

The following summary are suggestions on car preparation and detailing. This scope only includes cleaning the car exterior and does not include major concerns, such as paint restoration, deep scratches or dents. The scope can be expanded to solicit input from the members to include suggestions on other topics, such as, interior, wood trim, engines etc.

For simplicity, the summary is broken down into a sequential four step process: **Wash, Polish, Shine and Seal**. As you are aware, there are thousands of cleansers and application tools on the market for each process. Every product has its' own merits. We are not soliciting any particular product, but some brand names are listed for interest and discussion.

### 1) WASH

As the first point, your car should only be cleaned and detailed in a cool shady location with no wind in a controlled safe environment.

- have all supplies ready, mitts, clothes, micro fibres, buckets etc.
- rinse your car surface to remove loose dirt before you begin the wash procedure.
- hose down and wash from top to bottom
- a "car" wash shampoo is designed to be gentle and usually does not remove wax. As such, if you are starting from scratch, (ie: continuing with polish, shine and seal), a stronger non-car shampoo/cleanser may be required to remove all existing layers. Be easy on the first wash pass.
- a soft brush, sheep wool cloth or micro fibre towel should be used. "anything that comes in contact with your car's finish should be soft". Do not use bath towels, rags or sponges, they will scratch your surface.
- use two buckets with grit guard inserts, one hot water bucket for cleaning and one cold water bucket for rinse. Rinse frequently. This will prevent swirls. Use back and forth motions. Avoid going in circles. Do not use a power sprayer.
- never use the same clothe, mitt or micro fibre towel for wheels/tires and the rest of the car
- a clay bar can be used next, if desired. If you drop the clay bar on the ground, "throw it away" and start again. Keep surface well lubricated while using clay bar. Work clay bar in one direction horizontally down the length of the car. Wash again after a clay bar application.
- clean windows in one direction on the outside and the other direction on the inside. Easier to tell where the streaks are. If you have tinted windows, be very careful. Make sure your glass cleaning product is suitable for tinted windows, "no ammonia". Glass cleaning should be done last, after detailing to avoid re-contamination during the detailing process. Don't forget to clean the wipers. Dry windows and mirrors first.

- Clean your tires, rims and wheel wells before you start the next polish process. Be careful on which cleaning product you use on your rim, never put wax on your rims.
- **Products and Tools**
- any auto shampoo
- Dawn liquid detergent (my favourite product), strong but gentle, removes wax etc.
- I use different colour micro fibre clothes (yellow, green, blue) for each different cleanser product. Thicker the better. Remove the labels, as they may scratch the surface. (eg I only use the yellow micro fibre clothes for glass cleaning).
- Sika Glass Cleaner, Zaino Z12
- A good tire brush from DollarRama

## 2) **POLISH** (As a generic description for pre-preparation prior to shine and seal)

In my opinion, this process is the most important in car detailing. Polishing or compounding deep cleans your paint by removing oxidation, light scratches, spotting, old wax, swirl marks and other minor paint defects. The product, tool and work that is required is totally dependant on the condition of your paint. I'll break down the paint conditions into two categories: **Neglected Paint/Moderate Imperfections** and **Good Condition**:

- there are paint charts available to help determine you paint condition

### **Neglected Paint/Moderate Imperfections:**

- make sure your car is completely dry before starting this process, otherwise you will get streaks that are difficult to remove and you will be polishing water spots. A leaf blower will speed up the drying process then micro fibre by hand. Open and shut your hood, trunk and doors a few times to eliminate hidden water. Never let your car air dry.
- clean all rubber, plastic or vinyl pieces that are adjacent to the painted surfaces before the polish, shine and seal processes. Silicone spray is best for all rubber seals. Let soak in over night.
- there are several strengths of 'compound' polishes available to restore neglected paint finishes. The choice of compound all depends on how bad your paint finish is. You should start with a lower abrasive compound polish and move up, if needed. A stronger compound tends to leave marks, so a swirl remover may be required after the compound application.
- Halebogon lighting sees' all imperfections
- apply in small areas at a time, eg. half a trunk, and in thin coats as possible
- apply thin coats with poly foam pads. Pads are variable abrasive, eg yellow, white and grey.
- press the polisher to the paint and spread it around before you turn it on. This will lessen the likelihood of splatter

- after the swirl remover, I use a finishing polish
- hand buff with a micro fibre clothe
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- **Good Condition:**
- I use a swirl remover and a good finishing polish

### **Products and Tools**

- Various Meguiar's compounds and Swirl removers
- Various Zaino polishing products
- Yamaha polish as my finishing polish
- Simonize polisher/ yellow foam pads
- Micro Fibre clothes

### **3) SHINE**

This process is the easiest and most satisfying. Dozens of products are available and easy to use and apply.

- purchase a "glaze" product. It's usually not a wax or a polish. It has no ultra violet protection or for that matter, completely useless, other than the fact that once you apply it, it blinds you. It just shines and shines.

### **Product and Tools**

- many Glaze products available, eg. #7 Meguiar's Show Car Glaze, #81 Hand Polish for dark paints
- my product (Top Secret)
- Simonize applicator/ white pads,
- micro fibre clothes

### **4) SEAL**

You need a sealer to protect all your hard work on your wash, polish and shine. There are two basic products on this process. Synthetic (polymers) or Wax (Carnauba) are your two sealant choices. There are pros to each.

A synthetic sealer lasts longer (one year plus) and is easier to apply, water based . A wax has a nicer shine/sheen (six to eight weeks)? It's all subjective.

As a result, I use both. I put on a water based sealer and use a wax as the finished product. Not the other way.

- do not apply wax on exterior plastic or steel components, painted surfaces only.

### **Product and Tools**

- “Rolite” water based, used on aircrafts.
- Meguiar’s Gold wax, NXT Tech Wax
- Simonize applicator/ Grey pads
- Micro fibre clothes

### **Other Tips:**

- use separate foam pads for polishes, waxes, compounds and glazes. Mark the back of the foam pad with P,W,C, or G.

- interior cleaning should primarily be only water based products (ie; plastics etc)
- cleaning the engine should start off with least abrasive products first (ie Dawn my favourite). Work up to stronger products for chrome, aluminium parts etc.
- if you see a “bird dropping” on your car, clean it off ASAP