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# ANATOMY OF A QUALITY SHOE

By William Kissel

## SHOE CARE TIPS:

- Nothing breaks down footwear faster than water in the leather. Use cedar shoe trees between wearings to absorb the moisture and retain the shoe's shape.
- Don't wear the same shoes two days in a row; try to rotate them so the leather can breathe between wearings.
- Use a good clear polish regularly and colored polish only when the finish has faded.

“Many people underestimate the effect that high quality shoes can have on your entire well-being,” explains Paul Grangaard, the president of American shoe maker Allen Edmonds. “Your feet are the foundation for your entire skeletal support structure.”

While shoe trends come and go, the basic components of fine shoe making never waffle. Look first at the quality of the leather. You can tell a high quality shoe by how soft the leather feels, not how thin it looks. Thinner leathers tend to tear easier. Another good barometer is

the interior lining. A well-made shoe will always have one made of leather to keep your feet comfortable and dry, as well as prevent the interior stitching from chafing your foot.

Notice too how the leather is finished, even if the shoe appears to be a classic black. Solid colored shoes sometimes disguise flaws in the skin. “We do a leather called Lucido that has a color overlay, which means the finish goes on black, but as you burnish it there is rich color that shows underneath,” explains Cory Haberman of Cole Haan.

Equally essential to first-class shoe making is the sole. The finest dress footwear is always produced with Goodyear-welted sole construction. This means an extra layer of material, known as the welt, is sewn between the upper and the sole, which is customarily made of leather. Because the welt is sewn, not glued, it can be easily taken apart and replaced when the soles develop holes. Many fine shoe makers will gladly resole your shoes for a nominal cost, greatly extending their life. If you factor that into the overall cost, a good pair of shoes can last for decades and ultimately prove to be the smarter investment.

