

SPRING CLEANING YOUR GEAR

We know. You meant to scrub and scour your gear last fall. But...[insert excuse here]. Now, set aside one weekend afternoon to get your gear back into action and promise to be better next year.

by: Lesley Suppes

Spring Cleaning

We know. You meant to scrub and scour your gear last fall. But then came gift shopping, snow shoveling, and the NFL playoffs. First, make a resolution to take better care of your stuff this year. Next, set aside one weekend afternoon to get your gear back into action.

Tent

Cleaning

- Pitch your tent in a well-ventilated spot. Shake it upside-down to dislodge dirt and debris, then vacuum or sweep the interior. If it's dirty, hose off the exterior with cold water. Wipe down with a towel and let it dry thoroughly. Never store a wet tent.
- Brush away mildew by adding a half cup of bleach to one gallon of hot water (1/32 solution), followed by multiple rinses of hot water mixed with small doses of lemon juice and salt. For serious funk, deodorize in a tub with McNett's Mirazyme (\$4, mcnett.com).
- Scrub off sticky pine sap with a sponge soaked in mineral oil, then rinse the fabric to remove residue.
- Clean balky zippers with a toothbrush and warm water. Lubricants can attract dirt and grime.
- Check for mesh rips, especially near the doors. Reinforce worn spots and repair tears with nylon repair tape.
- Let your tent dry completely before rolling it loosely to store in an old cotton pillow case.
- Replace any missing or worn guylines. Straighten bent stakes with a vice or by bending them inside a narrow metal pipe.

BOOTS

Cleaning

- Wiping away dirt isn't just cosmetic. Caked-on mud clogs pores in leather, drying it out and compromising breathability. Use warm water and a stiff brush to remove what you can. Clay and mineralized soils may require a mild dish soap. Use a toothbrush for tight spaces.
- Scrub especially grungy footwear with McNett's ReviveX boot cleaner (\$7), which is designed to remove mud without clogging waterproof/breathable membranes.
- Dry boots at room temperature. Direct heat from a radiator or hair dryer can damage leather and weaken the adhesives that bind the sole to the upper. Let boots dry slowly to avoid cracking.