

Author: Sgt. Lumley, Andrew

Boot Polishing 101



Disclaimer: This guide is meant as a helpful how-to instructional to get you started. It will get you on the right track but everyone is different, what works for me or another cadet may not work for you. I encourage you to take what you can from this article and also apply your own techniques so as to develop your own tips and tricks that you can use for years to come.

What you will need: First things first, before you start shining your boots you'll need a polishing kit. Below is a picture of my personal polishing kit, everybody's is different but I'll walk you through mine so you know what everything is for.



It's Contents:



A Kiwi Cloth: (can be another brand) This item is mandatory and very important, so make sure yours is high quality. This is the cloth you will use to do all of your actual polishing.

	<p>Some Black Kiwi Polish: This is another mandatory item. This is the polish you will find yourself using the most. I recommend putting a penny in the polish to prevent it from drying out too quickly.</p>
	<p>Old Toothbrushes: For these just see if you can find some old toothbrushes lying around the house, there's nothing too special about them. However it is another mandatory item for sure. We will use these to blacken the welts of your boots and the edges as well.</p>
	<p>A rag: I recommend having an old rag in your kit as well. It can be very useful for cleaning up your boots before you polish them, for example if you are at camp and they get really dusty.</p>
	<p>Some Neutral Kiwi Polish: Although not a necessity, I would highly recommend a tin of neutral. If applied correctly it will really help to bring out the shine and make your boots look that much better. It would also be a good idea to put a penny in this tin too.</p>
	<p>Aqua Velva Aftershave: (The Original – Sport Variant) Firstly, this is not a mistake. I personally use the aftershave as a substitute for water when I polish my boots. When used correctly it is very affective and won't damage your boots in the long-run. More on that later. If you can use it properly I highly recommend it.</p>
	<p>Some Cordovan Kiwi Polish: I haven't had so much success with this polish myself but some cadets certainly have so if you are interested you can buy a tin of it, it may work for you. As with all polish, leave a penny in there to keep it from cracking.</p>
	<p>Some Parade Gloss Kiwi Polish: This polish works well for special occasions but otherwise damages your boots in the long run. Leave a penny in there as well if you buy a tin of it.</p>

Instructions:

	<p>Step 1: The first step is to wipe down the entire boot. Take your rag and gently brush off any dust. If there is mud on your boot then dampen the rag first. Make sure to wipe down the entire boot at this time and be careful not to scratch it.</p>
	<p>Step 2: Next you need to hold the cloth properly. Find a fresh spot on your polishing cloth and place that spot over your index finger. Now pull it tightly down into the palm of your hand, wrap it around your hand once and then grab it in the palm of your hand again.</p>
	<p>Step 3: Now take that index finger and rub it around in the black Kiwi polish. It doesn't take too much though so don't go scooping it out. But use a bit more if this is your first time polishing as a solid base coat is the key to a better shine later on.</p>
	<p>Step 4: Now take that finger and rub it into the boot, always move in circles. For now use large circles and make sure to cover the entire boot, once that entire section has been coated in polish (shouldn't take longer than 20 seconds or so) you can move on to the next step.</p>
<p><i>For the fifth step you have two options. If you have purchased the aftershave you can use that method. If not you can do the same thing except rather than dipping your finger in aftershave, you can take a pot of water (I prefer to use warm-hot water but make sure it's not boiling water) and just dip the pad of your finger in it, make sure to not use too much. You should not see water droplets on your boot when using water, if you do then you have used too much.</i></p>	
	<p>Step 5: If you have chosen the aftershave method, remove the cap and press your finger tightly against the opening. Now hold your finger tightly and slosh the bottle up-side down and right side up again and you should get just the right amount on your finger.</p>



Step 6: Now you will repeat the same motions as during step 4. The only difference is that this time you have aftershave or water on your finger rather than polish. If using aftershave and you see faint white streaks, this is normal do not panic. These develop as the alcohol in the aftershave evaporates.



Step 7: For the next step you should get really close to your boot, take a deep breath and then breathe on the area you are polishing. The condensation from your breath is what we're after here. Don't eat/drink anything acidic right before doing this step.



Step 8: As soon as you've finished breathing on your boot start rubbing it in. Use small, fast circles. Make sure you keep moving because it doesn't take long before it all evaporates off of your boot.

Step 9: Now repeat steps 7 and 8 over and over. You should repeat them at least ten to twelve times or as many as you deem necessary.

Step 10: Now you repeat steps 3 through 9 until you have reached the desired shine. Although every time you start again at step 3 you should use a little less polish so by the last coat you should be just barely dabbing your finger in the polish.



Step 10: This step is often over-looked. Now that you have polished the toe you must repeat steps 2 through 10 for the heel and the sides. Although now that you've done it once it should go by much quicker this time.



Step 11: Finally, take one of your old tooth-brushes and rub it around in some black Kiwi polish. Now just rub it along the welts and the sides of your boot (the side of the rubber soul) to blacken them.

Tips and Tricks:

- If you would like to use neutral too... Wait until you have finished polishing and apply one extremely thin coat of it. Apply it as you would apply another coat of black. Don't apply more than one thin coat of neutral for every four coats of black polish.
- Never use parade gloss as it works well for the short-term but in the long-run it will only cause you problems.
- If your boot develops boot cancer then the only known remedy is to strip your boot and start again.
- To strip your boot (remove all of the polish) slowly pour boiling water over your boot.
- As I mentioned earlier always leave a penny in each tin of polish as it will prevent your polish from drying up quickly.