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'Ole Faithful' Never Looked So Good

One of the most popular and most appreciated gifts to Dad on Father's Day is the promise to wash the family car. Here are some tips on how to get the best results for your efforts and a happy smile from Dad.

The key to proper car washing is getting the surface clean without drying it out or scratching the dirt into the finish. High-pressure washing removes the dirt but also causes the dirt particles to leave a scratch behind as they are blasted off. It is best to use a garden hose with a nozzle that releases a gentle spray instead of a jet stream.

It is important to consider what type of solvent you are using for the wash. Petroleum or spirit-based solvents can literally strip the paint from the car. The same holds true for household cleaners and detergents with ammonia bases. These will give the surface a chalky, dried-out look. It is best to use a cleanser specifically designed for washing cars.

After getting the right cleanser, fill up a five-litre or larger bucket with water (warm or cold, not hot). Wash cars in light shade because bright sun causes the water to damage the paint. Never wipe a dirty car with a chamois or napless towel. Try using a towel with a deep nap to wash, dry and buff the car. Brushes and sponges can trap dirt and scratch the finish.

The best strategy is to do it one section at a time. If you do it all at once, soap will dry on the finish. This will trap the dirt before you can wash it off. Start by soaking the area to be washed with the hose. Next wash the section with a soapy wet towel. Rinse the towel often. Using a large circular motion will help minimize scratching. Use your hose to rinse off the soapy water and move on to the next section. After cleaning all sections, gently spray the whole car. Use a clean towel to dry the car, wringing it out as it gets wet.







