



Dehner Boot Care

Boots are an investment. Treat them like one!

Dehner boots, like any leather product, need care and attention to keep them looking their best. The following guide should help you determine what's best for your boot as well as what products to avoid.

- **Part 1: The Break-in Process**
- **Part 2: Cleaning and Conditioning**
- **Part 3: Creams and Polishes**
- **Part 4: What about Dehcord?**
- **Part 5: Repairs and Adjustments**

The Break-in Process

Your boots are made of the finest materials -- fashioned by expert craftsmen. The leather was carefully cut and molded to your exact measurements, then stitched with nylon thread for long wear. **The boots should be a snug fit when you first wear them.** This is completely normal. Here are a few suggestions for breaking them in...

- They will be a bit hard to put on at first, so sprinkle a little talcum powder inside the boots, particularly around the instep. Although still snug, this should allow your foot to slide in.
- You may feel some looseness in the heel when the boots are new. This is normal. As your sole breaks in, this heel slippage will gradually go away.
- Walk in them, ride in them. If they get wet, don't worry about it. The dampness while you're wearing them will help mold the leather to your legs.
- Do not dry your boots with heat. Repeatedly drying your boots this way can cause the leather to crack and the insole to curl.



Use talc to help your foot slide into the boot when they are new.

Before many wearings, the leather will begin to adapt itself to your legs. After awhile you will find that the boots have become a part of you.

Cleaning and Conditioning

One of the questions we get asked the most is how to properly clean a Dehner boot. The answer to this question can vary by leather type but there are a few key points you always want to keep in mind.

Sometimes the simplest way really IS the best way. Plain tap water is ideal for everyday cleaning and is the easiest on the leather. **DO NOT USE SADDLE SOAP!** Now we know this may come as a shock to many but despite popular belief, the saddle soap can actually harm your boots.



It's important to know which products can help, and which can hurt.

The following excerpt is taken from an article titled "The Saddle Soap Myth" and it was written by Dr. Herndon Jenkins. It first appeared in the Carriage Journal, Summer 1983 Edition.

Saddle soap is a mixture of oil and soap. The soap's cleaning effectiveness is diminished by the need to dissolve its own oils, leaving little useful cleaning capacity to remove the dirty oils in the leather itself.

Soaps are inherently alkaline, but alkalinity is damaging to leather. The ability of soap to emulsify oils and release oil-entrapped dirt is inseparable from its alkalinity. Neutralize a soap solution and it becomes ineffective as a cleaning agent.

Most saddle soaps call for the user to work the lather into the leather but, since the dirt which has been loosened is suspended in the lather, it is pushed back into the leather and into the pores.

After so many years in the business, The Dehner Company has seen first-hand how continued use of such saddle soaps can actually decrease the life of a boot. A damp cloth with plain tap water should always be your first choice but if something more is needed or you have a really tough stain, try to find a pH-balanced cleaner and conditioner such as **Lexol**.



Dirty Welting

A dirty welt can eat away at the stitching of your sole. Clean this area often.

Lexol, and other cleaners like it, have a pH-balanced formula which helps you avoid the damaging effects of alkaline-based soaps. Use these cleaners for the tough dirt and grime, but as with any chemical, use it sparingly and ALWAYS follow your cleaning with a conditioning. Most brands such as Lexol will also make a conditioning product as well. Conditioning helps replace the "good oils" that keep your boot breathing and soft.

Although your boots need oil to stay healthy, avoid over conditioning them. Adding too much of a good thing can saturate the boot and cause it to become oily to the touch. Always follow the instructions on the conditioner label.

Washing the welt area of the boot can be a bit tougher and a soft bristled brush may be required. Gently work the brush around the welt area to loosen the dried-in dirt and oil then wipe dry with a soft cloth.

One other important thing to note is how much boot trees can preserve the overall shape of the boot. This is especially true once the leather has gotten damp. Even a plastic tree can make a world of difference and help keep your Dehners looking great for years.

Creams and Polishes

Now that your boots are clean, let's take a look at what works and what doesn't when you want to add those finishing touches to your boot.

At some point during the life of the boot, most people are probably going to want to spiff them up a bit and get them looking shiny and new again. This can be accomplished in different ways, but it's important to keep your boot's leather type in mind as well as the product you plan to use. Let's begin by taking a look at each type of leather we offer and find out what the limitations are.



- **Imported Calfskin**- A very dressy leather that can take a shine easily. Creams or polishes will work well as long as you follow the guidelines below.
- **Voyager**- Voyager leather is a good alternative to calfskin for those looking for a bit more durability. A silky finish allows the boot to shine up well.
- **Dragoon**- A heavily oiled leather which will not take a shine. Primarily used for boots that will see heavy use outdoors. Cream and polish is not recommended.
- **Dehcord**- A synthetic leather manufactured by **♦Majilite**. Easily shineable with water or ©KIWI Express Shine. (see next section)
- **ME Leather**- Because this is a "rough side out" leather, cream and polish are not recommended. A hard bristled suede brush is the best way to care for this type of finish.

Now that you know what your boot's leather limits are, it's time to pick a product. Almost all products used for shining purposes have a wax-based formula. This can be a double-edged sword in many respects since wax in general can clog the pores in the leather and keep it from breathing. Because of this, we recommend using a cream polish over a paste. While even the soft creams are wax-based, they are a much lighter blend and still shine up great. They also offer a bit of protection for the leather as well. **DO NOT USE A LIQUID POLISH.**

We recognize that there will be occasions when you need an absolute shine. Using a heavy wax polish to achieve this is ok, but cleaning it off afterwards is a must. Leaving a heavy wax on the boot for an extended period of time will greatly diminish the boot's lifespan and dry it out quite quickly.

What about Dehcord?

Dehcord is a synthetic leather manufactured by **♦Majilite** and used in the shaft of our stock dress and bal-laced patrol boots. Cost effective and long lasting (10 year shelf life), Dehcord was the perfect solution for police departments across the country looking to find a less expensive alternative to calfskin.



Just as with any boot, proper care needs to be taken to prolong its life. Because the boots still use calfskin in the vamps, a damp cloth wetted with regular tap water should always be your first choice. If a higher shine is needed, ©KIWI Express Shine polish (or similar product) may be used on the **DEHCORD SECTION ONLY**. Take care not to spray the lower section of the boot. Creams and polishes may be used on the vamp as described earlier in this article.

Should the Dehcord become deeply scratched to the point where you can see the backing, the best advice is to take a pure black permanent marker and cover the affected area.

Repairs & Adjustments

Of all the clothing we wear, boots and shoes take the most abuse. We walk on them, slide on them, kick things with them, and climb in them. Everything we do puts stress on the leather and the stitching. Taking proper care of your boots help them resist this stress but at some point a minor or even major adjustment may be needed.

The Dehner Company does offer a repair and adjustment service located at the factory in Omaha, Nebraska. Although prices may vary depending on the age of the boot, a general listing (with base prices) can be found on our website **here**. Please keep the following in mind when returning a boot (or boots) to us for inspection.

- Leather changes over time. Boots do not last forever and eventually even the finest leathers become too brittle or dry to restitch or stretch. For this reason **we do not accept repair or adjustment requests on boots over 20 years old.** A local cobbler may be willing to give it a shot, but always inform them about the age of the boot.
- You are responsible for any shipping charges accrued when sending your boots to our factory for repairs or add-ons.
- A boot that has not been cared for properly may not be eligible for repairs. Always clean and condition your boots regularly, and tree them whenever possible.
- Repairs or add-ons typically take anywhere from 2-6 weeks to complete depending on the complexity of the request.
- Because many of our leatherworkers have been crafting Dehner boots for over 20 years, there is a good possibility that your boot will be adjusted by the same person who created it.



Once you have decided to send your boot in for an adjustment, please send it to our Omaha office with a note inside explaining what needs to be done as well as a phone number where you can be reached. Even if the repair seems obvious, please always include the note.

MAIL TO:

**The DEHNER COMPANY
3614 MARTHA ST.
OMAHA, NE 68105**

If you require additional assistance please contact us at 402/342-7788 between the hours of 8am and 4pm Central time, Monday through Friday. You can also use our **contact page** and send us an e-mail.