

How To Choose Leather Shoes: A Quick Guide

Leather is a material "created through the tanning of hides, pelts and skins of animals, primarily cows." Leather shoes and boots are two items very commonly made from leather.

It's hard to resist a pair of leather shoes, regardless of whether you are a man or a woman. Genuine leather is durable, classy, comfortable and usually expensive but worth the price because a well made pair of leather shoes can last a person for years.

Leather is sold in three forms, these being full grain leather, corrected grain leather and sued. Full grain leather is natural leather made from the finest of all raw materials and this case only the hairs have been taken away while the hide is left clean and natural. There are a variety of forms of leather and these include vegetable tanned leather, alum tanned leather (alum meaning aluminum), rawhide, boiled leather and chrome tanned leather. For men dress shoes mean leather shoes and that means oxfords. Men's oxfords come in a variety of styles and these include open laced oxfords (or Bluchers), close laced oxfords (or Balmorals), "saddle" oxfords, "kiltie" oxfords, and "wingtip" oxfords.

Oxfords are men's shoes that lace up and don't come up any further than the ankle. Blucher oxfords are open laced leather dress shoes which have the sides of the shoe sewn on the front part (the top to be exact). Balmoral leather oxfords are close laced shoes in which the laces are sewn in a very unique way under the front part of the oxford and then the laces close over the tongue. The end result is a smooth, streamlined shoe that has the appearance of being constructed from only one piece of leather.

"Saddle" oxfords, as the name suggests have a piece of leather on them that is the shape of a saddle, the saddle being a different leather type or color than the rest of the shoe.

Another type of oxford shoe referred to, as "kilties" are fancy in their design with a fringed leather tongue that comes over the instep of the shoe and covers both the eyelets and the laces.

By far the most popular type of oxford shoes is the "wingtip." This pair of fashionable men's footwear gets its name because the toe brogueing (or leather embroidery) looks a lot like the spread of a bird's wings.

The variety of oxford styles gives men plenty of options when shopping for business shoes. Some include a separate piece of leather that is to be found on the toe of the shoe (or the "cap toe"). Sometimes this piece of leather is plain and other times it is decorated with leather embroidery (also refined as brogueing).

Genuine leather shoes are the only way to go if you are in the market for a pair of oxfords. And black is the color to go with because all black leather oxford style shoes, regardless of the style of leather finish or structural design will complement business attire. The most formal of all men's dress shoes are the black leather close laced oxfords (Balmorals). Not to be denied their due, open laced leather oxfords in either brown or oxblood look great when paired up with light suits and sports coats and even more relaxed, casual wear such as jeans and khakis.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

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