

CAR DETAILING

TIPS & TRICKS

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eBook!



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There are many reasons why you should, or you want to, detail your car. The biggest appeal to detailing your own car or having it detailed by a professional is to make it look fresh and new. Detailing, in the grand scheme of things, is just a way to say you're cleaning your car up a bit. That being said, detailing is more in-depth than just a quick trip to the car wash or washing your car in the driveway.

When detailing a vehicle, you're preserving its appearance in addition to keeping it clean. For example, cleaning off dirt and debris can make your car look shiny, but it also preserves the paint. Avoiding any sort of long-term damage is always the goal. Another big reason cars are detailed is to improve performance. "Detailing" can often add to the positive connotation of the aesthetics of the car, as it has to do with just about every part of the vehicle.

Sure, detailing includes cleaning, vacuuming, polishing, and scrubbing. However, it also includes fine-tuning the car's most important parts, like the wheels, tires, and engine. Removing dust, debris, and built-up oil from these parts can ensure they work more efficiently. It can also improve visibility, as detailing headlights and taillights can brighten them, so other cars can see you more easily.

Besides the benefits of a great-looking and high-performing vehicle, there's one other major reason why a car should be detailed: It can increase resale value. If you're thinking about selling your car, having it detailed could get you a few extra bucks.





DETAILING YOUR VEHICLE

Now that you understand why people detail their cars, let's talk a bit more about how a vehicle is detailed. Detailing your own vehicle can be an easier process when following these tips below. Let's get the process started by talking about detailing the interior.

Interior Detailing

The first thing that typically comes to mind when thinking about detailing a car is the interior. So, that's where we'll begin. Before the actual detailing is started, you'll want to take everything out of the car, including personal items and floor mats. Now, you're ready to start the process.

Floors

The floors of your car take on a fair amount of wear and tear. Start off by vacuuming the carpet in your car to pick up any loose debris. Move the seats forward and back as needed, so you can get to the carpet under the seats. Then, take the carpet floor mats you removed and run the vacuum over those to get out any leaves, pebbles, sand, or other debris.

If needed, use a carpet scrubber and foam cleanser to get rid of stains from the carpet and floor mats. Make sure this is done after vacuuming, to avoid any dirt or dust sitting on the top layer of the carpet from being pushed deeper into the carpet when it's shampooed.

If you own rubber floor mats, they should be rinsed off with a hose, then towel-dried. There's no need to vacuum or shampoo them.





Hard Surfaces

There are many hard surfaces throughout a vehicle, including the dashboard, armrests, and doors. Over time, these surfaces can pick up a lot of dust. A mild all-purpose cleaner, and a rag or paper towels should help, though.

Spray a decent amount of cleaner on the rag and wipe over the hard surfaces in your car, not including the seats. Once the cleaner has dried, go over the surface with an interior dressing to leave a finishing touch that'll make the surfaces like-new again. Make sure to let the dressing dry, so it doesn't smudge.

Nooks & Crannies

Every car is filled with tiny crevices and cracks that can fill with dust and dirt. It's hard to reach these spots with a cloth or even a duster. The best option here is to use a canister of compressed air, which will blow away the dust caught in the nooks and crannies.

Compressed air canisters can be found in many automotive supply stores. However, it's also fine to purchase the same ones found in office supply stores.

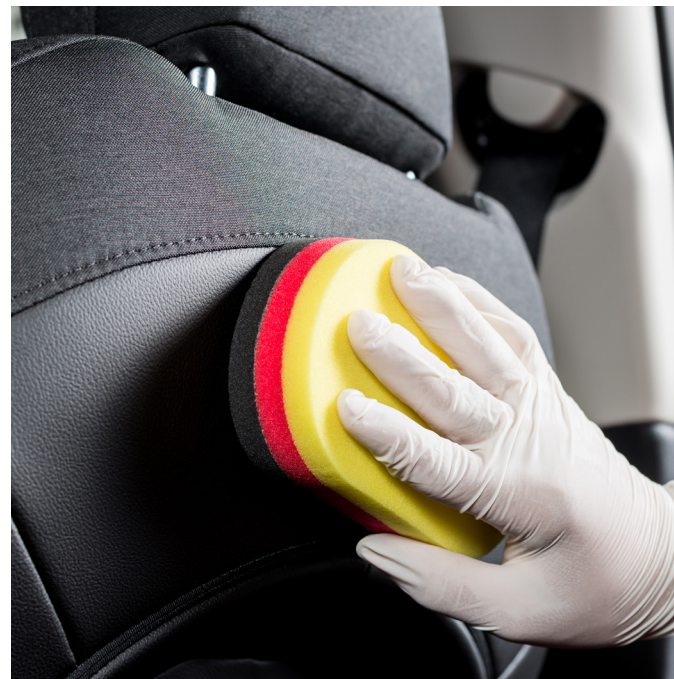
Seats

Seats are used heavily, so it only makes sense that they need some attention, too. It's important to clean the seats every so often, so stains don't become permanent. The seats should be cleaned based on the material they're made of.

If your seats have cloth on them, the best way to clean them is by shampooing them with a wet-vac extraction machine. Shampoo the seats thoroughly and then use the machine to remove any excess shampoo or liquid.

If the seats are leather or vinyl instead of cloth, the cleaning method will be different. You'll have to buy a cleaner specifically made for leather or vinyl upholstery, along with a leather brush. Once you've cleaned every seat with these items, wipe away the cleaner with a cloth.

One extra step to take with leather upholstery is conditioning it. You don't want the leather to dry out and crack, so wipe leather conditioner over the seats once they've been cleaned and dried.





Windows & Mirrors

The rearview mirror and inside part of the windows can get dirty over time. To clean the inside of your windows and mirrors, use a window cleaner liquid and a lint-free cloth. Using a lint-free cloth ensures that there won't be anything left behind when wiping the windows down.

Spray the lint-free cloth with the window cleaner and wipe down the windows. Then, let the windows and mirrors dry on their own. If you try to dry them with another cloth, it could leave streaks behind.

Exterior Detailing

Once the interior is all taken care of, it's time to move on to the exterior of your car. Oftentimes, you'll be able to get away with a simple wash-and-rinse or trip to the car wash. That being said, if you want to detail the exterior, you'll want to follow these steps.

Tires & Wheels

The tires and wheels are a great place to start. Because of their contact with the ground, they get dirty fast. It's rewarding to see that dirt wash away! Start by taking a brush and removing any visible dirt and substance build-up, then use wheel cleaner on the rims. Let it sit for a few minutes before scrubbing, so the dirt can be loosened.

Once rinsing off the residue, apply wall tire cleaner to the tires. Rinse this off and apply a coat of tire dressing to give the tires and wheels a glossy and clean finish.



Body

To clean the body of the car, start by filling up a bucket with water and some soap. Dish soap can be used, but car wash soap is preferable for the best possible results. Dish detergent can actually strip the polymers of the paint off the surface of the car.

Take a sponge, dip it into the bucket, and scrub the body of the vehicle in a circular manner. Start at the top of the car and work downwards. You want to work as quickly as possible, because the soap shouldn't have time to dry.

Once the body has been scrubbed, it's time to rinse. A hose and tap water will be fine for this. Like with washing, rinse from top to the bottom. Then, use a terry cloth to dry the vehicle. Air-drying can cause spots to form.

If you'd like, add polish or wax to make your vehicle look brand-new. You can use both, but first apply and remove the polish before adding the wax.



Windows

The last step when detailing your car is to clean the outside of the windows with glass cleaner. Use the same glass cleaner you used when cleaning the inside of the windows. Spray it on a lint-free cloth, and wipe down the outside of the windows.

Once the body has been scrubbed, it's time to rinse. A hose and tap water will be fine for this. Like with washing, rinse from top to bottom. Then, use a terry cloth to dry the vehicle. Air-drying can cause spots to form.

If you'd like, add polish or wax to make your vehicle look brand-new. You can use both, but first apply and remove the polish before adding the wax.

START DETAILING TODAY

As you can see, there's plenty to think about when detailing your car. However, when following these easy steps, your vehicle will be looking like it did when you first drove it off the lot, which can make a little bit of elbow grease worth it. Make sure you have all the supplies necessary before getting started. One last tip: It's best to detail your car on a cooler, cloudy day instead of a hot, sunny day.

We wish you good luck with your car detailing! The next time you get on the road, do it in a clean and fresh vehicle.

