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Leather processing â€“ an interesting process to know by Heather Protz

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When nomadic tribes made shelters and clothes from the skin and hides of animals such as bison, now we are using the animal skin for making valets, bags and foot wares. Earlier there were no technologies to process the animal skin, so the skin was always turns stiff and rotten. Later they discovered a technique to process the skin. It is nothing but drying in the air and sunlight. This was the beginning of the leather processing. With the passage of time, man tried various other techniques to process the leather. As civilization progressed, preserving hides and skin, and converting them into leather become an important business. Today we established large manufacturing industries to do leather business. Two types of materials used for making leather are skin and hides. Hides are the skin of large animals such as cattle and buffalo, while skin are taken from smaller animals like sheep, goat and calves.

Letâ€™s go through different stages of the leather production. Warehousing and sorting- In the warehousing department, the skin and hide will be preserved in salt. This will prevent the skin from decaying. Before taking into the production area the skin will be presorted according to its weight and quality. After sorting, the skin will be soaked in water that contains detergents. This helps to remove dirt and salt. De-fleshing- this is the second step of processing. De-fleshing is a process in which the tissue, flesh and fat remnants that stick to the skin and hide will be removed by a roller mounted knife. Liming â€“ This process will help to remove the hair particles from the skin. To remove hair particles the skin will be put into a medium containing lime and sulphur compound. Batting, Pickling and tanning â€“ After the hair has been removed the hides and skin are neutralized with acids and treated with enzymes to remove any deposits and to increase softness. This process is called batting. In the pickling process, the hide and skin are soaked in a solution of water, salt, hydrochloric acid or sulphuric acid. Towards the final stage of the processing we apply tanning process.

Among the several types of tanning, the commonly used processes are Chrome and Vegetable Tanning. Chrome tanning is used for making upholstery, shoe uppers, garments and bag leathers. The chrome tanning process takes nearly eight hours to complete. Vegetable tanning process will take two to four days to complete. Tannic acid extracted from the bark of tree is used in vegetable tanning. Vegetable tanning is used for products as shoe soles, luggage, saddler and belt leathers.

Wringing, splitting and shaving â€“ Wringing takes the water content out. Wringing helps to split the product. Depending on the use of the leather product, the hides are split into sheets of the required thickness. The process after splitting is shaving. This adds quality to the hide or skin. Staking- After shaving process next comes the staking process. This is the mechanical softening of the leather after drying. After staking, the leather is lubricated with natural fat or synthetic fat. This will give more softness to the leather. This is almost the final stage of the leather processing. In the finishing stage, the leather will be given a series of coatings. These coatings are designed to protect the leather and produce more surface effects.

Donâ€™t you think, itâ€™s interesting to know about leather processing and the final product we are gettin from it. So many people are indulged in the leather processing work. Its really interesting to know that that the leather products that we are using is coming to us after going through different procedure.

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