

Detail your car once a year!

This blog is for “do-it-yourselfers”. If you aren’t going to get yourself a little dirty, stop reading now!

This process will take the better part of a day to complete. So, pick a nice day, get out some headphones and listen to some good music while you make your car like new again. (or almost just like new)

Your car is many times the second biggest consumer of your pay check after paying rent or a mortgage. Making a car payment, insuring, paying for registration renewal, property tax, maintenance, gas and oil changes all add up. It pays to take care of your car to extend the life of the vehicle. Keep it looking good, and preserve it’s resale value.



Not a bad looking truck for being 12 years old!

There are several cleaning tasks that should occur several times a year, such as rinsing and washing the “road film” off, vacuuming the inside, removing trash, cleaning your windows, etc. But, you can protect your vehicle for a whole year of weather damage by detailing your care once a year. The first step is to clean the vehicle.

Never use a detergent on your car paint!! My first advice is not to use soap, detergent, or have your car run through a car

wash ever again, unless you live in the snow belt and need to do this during the winter months. Soap, detergent and the cleaning products used when running your car through a car wash, remove the polish that we are suggesting you apply. If the wax is not removed, it will last for a full year or longer. To renew the finish to a nice shine, wash the vehicle with only water. We run water and wash the vehicle surface with a clean rag, dislodging the road film while we wash and rinse. We do the same to the wheels.

When this is done, we dry the car with a clean rag, twisting it to remove excess water in between drying one area at a time. You can also use a chamois. If you happen to have a “wringer”, that works well to remove excess water from either a chamois or a wet rag. We recommend you purchase a package of cloth baby diapers which are very durable and can be used for years. You may have to buy a package of ten diapers. When you dry the water off the clean vehicle, you will also remove any dirt or road film that you missed when you rinsed the car.



Products to detail your car or truck

Next, it is time to really clean the outside of the car by removing bugs, tar, grease, etc. that gradually accumulate during the year. Most of this type of accumulation will occur on the lower portion of the vehicle. We use a bug and tar cleaner to do this. There are quite a few brands to choose

from we like Turtle Wax® brand. We use an old T shirt to do the wiping or we purchase similar work cloths at an auto parts store. We use a rolling stool or short bucket to sit on while we do this. You gradually move around the vehicle cleaning each little speck and blotch until everything is removed and the surface is ready to accept the polish.

We then polish the vehicle one section at a time and wipe it off one section at a time. We use Nu Finish® once a year polish. We have used many brands over the years and always come back to Nu Finish. It is inexpensive, sold all over the place, easy to apply, easy to wipe off, and leaves a beautiful shine that will last a year. It is important to do a section at a time and then wipe it off about 15 minutes later. Occasionally, if you wait longer the polish is a little more difficult to wipe off. If you don't wait, it comes right off easily. It dries very quickly after it is applied. We like to use micro fiber cloths to wipe off the wax. When you are finished with them, you can wash and dry them, and use them another time. It is best to polish your vehicle in the shade. When polishing in the direct sun, it makes any polish harder to wipe off, because it dries very quickly and starts to harden. Be sure to clean and polish all the painted surfaces on your vehicle. There are additives in the polish that clean the paint similar to what a detergent would have done.



Wax and polish the vehicle in the shade!

After polishing the vehicle, we use both ArmorAll® protectant wipes and a spray container. We use the wipes on the dash and all the plastic pieces around the seats, doors, accents, beverage holders, etc. on the inside of the vehicle. We also use the wipes on outside plastic pieces. We use the spray bottle and a rag on larger surfaces like mud flaps and to blacken the tire walls. In some cases, we clean the tire walls before we use the ArmorAll on them. ArmorAll contains silicone which seals the plastic from air and water, and protects the plastic from the harmful effects of the sun.



Apply ArmorAll® to plastic pieces to protect them from the weather

If you ever have a vehicle that is seldom driven and you want to extend the life of the tires from dry-rot, remove them from the vehicle and spray a liberal coating of ArmorAll all over the tires. This also works well to preserve a spare tire.

Be sure to wash all your windows, inside and out, your outside mirrors and your rearview mirror. We like the aerosol type window cleaner and always try to keep a can in the car along with a roll of paper towels. We have observed a gradual accumulation of "haze" on our inside window surfaces and are always amazed how much clearer the windows are after having been cleaned.