**Leather Care**

**Avert your own leather disaster by taking care of your toys and accessories!  A bit of regular maintenance and cleaning can help your items last as long as your own skin.**

**Prevention**

**Keep your toys clean! Sweat, blood, oils and other body fluids can supply enough food for mildew to start growing. Even ordinary substances such as alcoholic beverages, sodas and juice, petrol and body lotions can damage the leather. Thoroughly clean leather after each use. Wipe down with a clean, damp cloth and sanitize if necessary. Let items dry thoroughly in a well-ventilated area before storing.**

**Cleaning**

**Keep this item clean and in good condition. Wipe with a barely damp cloth after use. A quality leather conditioner (such as Feibings Aussie Leather Conditioner or the good old Kiwi Dubbin) should be used at least twice a year if not more often. Conditioning keeps the leather from becoming brittle and helps with water resistance all the toys l make are conditioned with Dubbin before shipping so another coating will not be needed for several months.**

**Storage**

**Leather is porous and needs to breathe. You should store your leather in an airy, dry area that is not too hot or cold and certainly not damp. Do not impede air circulation by hanging your leather toys in a tightly packed closet. Do not store in direct contact with heating vents or near heating units and avoid direct sunlight as this will dry and fade leather. If you choose to cover your leather items use a breathable material like a cotton sheet. Avoid storing any leather items in plastic bags, plastic containers, tight drawers, car trunks, bathrooms or packed tightly into a toy bag or toy box.**

**Mildew Removal**

**Mildew can attack even with proper cleaning and storage. If you discover that lovely lacy stencilling on your leathers the first step is to REMOVE the affected item outside gently and carefully. That way, you'll avoid filling the air with mould spores that will simply infect other items in the confined space.  Have a supply of old soft rags that you are willing to throw out. Start wiping away any surface mould with a wet rag. Wipe and capture as much of the mould as you can then throw the rag away. Don't rinse and reuse your rags. That only spreads the mould spores. Use an old toothbrush to clean stitching lines and crevices within the braiding or knots. Finish cleaning the leather using a water-based, pH neutral product to float away any remaining organic surface dirt that could support mould and mildew growth.**

**Some traditional leather cleaners contain glycerine and are not a good choice for mouldy leather. Glycerine acts as humectants, which means it tends to attract and hold moisture from the air. While that property may help leather fibres remain flexible, it also provides a lovely location for future mould and mildew growth**

**Dry the leather in the sun to take advantage of the disinfectant properties of the sun's ultraviolet light. (Hint: Do this on a breezy day so that there is less time the leather needs to remain in the sunlight)**

**Vinegar, household bleach or alcohol can also be used to remove mould and mildew from leather but do know that they can all damage the fibres, will cause excess drying of the leather and could cause extreme discoloration. For heavily mildewed leather I suggest a 50/50 mix of 70% isopropyl alcohol and water. After washing the leather as noted above spray a fine mist of the alcohol solution over the leather, wipe with a clean soft cloth and let air dry in the sun.**

**You will need to recondition your leather after removing mould and mildew. You have removed the villain but you have also removed the natural and impregnated leather oils that keep quality leather in top-quality condition!**