

After Care

Find Out How The Pros Do It!



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Passion Detailing After Care

Firstly, let me take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Passion Detailing to care for your vehicle, we are a small family run business and value your custom and support. Please feel free to share us with your friends, family and colleagues.

Now that you have taken your newly detailed vehicle home how do you maintain 'the perfect shine'? You have two options, allow Passion Detailing to take care of the work and detail your vehicle as part of a maintenance contract, or enjoy keeping your vehicle clean yourself. We are here to advise on products and techniques, if you require any assistance then please ask.

This document contains the information you will need to safely clean the interior and exterior of your car.

Safe Washing Technique

Why Wash Your Vehicle

Our vehicles live outside for most of their lives and pick up all sorts of contamination, acid rain, tar spots, tree sap, bird poo etc, (see fig 1). All these environmental contaminants have the potential to dull the shine and eat into the paint surface. That is why we need to remove them from the paint as quickly as possible before they have time to bond or etch into the surface. The Last Step Protection (LSP) that we apply will help protect the paint against these factors, LSP products are a sacrificial layer of protection on top of the paint surface, they also give protection against UV rays and dirt and leave the vehicle easier to clean, in the case of ceramic coatings they can be several times harder than the paint itself so provide a long lasting glassy shine that is resistant to chemicals and swirls.



fig 1

What You Will Need?

- Quality wash solution
- Good quality wash mitt
- 2 x buckets
- Grit guard inserts
- Microfiber drying cloth
- Wheel cleaner
- Older wash mitt
- Long reach wheel brush
- Soft wheel brush

What do I need to know?

Well first of all the observant will have noticed there is no mention of a sponge in the list of items above. Microfiber and lambswool wash mitt's have replaced the old 'car wash sponge' as the tool of choice. Let me explain why. Imagine your nice fresh paintwork hidden underneath a coating of dirt and grit, these particles will have sharp edges. Now if you were to look closely at the face of a 'car wash sponge' you will notice it's flat, especially when pressed against the surface of your car. When you use one of these sponges to wash your car some of the sharp particles of grit will become trapped between the face of the sponge and the surface of the paint, they have nowhere to go because of the flat face of the sponge. So when you wipe the sponge over the car you are dragging the grit over the paint which creates fine scratches. These scratches or swirl marks are highly visible in bright sun light or under petrol station lighting. Swirl marks dull the paint finish and look terrible. When you look at the wash mitt you will see it has a nice soft deep pile, it has been developed to get around the problem of the car wash sponge. These mitts contain Thousands of strands of open ended microfiber per square inch and can hold up to 7 times their weight in water. Using one will loosen the dirt and safely trap it in the microfiber strands so there are no swirls or scratches on your paint surface. Now when you load up your wash mitt with wash solution and begin to wash the paint, remember the grit particles? They are now absorbed into the mitt and held away from the paint so that they do not cause any damage.

What are Swirls and Above Surface Contaminants?

Swirl marks are the fine cobweb like scratches visible under direct sunlight or bright lights, e.g. the lighting at filling stations (see fig 2). These scratches are in the top layer of paint, the clear coat, they are usually fine and appear to radiate out from a central point. As they seem to be in a circular pattern they are visible from any height and angle. The reason we see them is that they have a sharp edge which reflects the light upwards towards your eyes (see fig 3).



fig 2

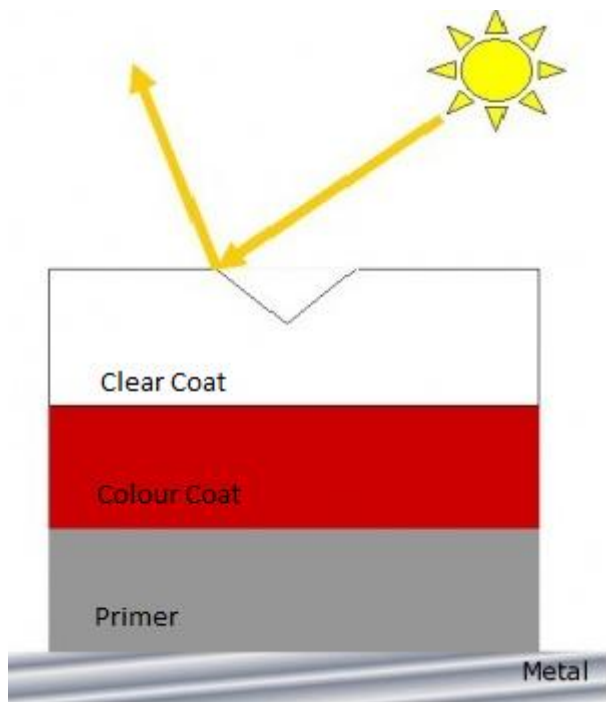


fig 3

The only way to remove these swirl marks is to use an abrasive polish to safely lower the paint below the bottom of the swirl marks, glazes and waxes can also be used to hid swirls as they contain fillers. This is like applying makeup, it is only a short term fix. It is much easier to follow a proper wash regime than to have to polish the swirls out. Other above surface contaminants you may pick up are tree sap, tar spots, industrial fallout rail dust, bird poo and insect remains. All these should be removed as they are harmful to the paint if allowed to dwell, they also dull the shine and stop the LSP from bonding to the surface of the paint.

What shampoo should I use?

There are so many on the market that it comes down to personal preference, but your shampoo should not contain any harsh detergents and have good lubricity. We like plenty of suds, this has the benefit of suspending the grit in the wash solution so that it can be rinsed of the car without causing any micro marring to the surface. A harsh detergent will strip your wax or sealant of the paint and leave it dried out and unprotected. Fairy liquid is a big 'no no' as this will remove all your wax and sealant from the paint.

What's the two bucket method I hear people talking about?

As the name suggests we use two buckets, one for the wash solution and a second to hold clean rinse water, both buckets should have a grit guard in the bottom. First soak the wash mitt in the soapy wash solution, wash a section then dunk the mitt into the rinse bucket rubbing it over the grit guard to remove more dirt, then put it into the wash solution and repeat.

Let's Get Started

Wash your car in the shade, clean the wheels first, wash and rinse one wheel at a time, use your soft wheel brush and wheel cleaning solution. Use a different wash mitt for the wheels, lip of the wheel arch and sills as these areas are usually dirtier than the rest of the car. This is so you do not cross contaminate the vehicle paint with dirt and brake dust, we recycle older wash mitts that we would not use on paint to wheel/door jam cleaning duty. If you wash the bodywork first then the wheels, you may end up splashing the clean paint with wheel cleaner solution or dirt, also on a hot day the rinse water will start to dry on the paint and leave water marks.

NB Do not use any brushes or mitts for the wheels on the paint work.

Now clean the door jams, fuel filler cap etc. Carefully wash the dirt from around the fuel filler cap, the door jams, boot and bonnet. These areas tend to get quite dirty and it adds a little extra when you open the door and the jam is as clean as the rest of the car, these areas can tend to get forgotten about. An All Purpose Cleaner (APC) diluted to 10/1 sprayed on will loosen any dirt, do not let this dry out on the paint as it becomes more concentrated as the water evaporates and will stain. A mild de-greaser can also be used if needed but remember to reapply any grease to the hinges if needed.

Pre rinse the car with a gentle spray from a hose to loosen the dirt and wet the paint. We are not trying to blast holes in the bodywork with the pressure washer here, all you will end up doing is forcing the grit onto the paint under pressure which will result in swirl marks.

Mix the wash solution to the correct ratio for the amount of water in your bucket and follow the guidance above for the two bucket method.

Care For Your Ceramic Coating

Ceramic coatings require an extra step in the process to keep them looking great. Every 4 - 8 weeks you should chemically decontaminate the paint after the first rinse with a good fall out remover and solvent tar and glue remover. Spray on the fall out remover all over the car allow it to dwell and rinse off with your pressure washer. This will remove iron deposits and brighten up the paint. Next use the tar and glue

remover in the same way. Please follow the manufactures recommendations on how to use these products correctly, also follow good HSE practises and use gloves as these chemicals are not something you would like to get on your skin.

Start to wash at the top as this is the cleanest part of the car, divide the car into sections and wash a section at a time. In warm weather you will need to rinse more frequently so the wash solution and dirt do not dry onto the paint, this will be more apparent on dark coloured cars which will be very hot on warm days. Wash the lower sections last as these will be the dirtiest. Finally give the car one last rinse, if you remove the nozzle from your garden hose and rinse the car from the highest point most of the water will sheet off leaving less to mop up.

Next dry the paint, do not use a chamois for the same reason mentioned about the sponge, instead use a quality microfiber towel designed for drying your vehicle. I like to put the towel on the car and pat it dry, the towel will absorb the water but may leave a thin film behind, this will quickly evaporate off. Remember to dress your tyres and plastics.

Protection

The paint on your car is a multi-stage system made up of a primer, a base colour and a clear coat. It is the clear coat that protects against UV damage and fallout etc, this is a pretty hard but thin coating that can become scratched due to improper wash technique. It is important to keep this protected as it will dull through time, there are many LSP products to choose from, either waxes sealants or Nano coatings.

Natural and Synthetic Wax

Carnauba waxes are made from a naturally occurring wax collected from the leaves of a palm tree in the Brazilian rain forest, carnauba will give your paint a warm wet looking shine with plenty of depth, some of this is due to the addition of carrier oils used to make the product easier to spread. The wax is yellow, the manufacturer may refine it again to white to give a clearer more reflective gloss, it is not completely transparent, it can be layered but the more layers you apply will have a slightly dulling effect on the paint. Carnauba is not very durable it will evaporate off and needs to be reapplied more often than man-made products, typically you should expect to reapply it in 4 – 6 weeks but this is dependent on a number of factors, e.g. climate, how often the car is driven, where it is parked etc.

Synthetic Waxes and Sealants

These are a man-made alternative to carnauba wax, they are generally less expensive and more durable but lack the depth of shine, they can typically last up to 6 months, they produce a very reflective shine and make any metallic flakes in the paint really stand out. These products can be layered to increase the shine and protection of your finish. Both carnauba/synthetic wax and sealants are relatively easy to apply.

Nano Technology Quartz/Ceramic coatings

These are the newest most technically advanced products available on the car care market today, whereas carnauba wax has been available to the enthusiast for about 100 years Nano technology has been with us for the last decade or so. These

products are derived from silica which is a component used in the manufacture of glass and ceramic. This is an incredibly hard substance and has been devised for use in the US space program as paint for use on the space shuttles. These coatings are inorganic and offer a much higher level of protection than traditional waxes and sealants. They are more resistant to heat and chemicals and offer protection extending for several years. As they are significantly harder they protect your paint better from swirl marks, acid rain and harsh wash chemicals, they cannot be removed by pressure washers or paint cleaners. They offer an incredibly glassy looking hard wearing finish. These products are more difficult to apply and some should only be used by trained professionals, as an incorrect application will result in either sanding the coating off or looking at it for the next 5 years or so.

There you have it, safe washing technique. As with most things in life the buy cheap buy twice mantra applies to your products and wash tools. A quality wash solution will provide better safer results and last longer than a cheaper alternative. Please remember to top up your shine with your choice of LSP to protect against environmental contaminants and keep your paint looking good.

Interior Care

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 covered in dog hair? 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 OCD you are)
- 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 any 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 clean and condition your leather upholstery and door cards.

Cleaning the Dash

The dash and parcel shelf 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 centre 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 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, just be careful not to scratch anything.

If your vents are very 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 microfiber 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 and 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 Door Cards

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 APC will easily remove black scuff marks from these areas.

Thoroughly clean around door handles and window winders using a toothbrush and some APC. Be sure to clean and dry the speaker grilles and the wells on armrests, too. If the door panels have storage pockets, use a microfiber or wash mitt to clean inside 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 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 door shuts, alloys, engine bay 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.

N.B. Do not use any sort of protectant on the pedals or drivers floor mat as these may transfer to your shoes and possibly cause your foot to slip.

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.