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CRAFTSMANSHIP

Some things remain timeless. That's how we feel about our traditional 212-step manufacturing process that has been the basis for handcrafting Allen Edmonds Goodyear welted shoes since 1922.

Our method starts with finding the best available materials money can buy. We use only fine leathers that breathe, repel moisture, hold their shape and age gracefully. That's why the design team at Allen Edmonds searches the globe looking for premium hides for our shoes. Sometimes, the team doesn't have to travel far, like when we head to Chicago to visit the Horween factory, an American institution and supplier of fine leathers since 1905.

Until someone improves on our way of doing things, we are sticking with what got us here.

When the leathers make it to our Port Washington, Wisconsin plant, it's like they are traveling back in time to an era when products took on the character and originality of the people who made them. While we've improved on using scissors and a needle and thread, we still have skilled workers with hands-on involvement in the cutting, fitting and sewing processes that are so fundamental to the creation of our shoes. This sort of attention to detail not only ensures a great fit but also creates the unmatched styling that shows up in the signature detailing of a pair of Allen Edmonds.

After that, our veteran team begins the lasting procedure. Lasts are foot shaped molds in all manner of lengths and widths, our professionals can craft shoes to match the contours of millions of feet.

From there, an operator attaches a 360° Goodyear welt, a strong leather strip stitched around the shoe. Created in the United States in 1871, this process of joining the shoe's upper to its insole is labor intensive and more expensive than more modern cementing techniques. However, the durability of a Goodyear welted shoe is unmatched and provides the opportunity to re-craft the shoe down the line.

But what good is a strong shoe that is perfectly tailored to the top of your foot if it doesn't look after your sole, perhaps the part of your foot that needs the most TLC? That's where we apply a layer of shock-absorbent cork between the insole and the outsole. This naturally ingenious cushioning-technique allows your sole to form an imprint in the cork, which acts as a comfortable cradle for your whole foot. The resulting imprint is totally unique to your foot shape and is part of the reason our shoes are so comfortable.

Finally, the shoes move to the last stages of manufacturing. We've developed hand-finishing and polishing techniques that highlight the natural appearance of the leather while simultaneously protecting it from the elements. The shoes remain in the last for at least 24 hours to ensure that they hold their shape for a lifetime. From there, it's on to final inspection. We take quality control very seriously, because only the best of the best leave the factory with the Allen Edmonds insignia stamped into the heel of the insole.

Yes, that's a lot of work for one pair of shoes. And we certainly feel a sense of pride that comes with making our shoes in the same way and in the same place for nearly 100 years. But we aren't just keeping up a tradition for tradition's sake. If there were a better method of making premium shoes up to our exacting standards we'd do it. Until someone improves on our way of doing things, we are sticking with what got us here.



7 Last (97): One of many Allen Edmonds' custom designed molds.

