

Leatherique step-by-step guide to recolouring leather and vinyl seat upholstery

STEP 1. REMOVE THE SEATS (OPTIONAL).

This makes it easier to achieve the best results. However, with careful masking it is possible to do a good job with the seats still in the car.

STEP 2. REMOVE THE OLD FINISH (OPTIONAL).

You may remove the old finish to (1) renew the colour or (2) change the colour.

Leatherique Colour Dye may be successfully applied over the old finish, following recommended preparation, with very impressive results. However, for the perfectionist, the ultimate results will be achieved if the old finish is removed.

- To remove: use quick-dry lacquer thinners. Apply it on the leather sections only. The leather sections are: the parts you sit on/against, the front headrests, the entire rear pull out armrest. Everything else may be vinyl – DO NOT USE THINNERS ON VINYL as it can make the surface sticky. Use a green nylon scouring pad or a stainless steel scouring pad (both kitchen type available in supermarkets) and old towels to wipe the mess off. Use a dull edged kitchen knife with a rounded tip and a brush to gently clean the seams. The key is to use generous amounts of thinners, keeping the surface wet. You may use 4 litres of thinners. Use heavy rubber gloves and eye protection. Good ventilation is a must. Fortunately, you need remove only about 80% of your old colour. Wet and dry sandpaper of 180 and 320 grade is advised for difficult spots. Be careful not to create suede.
- Let the seats dry for 24 hours to get the solvent completely out of the leather. You'll be surprised how much softer your seats are now, without the old, brittle finish.
- When dry, sand lightly using 320-grade sandpaper over the whole seat surface, leather and vinyl. This helps the conditioner thoroughly penetrate.

STEP 3. CONDITION AND DEEP CLEAN LEATHER (MANDATORY).

Leatherique's leather conditioning and cleaning system comprises two products: Rejuvenator Oil and Prestine Clean.

- **Leatherique Rejuvenator Oil** is the secret of the Leatherique deep cleaning and conditioning process. It penetrates the pores in your car's leather, restoring suppleness, swelling the leather fibres and loosening and lifting dirt to the surface. It should be liberally applied to all leather surfaces with a spray bottle and your gloved hands, and allowed to soak in overnight. If the leather is very dry or brittle, multiple

applications over several days (or weeks in extreme cases) will create astonishing results.

- After your leather has been treated with Rejuvenator Oil and left at least 1-2 days, **Leatherique Prestine Clean** should be applied to the surfaces with a sponge or soft brush. Let the Prestine Clean stand for 10 minutes, then wipe off with a clean water-dampened towel to remove dirt, rinsing frequently in clean warm water.

STEP 4. PREPPING (MANDATORY).

- You will need 320-grade wet & dry sand paper and a bucket of clean, warm water.
- Lightly sand the leather to smooth out any imperfections in the surface, and to remove any loose and worn dye. Do not attempt to colour over damaged dye – it must be a sound surface. Do not remove the grain or texture of the leather and do not create suede!
- Wipe on Leatherique Prepping Agent with a small clean towel or lint free cloth. This removes any remaining dirt, silicone, waxes or petroleum oil and prepares the old dye for the new colour coating.
- You may apply Leatherique Crack Filler at this stage. Apply it only into cracks or holes, not over the grain. Your fingertips will allow a more subtle blending with textured surfaces, while a business card is good for getting a smooth fill on smooth surfaces. Allow to dry for 30 minutes and apply another coat of filler if necessary. For holes in leather, a mechanical repair will be necessary. Insert a patch (a piece of canvas or leather) larger than the hole carefully into the hole, using tweezers if necessary. Make sure the fuzzy side of the patch is facing up towards the underside of the upholstery. With a toothpick, spread a small amount of leather glue between the patch and upholstery and apply a flat weight until dry. Fill the remaining scar with Crack Filler. Lightly re-sand as necessary with 400-grade sandpaper for a smooth, flawless finish.
- Allow the project to sit about 6 hours or overnight to allow the Prepping Agent and Crack Filler to dry.

STEP 5. RECOLOUR WITH LEATHERIQUE COLOUR DYE.

Do this in the shade to avoid the dye drying too fast. If it is summer, try to do it in the relative cool of early morning when the air is more humid.

- Use rubber gloves (thin disposable type) to minimise cleanup effort.
- Everything must be thoroughly clean and dry otherwise the dye will not adhere.
- Pour just enough dye into a clean, flat bottomed, wide container (such as a plastic ice-cream tub) that you can apply in 10-15 minutes (say 1 to 2 cms deep).
- You may dilute the dye up to 10% (say 1-2 teaspoons for the above amount) with pure / filtered / distilled lukewarm (not hot) water to enhance its spreadability and penetrability.
- Keep the Dye stirred or gently swirl around container to stop pigment settling and resultant streaking of the finished job.

- Apply the dye using one or more of the following:
 - a clean soft fleecy-lined cloth folded into a pad,
 - a 75mm foam brush (grey bevel-edged),
 - a 50mm or 75mm quality nylon bristle brush (RotaCota's Excel2 is excellent and leaves no brushmarks)
 - a paint pad (covered with short, fur-like white nylon bristles),
 - a spray gun (use 60 psi pressure). Apply the first coat by brush to ensure optimum penetration of the leather. This combination will give the best results and a spray allows quick and easy touch-up of any missed or imperfect areas.
- The first coat and any subsequent coats must be applied sparingly. The objective of the first coat is covering, not worrying about unevenness, or making it look finished. Don't re-work your strokes much, especially if it's drying fast.
- Begin with the broad areas first to "unload" some of the dye before doing the seams, piping and edges with the applicator. Do not let the dye pool and dry in the seams. Some seams need to be separated with your fingers and the applicator worked into the stitches. The seams take time but are very important. The clean, complete coverage and appearance of your seams can make the difference between a good job and a poor one
- After 10-15 minutes, Leatherique Colour Dye is dry to the touch. You can apply a second coat after 30 minutes. The colour, when dry, is different to when wet and the surface evens out.
- A third coat can be applied, if needed. Use just enough to colour, no more. When doing touch up, remember to keep just a very small amount of colour on the brush and resist the temptation to even out or rework the strokes. If you don't, you will get brush strokes on the surface.
- The colourant is durable for use after 48 hours. After 48 hours, if you wish to bring out a luster, you may buff the surface lightly with a soft, clean dry cloth.
- It takes about 6 weeks to cure fully. After that, it can be cleaned with a water-dampened cloth. After 6 months, you may use Leatherique Prestine Clean as a maintenance cleaner and detailer as necessary, and Rejuvenator Oil as necessary to maintain the suppleness.