

## How to Care for Your Car's Interior

Let's face it we will spend more time inside our car looking out than we will spend outside looking in. Interior care is very important, who wants to turn up to work in their nice clothes smelling of chips and dog hair with chocolate buttons stuck to their back? Your interior cleaning regimen should look like this.

### Weekly Tasks

- Wipe down
- Vacuum

### Monthly Tasks

- Wipe down
- Vacuum
- Upholstery spot cleaning
- Clean Glass
- Condition Leather

### What You Will Need

- Vacuum Cleaner
- Microfiber Clothes
- Applicators
- Interior detailing brushes
- Cotton buds (depending on how anal you get)
- Upholstery spot cleaner
- Upholstery brushes
- Leather Conditioner
- Glass cleaner
- Vinyl protectant

**NB Test products on an inconspicuous area to check for colour fade etc.**

### Cleaning the Carpet and Upholster

There is nothing special, or hard to master techniques for using a vacuum so get in amongst it!

First thing to do is shake out your mats and vacuum them, the more you agitate the carpet the cleaner it will be. A quick tip here is to beat the carpet in front of the

vacuum nozzle as this will force out dirt that is trapped deep in the carpet pile. Pull both front seats as far forward as possible and work on the rear upholstery and carpet, use the crevice tool to vacuum the cracks in the seats and between the seats and the carpeted areas. If the seat upholstery is fabric, switch to the upholstery attachment and vacuum the rear seat and the shelf under the rear window. Use the crevice tool to vacuum around the seat tracks and under the front seats. Use the round dust brush attachment to vacuum the door panels.

Next push the front seats all the way back to work on the front upholstery. Use the crevice tool to vacuum the cracks of the seats, between the seats and carpeted areas, and around the pedals. Now switch to the upholstery attachment to vacuum the seats (if the seats are fabric). Use the round dust brush attachment to vacuum the console, vents and door panels.

If your headliner is fabric, use the round dust brush attachment to vacuum the headliner. Be gentle though, as this material is not as durable as your seat upholstery. Remember to condition your leather and door cards.

### Cleaning the Dash

The dashboard take a lot of exposure from the sun's UV rays, we look at the dash more than any other part of the car so it is important to give it some special attention in order to keep it looking good and stop it fading or cracking.

Caring for the dash and center console is really pretty easy. Simply wipe them down with a damp microfiber towel every time you wash your car, if it is quite dirty you can use a weak solution of All Purpose Cleaner (APC) then treat it with a vinyl protectant once a month. To reduce the effects of the sun's UV rays, use quality products which contain protective UV sunscreens. Please ask if you need help selecting one of these.

The easiest way to treat the dash and console is to use a foam applicator pad. Spray your vinyl protectant on the applicator, not on the dash or console as over spray can get onto the glass or possibly into your stereo, better to be safe than sorry, now wipe it in thoroughly. Don't forget to protect the steering wheel, indicator stalks and the gear stick gator. Allow the vinyl protectant to soak in for 3 to 5 minutes, and then buff the dash and console dry with a clean microfiber.

If you're doing a complete interior detail, you should also dust and clean out the vents and grillwork. There are a variety of tools that work in vents and grilles. The easiest are a small detailing brush and compressed air. If you don't have compressed air, you can use the blow cycle on your vacuum. A small paint brush also works here.

If your vents are really dirty, use a cotton bud to clean out the dirt. A good vinyl cleaner and protectant works well on a cotton bud to clean and beautify vents and speaker grilles.

On consoles with a lot of nooks and crannies, it's best to use a soft bristled brush followed by a towel to clean and protect. This same method works well around buttons and controls on the dash.

Remember to clean the fog of the inside of the windows, use a good ammonia free cleaner a microfiber cloth designed for glass. Spray the cleaner onto the cloth and wipe it onto the glass, turn the cloth over and buff the product off. If your windows are tinted be sure to use a cleaner that is tint safe.

### Cleaning Doors

Door panels are often made of several materials, including fabric, vinyl, carpet and leather. Vinyl can be scrubbed to remove shoe scuffs. A weak solution of All Purpose Cleaner (APC) will easily remove black scuff marks from these areas.

Thoroughly clean around door handles, pulls and window winders, using a toothbrush and soapy wash water. Be sure to clean and dry the speaker grilles and the wells on armrests, too. If the door panels have storage pockets, use an old wash mitt to clean in these areas as they tend to collect a lot of dirt and crud. Next, use an old wash mitt and soapy water to clean all the way around the door frame and the doorsill. When you're finished, dry the door completely with a clean towel. I retire my good microfiber towels that are getting worn, the cycle is towels move from wiping paint, to interior, to engine bay, door shuts then alloys etc.

If your door panel is leather or vinyl, be sure to treat it with a leather or vinyl protectant. Fabric door panels can be treated with a fabric protectant to reduce staining and fading. Even if lightly soiled, it's always a good idea to use an interior cleaner first, this way the panels are prepped for a protective coating. Keep in mind, you can use leather cleaners on vinyl, but I would not use a vinyl specific cleaner on leather.

### Summary

Most of us spend 8 to 15 hours a week inside our cars, so it makes sense that we should keep them neat and tidy. Yet finding the time to detail the inside of the car is difficult with our busy schedules. If you take just ten minutes each time you wash your car to remove the rubbish, shake out the mats, and wipe down the dash, console and seats, you can stay on top of this job. Then when it comes time for a full interior detail, the task will not seem quite so daunting.