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## Expert offers tips for cleaning, repairing leather furniture

Greg Gerber posted on January 04, 2011 12:46

**FIBRENEW**

HOLLY SPRINGS, N.C. -- Over the holidays we open our hearts, homes and sleeper sofas to the people we love. But when the last toast is made and the company clears out, homeowners are left to take stock of the disaster left behind - and it's usually the furniture that bears the brunt of the beating.

Whether it's the wine and food stains left behind on the ottoman, the crayon and marker mementos from excited kids etched on leather couches, or the ruined upholstery on cushions and pillows from boots, high heels and mid-day naps, it's all got to be fixed. But where and how do you start?

This holiday season, a leather expert from Fibrenew, a leather and plastics refurbishing specialty company, is arming consumers with the dos and don'ts of furniture cleanup.

"We see a big increase in the damage of leather furniture this time of year with all the holiday parties" says Michael Wilson, CEO of Fibrenew. "Clumsy guests cause damage, but the worst disasters are caused by homeowners who don't know the best ways to clean up a mess and repair a problem."

### Top 5 tips to clean furniture properly

There are several types of leather, and the following tips apply to all fully-finished leather, which makes up 85 percent of the leather market.

**INK:** The spoiled rotten, we mean darling, nephew, tries out his new marker set by drawing Spongebob on your leather couch. You become a crabby Patty and scramble to clean it up.

Don't use dish soap or hair spray to remove the marks. The degreasing agent in dish soap can permanently de-gloss and damage the top coating on the leather surface. Hair spray has alcohol in it and will ruin the surface coating on your leather.

Do use a soft sponge and specialized leather cleaner. Buy it at most leather furniture retailers, but for serious problems your local Fibrenew franchise can help.

**NAIL POLISH:** You try out OPI's Affair in Red Square red to sexy up those toenails, but you end up polishing a couch cushion instead.

Don't use nail polish remover because it will take all of the color out of your leather and leave a bleached spot bigger than the nail polish spot.

Do once again, use a soft sponge and leather cleaner.

**FOOD OR WINE STAIN:** Your brother-in-law eats an entire pizza and drops a greasy cheese and his fifth glass of wine on your leather loveseat.

Don't use window/mirror cleaner because it contains alcohol which will dissolve and destroy the surface coating on your leather.

Do use a damp towel to wipe up the mess and a dry one to finish the job. Fully-finished leather is pretty much water proof, so a little spill isn't going to hurt as long as you clean up quickly before it soaks through.

**ANIMAL SCRATCHES AND PICKS:** For the purr-fect gift, Santa brings your kids a kitty. Hello Kitty quickly turns into Good Bye Kitty when the furry friend (now foe) decides your leather couch is his new scratching post.

Don't touch up the spots with shoe polish because it makes an ugly, sticky mess.

Do try to reduce the visibility of the problem by snipping off the cotton interior strands that often get pulled out when leather gets picked. Do use a hair dryer and massage minor scratches with leather cleaner to try to rub it out. Call a professional to fix larger scratches and holes -- this is not a do-it-yourself kind of job.

**BURNS AND DISCOLORATION:** Those window candles get knocked over on your upholstery and are left on overnight. You wake up Christmas morning to a dried out heat spot and a cracked couch cushion.

Don't try to rub it out and blend it with the surrounding area, you'll only make the problem bigger.

Do bring in some help. When leather or faux leather gets damaged by heat, the only solution is to call in a professional. Regardless of size, a professional repair can make that burn look brand new and can be done on the spot in your own home.

"We hate to see people damaging their leather furniture further by trying to fix minor problems," says Wilson. "Part of our job as leather and plastics experts is to serve as a resource, helping people understand what problems they can handle on their own and when they need to call a professional."

For more information and to locate a Fibrenew professional in your area, call Katy Millberg at 919.459.8167, e-mail [kmillberg@fibrenew.com](mailto:kmillberg@fibrenew.com) or visit [www.fibrenew.com](http://www.fibrenew.com).

About Fibrenew

Fibrenew, founded in 1985 in Canada, is an international franchise company that specializes in the renewal of leather and plastics, servicing five major markets: aviation, automotive, commercial, marine and residential. There are nearly 200 Fibrenew locations in 9 countries around the world. As a global leader in the environmental movement, Fibrenew prevents thousands of tons of leather and plastics from entering landfills.

For more information visit [www.fibrenew.com](http://www.fibrenew.com).