

Spring Car Care

The correct way to wax your car to avoid scratching the paint

Ask anyone the proper way to wash a car. You'll be surprised to hear the different methods. Most of us learned from watching our parents. Unfortunately, we're usually not aware of the damage we do from improper washing and waxing.

Your car collects dirt just sitting outdoors. Rain makes it stick to paint like glue. It contains very fine particles of hard, gritty sand. If you wash improperly, that grit will cause thousands of hair-like scratches in the paint. They look like spider webs and are easily seen on darker colors such as red, blue, and black. It's worse on sunny days or under fluorescent light.

If you dry your car with dusty towels, you'll cause even more scratching. Remember, every little scratch is a tiny groove where a little paint was removed. The more scratching you do, the quicker your shine will dull.

Do you frequently use one of the common car waxes that clean and polish your car in one step? These formulations contain polishing abrasives that also remove a tiny bit of paint each time they're used. Some can actually

make paint duller! Most newer cars have a thin clear coat over the color. If this gets worn away by improper care, the paint will never look new again.

Proper care starts with correct washing procedures. Wait for a day with little or no wind. Always wash in shade and after the paint surface is cool to the touch. Use a hose and plenty of water.

Start at the top. Wet the car down to loosen dirt. Use water to float dirt away. Soak the whole car. Wait two minutes and repeat.

Now fill a bucket with mild car wash diluted in lukewarm water. Fill a second bucket with clear warm water (no soap). Soak a clean sponge, towel or washing mitt in the soapy solution. Use it on the roof. Move very lightly over the surface. Do not rub hard, as this causes scratches. Hose off all soap residue from the roof.

Before getting more soapy water, always clean your towel, sponge or wash mitt of grit by vigorously agitating it in the bucket of clear warm water. Much of the scratch-causing dirt will sink to the bottom of the bucket.

Now wash all the glass. Wash the

hood and trunk. Hose off. Do the sides of the car last. Be careful near the car's bottom and wheels. These areas are usually the dirtiest and very susceptible to scratching. Hose off the entire car.

Be cautious when drying your car. Use only soft cotton towels that have just been machine washed and dried without a softener, or use a clean chamois skin. Never use drying materials that have been sitting around gathering dust. They'll scratch. You'll need at least four large towels. Use one towel to remove most of the water from the roof. Then completely dry the surface with a dry towel. Never allow water to evaporate. Dissolved minerals will cause water spotting.

If your car needs waxing, first determine if your wax contains any abrasive. Simply apply some with a white cloth to a painted surface that is not clear coated. (A painted lawn mower or metal desk is fine for testing.) Rub firmly for 30 seconds. Look at the cloth. If you see the color of paint, you can bet your wax contains abrasive. It may be all right to use, but don't wax often with this type product.



YOU may be causing more damage than good.

If you really care for your finish, use a no-rub, easy to use, pure Carnauba wax with no abrasive. Carnauba is a scratch-hiding, hard vegetable wax that gives an extremely high gloss compared to many of the commonly avail-

able man-made formulations. Apply every two to three months for cars left outdoors (less if garaged). Use a separate fine polish to remove scratches and "dead" paint only when necessary — and only one or two times per year.

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