

How to Iron a Leather Jacket Safely (Without Ruining It)



“Quick answer: Yes, you can iron a leather jacket—but only with indirect heat on a low setting (roughly 250–300°F / 120–150°C), a cotton barrier cloth between the iron and the leather, and short, gentle strokes. Never apply the iron directly to bare leather.”

Wrinkles happen especially when a jacket's been packed away between conventions or pulled out of storage the night before an event.

Ironing works, but it takes a different approach than a cotton shirt: get the heat or technique wrong, and you risk cracking, glazing, or warping before a shoot or con appearance. We've tested this method across full-grain, pigmented, and faux leather in our own workshop, and this guide covers the exact temperature, step-by-step method, and what to do differently for suede, faux leather, and [bomber-style jackets](#)—including the [flight jackets](#) common in aviator and [military-inspired builds](#).

Is It Safe to Iron a Leather Jacket?

Ironing itself isn't what damages leather—heat and moisture mismanagement is. The risk comes from direct contact, excessive steam, or heat that's too high for the material, not from ironing itself.

One exception worth flagging early: bonded leather, faux leather, and polyurethane-coated jackets are far more heat-sensitive than genuine leather. Since many [cosplay costumes](#) and [replica jackets](#) use a mix of materials to match a detailed, [costume-accurate look](#), they can melt, bubble, or discolor at temperatures leather would tolerate fine. If you're unsure what your jacket is made of, treat it cautiously and test first.

Different Ways to Layer Your Protective Barrier

The barrier cloth is the most important part of ironing leather safely. Here are your best options:

- **Cotton Towel** — A thin, smooth towel works best; avoid thick terrycloth, since uneven texture transfers heat unevenly.
- **Nylon Fabric** — Usable in a pinch, but patch test first, since synthetics react to heat differently than cotton.
- **Printer or Parchment Paper** — Best for small touch-ups, not deep creases; use a double layer and keep the iron moving.

See the Method in 30 Seconds — Prefer to watch instead of read? Here's the barrier-cloth method in 30 seconds—then scroll down for the full temperature guide and step-by-step breakdown.

Ironing vs. Other Wrinkle-Removal Methods

If you're prepping for a con or shoot and have time, start with the lowest-risk option (steam or weight) and only move to ironing if the wrinkles persist the night before.

- **Ironing (with barrier cloth):** Most effective for stubborn creases. Takes 10–15 minutes. Requires the most care.
- **Steaming:** Works well for general wrinkles or delicate leather. Takes 15–20 minutes. Lower risk than ironing.
- **Hair dryer + hand-smoothing:** Best for light wrinkles. Takes 5–10 minutes. Quick and low-risk.
- **Weighted books (overnight):** Suited to mild, preventative flattening. Virtually no risk.
- **Professional conditioning:** Safest option overall—no heat involved. Best for regular upkeep rather than fixing existing creases.



According to the Leather Working Group, differences in [tanning and finishing processes](#) directly affect how leather responds to heat and moisture—which is why the same iron setting won't work identically across every jacket, whether it's an everyday piece or a detailed [custom costume build](#).

What You'll Need

- An iron with an adjustable, low-heat setting (steam function optional)
- A clean cotton cloth or pillowcase to use as a barrier
- A separate damp cloth (for steam-assist, if needed)
- Optional: a hairdryer, [leather conditioner](#), or a few heavy, flat books

What Temperature Should You Use to Iron Leather?

This is the detail most guides skip—and it's the one that matters most. Set your iron to its lowest heat setting, ideally the "silk" or "wool" setting on most modern irons. That translates to roughly 250–300°F (120–150°C).

Anything hotter risks:

- **Cracking** — leather drying out and losing flexibility
- **Glazing** — a shiny, plasticky patch where the surface has been scorched
- **Melting** — especially on faux leather, linings, or coated finishes

If your iron doesn't show a temperature readout, always start on the lowest setting and test before committing to the whole jacket. Aniline and nubuck leather

should stay at the very bottom of this range; pigmented, full-grain leather has slightly more tolerance.

Step-by-Step: How to Iron a Leather Jacket

- **Turn the jacket inside out.** Whenever possible, iron from the lining side rather than directly on the leather.
- **Lay it flat on a padded, heat-safe surface** — an ironing board with a towel works well.
- **Place a cotton barrier cloth over the area you're working on.** Never let the iron touch bare leather—this matters even more on jackets with printed logos, patches, or applied details.
- **Set the iron to low heat,** with steam off or on the gentlest setting.
- **Press in short, gentle strokes.** Keep the iron moving—never let it rest in one spot, even with the barrier cloth in place.
- **Patch test first.** Try an inconspicuous area, like the inside hem or under the collar, before tackling visible panels, especially on jackets where front-facing detail matters most.
- **Let it cool flat** before hanging or wearing. Leather sets as it cools, so moving it too soon can reintroduce creases.



Can You Iron Faux Leather, Suede, or Bomber Jackets?

Faux leather: Use an even lower heat setting than you would for genuine leather, and always test first—synthetic materials melt rather than crack. This applies to many stylized and [character-inspired jackets](#) that use faux leather to hit a specific look or budget. Note: All jackets at [Excellent Leather Shop](#) are made from genuine leather, not faux—this section is included for readers working with faux-leather pieces from elsewhere.

Suede: Never iron suede. Heat can flatten and permanently damage the nap (the soft texture that gives suede its look). Stick to steaming from a distance, then brush gently with a suede brush to restore texture—[the Le Mans Racer suede leather jacket](#) is a good example of a piece where this matters most.

Speaking of which, if your [suede jacket](#) is past the point of steaming back to life, [browse the suede jacket](#) collection at Excellent Leather Shop for a made-to-order replacement.

Bomber/aviator jackets: These often combine leather with other materials—knit cuffs, quilted linings, or fabric panels, much like classic aviator and [military-inspired bomber styles](#). Treat each material separately, and avoid ironing over knit or elastic sections entirely.

What Happens If You Iron Leather Wrong (Mistakes to Avoid)

- Applying the iron directly to bare leather with no barrier
- Using a high heat or full steam setting
- Ironing over zippers, snaps, studs, patches, or other hardware and applied details
- Letting the iron sit still instead of keeping it moving
- Skipping the patch test on an inconspicuous area

How to Prevent Wrinkles in the First Place

- Store jackets on padded, wide hangers — never folded or scrunched, especially between convention seasons
- Avoid compressing leather in tightly packed closets, garment bags, or suitcases during travel
- Condition leather periodically to keep fibers supple and less prone to deep creasing

Want your jacket looking its best year-round? Browse the [custom leather jacket](#) collection at Excellent Leather Shop—made-to-order sizing and free worldwide shipping on every order.