

EXTREME SKIN CARE: Are Pricey Creams Worth It?

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Mariah Carey
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Tricks of the Trade

These boots may have an informal vibe to them, but there are some strict rules to follow for securing the right fit and keeping them in proper shape.

- Most boots can be stretched by a shoemaker if they won't fit over your calves—but not more than an inch and a half. And if they're too big, they can be taken in along the seams. Carlos Mesquita, owner of Shoe Service Plus in New York City, tallored more than 1,000 pairs of boots last year—but warns against making these styles *too* fitted around the ankle: “With flat boots, you need more range of motion there, or you won't be able to walk.”
- Waterproofing spray is a must for suede boots, but a cream (like Meltonian Boot and Shoe Cream Polish) is sufficient to safeguard regular leather.
- Protect pointed toes by attaching plastic taps to the boot's soles, but think twice before getting sole guards. Unless they're extremely thin, you run the risk of transforming those Manolos into Rockports.
- After getting caught in a downpour, resist the urge to dry boots near a radiator (or take out the blow-dryer). “Heat is deadly for boots,” Mesquita says. “The leather can shrink, and the soles may come unglued.” Instead, wipe them with a cloth, stuff newspaper or a boot tree inside, and let them dry naturally.

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