Leather Wallet Care Checklist

Identify the leather type, run the 7-step SOP, avoid the products that cause most damage, and keep care on schedule.

1 Match care to the leather type

LEATHER TYPE	CLEAN WITH	CONDITION	OIL TOLERANCE	FIRST FAILURE SIGN
Vegetable-tanned	Barely damp cloth, water first	Every 3 months	High — darkens and patinas	Dark blotches, stiff folds
Chrome-tanned	pH-balanced cleaner on damp cloth	Every 3–6 months	Moderate	Cracking at fold lines
Aniline / semi-aniline	Water only, condition immediately	Every 2–3 months	Low — absorbs unevenly	Dye on the cloth, blotchy color
Suede / nubuck	Specialist spray only — no liquids	Per product instructions	None	Matted nap, stiff patches
Edge-painted	Keep liquid off the painted edge	Wax edge every other session	Low at the edge	Hairline cracks parallel to the edge

2 The 7-step SOP

1 Inspect
- ☐ Empty; feel for brittle fibers
- ☐ Check folds, corners, edge paint
- ☐ Suede/nubuck: stop before liquid

2 Dry-wipe
- ☐ Horsehair brush removes loose grit
- ☐ Cornstarch for oil; cold pack for sticky
- ☐ Never scrub a stain deeper

3 Clean
- ☐ Distilled water, cloth wrung dry
- ☐ Cleaner on the cloth, not the wallet
- ☐ One panel; blot any darkening

4 Dry
- ☐ 20–22°C, no sun, no heat
- ☐ Stuff with acid-free tissue
- ☐ 4–6 h light, up to 24 h deep

5 Condition
- ☐ Light cream, pea-sized per panel
- ☐ Absorb 15–30 min, then buff dry
- ☐ Even, dry to the touch = done

6 Edges & hardware
- ☐ Inspect edge paint every 90 days
- ☐ One pass of edge wax, never layered
- ☐ Dry cotton swab on hardware

7 Schedule
- ☐ Weekly: dry wipe
- ☐ Monthly: inspect edges
- ☐ Quarterly: condition and buff

! Travel rule
- ☐ Cabin humidity drops below 20%
- ☐ Fly 2×/month: condition 6×/year
- ☐ Rotate wallets for recovery time

3 Never use these

- ☐ Hairdryers or any direct heat
- ☐ Rubbing alcohol or solvents
- ☐ Bleach or ammonia cleaners
- ☐ Melamine foam (“magic eraser”)
- ☐ Abrasive brushes
- ☐ Heavy shoe grease or shoe polish
- ☐ Olive oil or coconut oil
- ☐ Metal polish on wallet hardware

Storage

- ☐ 18–22°C and 40–50% relative humidity
- ☐ Breathable cotton dust bag plus a silica packet
- ☐ Never a sealed plastic bag, never a bathroom
- ☐ Stuff with acid-free tissue

Stop and send it to a professional if you see: mold smell, powdery leather fiber loss, detached lining, structural cracking, or edge paint lifting along the seam.