

Tips to keep your car from aging

How many times have you found yourself apologizing to an unexpected guest who is a passenger in your car? A poorly maintained car says a lot about the owner and his or her care of possessions. Your automobile not only represents a large investment of hard-

earned dollars, but also reflects personal standards and habits.

Following a regular schedule of personal and professional maintenance enables you to dramatically increase the trade-in value of your car and your pride of ownership. Practice these tips

to keep your car from aging.

Set some time aside in your weekly schedule to keep your car's appearance in top condition. A gleaming, well-groomed outward appearance keeps your car looking new longer. Regular washing is a must. Use cool water and a mild soap made for cars. Do not use laundry detergents. They will dull the finish. And, although you may be tempted to improve your suntan while washing your car, don't do it! For best results, always wash your car in the shade.

Vinyl tops need special attention. They will continue to look their best if you use a mild soap and lukewarm water for cleaning. Scrubbing lightly with a soft-bristle brush will thoroughly clean the textured surface. When the vinyl is dry, apply vinyl dressing to revitalize the surface. This keeps it with a showroom look. Follow the product's directions for best results. Mend vinyl rips early. Repair kits will save you many dollars at trade-in time.

The next procedure is removal of tar. Use tar solvents and rub gently. Wash the solvent off before applying wax. Also, give some attention to the chrome area. You can purchase products specifically developed to clean rust spots from chrome. Wash thoroughly

before applying wax to the chrome. Wax will retard rusting and keep the chrome in sparkling condition.

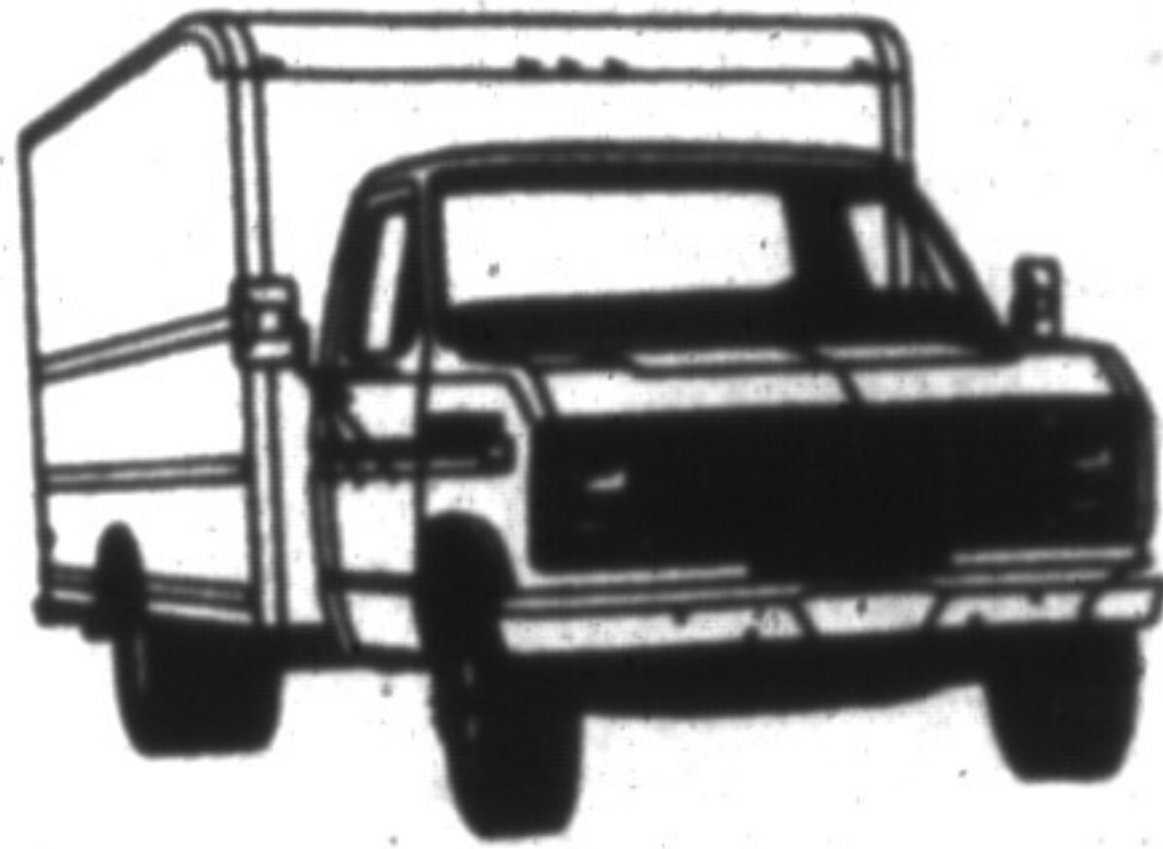
In general, you will get your money's worth from soft paste waxes. Using clean, soft cloths, shine only small areas at a time. Wax will not be needed with every washing, but it's easy to tell when you need to wax your car. Water will no longer form beads on the surface. When waxing, apply steady pressure but never rub hard.

Here are a couple of tips for special problems. Tip one: If you are having difficulty removing bug spots, use a little baking soda dissolved in water. Tip two: If the walls of your tires have lost their new look and are dull in appearance, apply vinyl-top dressing. Do not let the dressing dry before you remove it or it will form tiny white spots. Apply in a small area and wipe off immediately. For best results, follow the directions on the product.

Do not forget to clean the interior of your car. It needs regular attention, too. Clean out the ashtrays. Wipe down the upholstery with a vinyl furniture spray or cleaning fluid for fabric stains. Use leather soap and water for real leather. The carpeting needs vacuuming and shampooing if dingy.

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