING LEATHER BY GRADING SYSTEM

FULL GRAIN LEATHER

Leather Grade Guide by Iconic Society

Quality
The surface of full-grain leather retains the characteristics of the original cowhide, with the distinctive pores and grain of the cowhide clearly visible.

Use
Full grain leather is suitable for the production of all leather product.

Touch
Maintaining the softness, elasticity, and good breathability properties.

Durability
The surface of the leather remains intact on the leather, its fastness is good.

Full-grain leather:

No sanding, buffing, or snuffing is done on the hide making the leather stronger and durable with a more natural texture. This is considered as the highest grade of leather. As Full-grain leather ages, its properties like coloration and overall patina change making it more elegant and supple. Full-grain leather is the most ideal for car upholstery.

TOP GRAIN LEATHER

Leather Grade Guide by Iconic Society

Quality
The surface of sofas made from top grain leather can be given a rich colour and style while retaining the natural traces of the leather.

Use
Ideal for making high-end leather sofas and chairs.

Touch
Top grain leather is softer and more flexible.

Durability
Our artisans hand color each part of the leather to create a highly durable protective layer

Top-grain leather:

The outermost layer of the hide is sanded out during leather processing to remove blemishes producing an even texture. It is less durable compared to Full-grain due to sanding and buffing. More affordable, thinner, and malleable than full-grain leather, making it the most commonly used in car upholstery.

SPLIT LEATHER

Leather Grade Guide by Iconic Society

Quality
The natural surface of split leather is not as dense and practical as that of full-grain and top-grain leather.

Use
Split leather is mostly used in office furniture.

Touch
Hard and thick. In normal use scenarios, the cracks in the split leather are prone to wear and even tear.

Durability
The split leather is still referred to as genuine leather and although it retains the characteristics of cowhide, it has loose fibrous tissue and is far less durable and stronger than the first layer of cowhide.

Split-grain leather:

Often referred to as suede, the top layer of the hide is removed to have a rougher texture. The treatment of split-grain leather should be done with caution as it is less flexible and vulnerable to wear and tear.

CORRECTED LEATHER

Leather Grade Guide by Iconic Society

Quality
Corrected grain leather can come from any layer of the hide, that has been surface treated to provide a more even, 'corrected' appearance in order to retouch and improve the rawhide and grain imperfections

Use
It's used in the production of a jacket, handbag, shoes, belt, furniture, etc. But it is not a good choice for those looking for high quality leather furniture.

Touch
It's characterized by a smooth, luxurious surface with few-to-no flaws.

Durability
Corrected grain leather is considered as durable as full-grain leather, but the buffing of the surface removes the natural softness. In addition, the beautiful patina that is a characteristic of full-grain leather won't appear on corrected grain leather.

Genuine/Corrected leather:

Genuine leather is processed using the underneath layer of the hide after removing grains from the top layers. Often referred to as corrected leather, genuine leather can be produced through a correcting process on different layers of the hide. Its quality is lower than full-grain, top-grain, and split-grain. Genuine leather is not recommended for car upholstery.

BONDED LEATHER

Leather Grade Guide by Iconic Society

Quality
Bonded leather is made up of scrap leather and polyurethane, which makes it a cheap, fake leather.

Use
Bonded leather is suitable for making some cheap leather products.

Touch
It has a smooth, consistent texture, unlike genuine leather, which has imperfections in the overall appearance.

Durability
Bonded leather is not as durable as genuine leather and has a short lifespan. And it wears away over time and can easily scratch, peel, and flake.

Bonded leather:

this type of leather is created from scraps of leftover leather fiber and bonding agents mainly polyurethane (plastic). Smooth and uniform surface compared to Genuine leather. Bonded leather is more gullible to crack and wear out in contrast with other types of leather.

CONCLUSION

Leather is a unique material with various uses in many areas. Terminologies used in leather production and identification are often interchangeable which often causes confusion. The best way to identify your leather is through the feeling of touch. Leather is often used in car upholstery to give your car an elegant look and comfort to you and your passengers. It can be found in different parts of your car from the steering wheel, dashboard, seat covers, armrests, head restraints, roof linings, and even in the truck.

All leather materials are subject to wear and tear with time, fading away the glory of your automobile. Thus, we must always protect our leather upholstery by continuously maintaining its nature before it reaches an irreversible shape. When choosing car upholstery leather, you must consider the leather's durability, appearance, car type, price, and the usage of the car. Stitched by Wash will help you choose the best leather for your car and take you through the important restoration process. Contact us for more advice and tips on leather types and restoration.



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