

How To Wet Fit Your Leather Sheath

Items to assemble ahead of time: plastic wrap (for protecting carbon steel blades from rusting), hair dryer. Optional: leather dye, neatsfoot oil, and wool applicator swabs. Be careful not to wet your sheath until ready to fit it to your knife. Your knife should be carried, but not stored inside your sheath, as moisture from it can cause rust.

Wash your hands. Hold the sheath under a cold water faucet, allowing water to flow over and inside the entire sheath, for up to one minute. Pour out excess water.

On a table top, insert the knife as firmly as possible without cutting the bottom or side of your sheath. If wet-fitting a high carbon blade, carefully wrap it in plastic wrap first, to prevent water damage. The handle should extend 1-1/4" to 2" above the lip of the sheath.

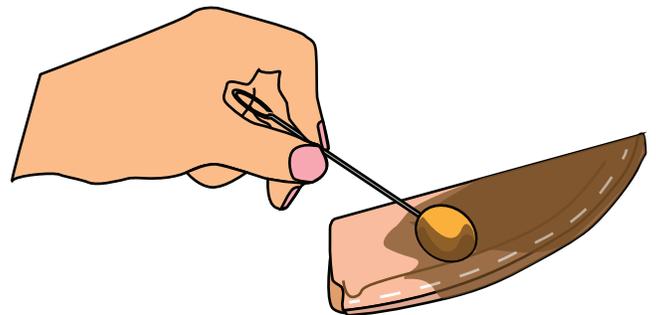
Rub and press the sheath with your fingers around the blade portion, guard, and/or finger grooves. Form around any shape that can be used to hold the knife inside the sheath. The tighter the leather fits around the knife, the less likely it will fall out of the sheath when being worn on the belt.

Have a friend hold a hair dryer on medium heat about one foot away from the sheath while shaping it. Continue molding its shape until the natural color begins to return and the leather begins to stiffen.

Remove the knife from the sheath, and continue molding to readjust any areas that were disturbed when the knife was removed. Be sure to keep the sewn edge straight and open the belt loop slightly.

When satisfied with its shape, hang the sheath in an area where it won't be disturbed until completely dry and hard. A few hours in the sun should be fine.

Now your sheath is ready to be dyed or colored with neatsfoot oil. Apply four heavy coats of neatsfoot oil with wool swabs, one after the other. Allow the sheath to dry at least six hours. If color is too light, just add more neatsfoot oil to darken. If waterproofing is desired, finish with a heavy coat of mink oil or snow seal.



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