

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Introduction

Wash your car, wax your truck, polish the chrome and buff the paint. Settle down to clean the wheels while Protectant works its magic on the tires. Stand back and examine the work you've done, looking for the little things you may have missed. The time spent cleaning your ride is an investment in its health and beauty—you trade on your elbow grease and painstaking efforts so folks can admire your ride as much as you do.

The people at Mothers® Polishes•Waxes•Cleaners feel the same way. Mothers® has been in the car care business for several decades—and helping you keep your vehicle looking its best is what we do.

Packaged here are some of the practical tips and tricks our chemists, body-men, mechanics and all-around car guys have put together for you to use as you need. We've also created a week-by-week schedule and listed a comprehensive set of car-care tools and materials for your handy reference. To get all the details on detailing we suggest going through this guide from cover to cover. Perhaps you'll find a new trick, or discover that a technique you've used in the past wasn't such a good idea after all. If you're one of those espresso-fueled people with no time to spare then use this manual as a quick go-to reference for important info. For instance, when you need to clean your leather upholstery, check for fresh ideas in the section that details interior and leather care.

Keep in mind there's a big difference between detailing your car and giving it a quick wash job. Mothers® encourages you to be thorough in your approach and execution of any car care project—doing a half-job means you're only half-done, and your vehicle's still half-dirty. Find the right cleaner or polish for each project, and use the correct tools.



Approach

Plan ahead for your detailing efforts to get an accurate idea of what can be accomplished. First, evaluate the condition of your vehicle: tires, wheels, paint, trim and interior (headliner, carpet, upholstery, and gauges). From there, you can determine what you'll need for materials, tools and time expended.

You'll also need to pick a good location to do your detailing—preferably in open shade. In addition to the obvious need for water, and power (for a buffer, vacuum, etc.), you'll want to make sure you have room to work and no distractions or interference (chrome cleaner does wonders for your bumpers, but you don't want to get it on the rose bushes).



Detail Guide

After assessing your vehicle's needs you may feel a bit overwhelmed if there's a lot of work to do. To make things easier break down the job into smaller tasks to be done in a set order. Generally speaking it's better to work from the inside out and from the top down (with one exception—take care of the wheels and tires first; see the Cleaning & Detailing Planner and step-by-step list below). You should also do any scratch repair or spot removal before polishing and waxing.

How often you're able to wash and/or detail your ride is another important factor to consider. Whether you've got free time or not will often determine if detailing can be a weekly or monthly affair. Following the recommended Cleaning & Detailing planner, you may have to parlay the weekly event into a monthly one when time doesn't allow more frequent attention.



Cleaning and Detail Planner

Wash	Weekly
Intensive Detailing: Jambs, Under-Hood, Emblems, etc.	Monthly
Paint: Pre-Wax Cleaner Polish	Biannual
Paint: Sealer/Glaze	Every 8-12 Weeks
Paint: Wax	Every 8-12 Weeks
Trim	Weekly
Apply Correct Preservative, Protectant, Clean Cracks	Monthly
Wheels	Bi-Weekly
Bead To Hub, Polish Wheel & Lugs	Every 2-3 Months
Tires	Monthly
Full Dress, Scrub Bead To Tread	Monthly
Glass: Clean	Weekly
Polish, Clean Along Seals	Monthly
Interior: Vacuum	Weekly
Clean Stains, Vacuum Trunk, etc.	Monthly
Leather: Condition	Monthly
Thoroughly Clean Leather Surface & Recondition	Every 2-3 Months

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Interior & Cockpit Care

Your automotive interior is probably as dirty as the exterior of your ride, but you may not know it. Trapped within the carpet's pile are pebbles and debris tracked in each time you enter the car. Dirt on your clothes and skin sticks to the upholstery, and the grooves and crevices in leather and vinyl accumulate grime. The dash, consoles and other accessory items show splatters from food and drinks, heavy layers of dust and lots of UV exposure.

Carpets & Upholstery

The initial step for anyone cleaning a vehicle's interior has to be a thorough vacuuming. Hit the seats, dash, floor and just about everywhere else. The only exception is the headliner which is a bit trickier to clean and should be lightly brushed instead of vigorously vacuumed. To make the job go faster start with a soft, natural bristle brush to loosen clingy dirt from all interior surfaces. After pushing it into an accessible corner use your vacuum's crevice tool to suck up all the debris. The crevice attachment is also handy for cleaning other hard-to-reach areas. Keep in mind that any chemical treatments for carpet and upholstery need to have a minimal-dirt environment to work properly. You wouldn't try to wax a muddy car, would you?



getting cornered

Use a soft, natural bristle brush to loosen clingy dirt and push it into an accessible corner. Then use your vacuum's crevice tool to suck up all the debris.

If you're working with carpeting and have vacuumed up all of the dirt, pebbles, sand, ashes, and general muck you're now ready to liberally spray the area with an upholstery-specific cleaner.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

if you don't succeed...



Repetition is the key to success when cleaning stained carpet. Several sprayings of carpet cleaner, along with brushing and then rubbing with a clean towel in between applications, works best in pulling grime away from the fibers. The whole process should both start and finish with vacuuming.

The purpose of a carpet and upholstery cleaner is to loosen the soil's attachment to the carpet and interior fabric fibers. Mothers® Carpet & Upholstery Cleaner is formulated to free contaminants trapped in the pile and suspend them for easier removal. After application of a carpet and upholstery cleaner, rub the area briskly with a towel and use the brush to further agitate areas with stubborn dirt and stains. Don't be reluctant to re-treat any portions of material that won't come clean—several firm attacks are better than one prolonged battle. In many cases your interior has become dirtier than you'd expected, and cleaning individual "dirty spots" may actually leave you with one exceptionally clean area and the rest unevenly dark. Be prepared to treat large areas accurately and evenly to ensure consistent coloring when finished. Also, chase any area cleaned with another vacuuming: dirt once stuck will be loose and/or suspended, ready to come free.

Leather Care

If you see your car as a collection of synthetic materials and manufactured devices, does all that leather belong inside? Sure it does. Auto manufacturers have long used leather to make the interior feel more comfortable and natural—not to mention, it smells great, too. To keep that earthy yet luxurious look at its best, spend some time caring for it with the right methods and materials. Leather is a natural skin and should be cleaned and conditioned much as you would your own. Regular cleaning is the best way to maintain the long-term health of your interior. Leather cleaners like Mothers® Leather Cleaner can be applied to a cotton towel, sponge or directly to the seat and rubbed into the leather, then wipe clean.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

baby me



When taking care of leather you should think of it as your own skin. No, we don't mean you should rub on baby oil, but it should be treated regularly and gently with the right type of cleaner (test an inconspicuous area first).

Leather often gives up much more dirt than you expect so be sure to clean section by section. If staining and discoloration are heavy, don't try to clean everything all at once: hit it several times lightly over a period of days, allowing complete drying in between treatments. (You wouldn't rub your own skin raw, so don't do it to leather either.) Most leather cleaners are specific to "smooth" leather or "rough" leather and suede. Don't confuse the two. As with all other car-care chemicals you get what you pay for—cheap leather "cleaners" may lack proper pH balance or could be no more than repackaged low-grade soaps. Mothers® Leather Cleaner is pH balanced and designed to clean leather safely and effectively. One note: be sure to keep leather cleaners from coming in contact with all clear or transparent plastics—they may dull the finish.

feeling kneady?



Follow cleaning with a good leather conditioner that has protective oils such as lanolin, (the same stuff found in a high-quality skin cream). You can even knead it into the surface by hand.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Subsequent to cleaning your leather be sure to replenish its natural oils and preservatives with a proper leather conditioner. Once cleaned, leather is bare and unprotected. Protect the leather from UV and environmental abuse (and passenger abuse) by rubbing in the conditioner after each cleaning. Mothers® Leather Conditioner is designed to augment leather's natural protective oils with neat's-foot oil and lanolin. You can use a similar applicator for cleaner as well as the conditioner, though you'll use a heavier dose of conditioner. Some folks prefer using their hands to knead leather conditioner into the surface.

Another option for restoring and maintaining your leather interior is with an all-in-one product. Mothers® Reflections® Leather Care is a multitasking solution that cleans as it conditions. Just spray it on and rub it in. All-in-one treatments are especially good for covering large areas, such as in SUVs, minivans or wagons. They get the job done in less time because they eliminate the need for additional steps.

Plastic Care

Interior plastic and vinyl may not be subjected to as rigorous exposure as an automobile's exterior layers, but can suffer damage just as easily due to neglect. To protect the dashboard, gauge-cluster lenses, dome lights, shiny plastic molding/trim and various other slick plastic surfaces you'll need to keep up regular maintenance.



soft or hard plastic

Don't use the same chemical for soft and hard plastics. Use a penetrating protectant on soft or matte-finish (no gloss) vinyl, and a plastic polish on hard or shiny plastic. Apply the chemical to a towel to avoid spots on the windshield or door gloss.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

The dashboard should respond well to a penetrating treatment like Mothers® Protectant. Regular and consistent attention with a high-quality plastic/rubber preservative goes a long way toward minimizing the need for repairs of interior parts. Conversely, hard plastics like the gauge-cluster lens or overhead light won't respond to most protectants and need to be polished much like paint. Plastic polishes are designed to work great on hard plastic, though in the case of advanced stains and yellowing, you might try some Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish followed by a mild plastic polish. Use of Mothers® Plastic Polish gives you the added benefit of leaving a protective layer behind when buffed away.

Glass & Window



no smelly ammonia

Cleaning tinted windows requires special care. Don't use ammonia-based cleaners—and make sure the cloth is made of cotton or microfiber. Specialized glass cleaners are also better for removing that new car haze on the inside.

Although not a complicated process glass cleaning does require a few tricks you might not know. Although most people probably prefer paper towels, wadded-up newspaper is a great way to wipe glass clean (but keep the paper fresh). Lint-free or microfiber towels work well too, as long as they're clean. Mothers® makes a glass cleaner specifically for automotive applications—it's better at pulling off airborne-stickiness (such as tobacco smoke haze, interior grime and that new-car film) but won't harm your dash, leather or tinting (it's ammonia-free). For hard-to-reach areas of glass it's better to spray the glass cleaner onto the towel instead of the windows. Be sure not to allow anything but soft cotton or microfiber to touch window tint, as it is easily scratched.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide



tough spots?

When you're cleaning the outside of the glass, hard-water spots may require a bit more effort, or you can try Mothers® Chrome Polish to remove them. It may also help with the haze on those hard-to-clean glass windows on a convertible top.

If the outside of your glass is marred with water spotting or minute scratching, Mothers® Chrome Polish can help to erase the damage. Often, only the outer edge of the water spot will remain. Repeated applications of chrome polish may remove spots, but if not the glass is most likely etched and needs to be professionally polished.



Detail Guide

Wash & Wax - Paint Care

Car Washing

Before you start wetting and soaping your car, look down. Not at your feet, but at the wheels. Chemical wheel cleaners are often needed for really dirty wheels, but they lose their strength on wet surfaces. Ditto for the tires so take care of those items first. Be sure to use the correct chemical (see Wheel Care section), and make sure the wheels are cool, or you may end up dulling the finish.

Laying suds to sheetmetal is a major opportunity to bond with your ride. Now's the time to caress every curve, check each gap and groove, and examine all the external parts. It's important to pay close attention because just slopping on the soap and hosing it off is only half of what you need to do. There are several other things to keep in mind when the bucket's in hand and your car's coming clean.

Suds & Soap

What kind of soap are you using? Be sure to keep all non-automotive wash soaps far, far away—dishwashing detergents and other sudsing cleaners are formulated to remove grease and wax (which are not too chemically different from automotive wax). Keep in mind that it's not the amount of suds which matters, but how the detergent cleans. Automotive washing agents such as Mothers® California Gold Car Wash are the way to go. The right car wash should be strong enough to clean off all of the dirt, bugs, tar and grime yet not strip the important stuff (like waxes and sealers) from your paint.

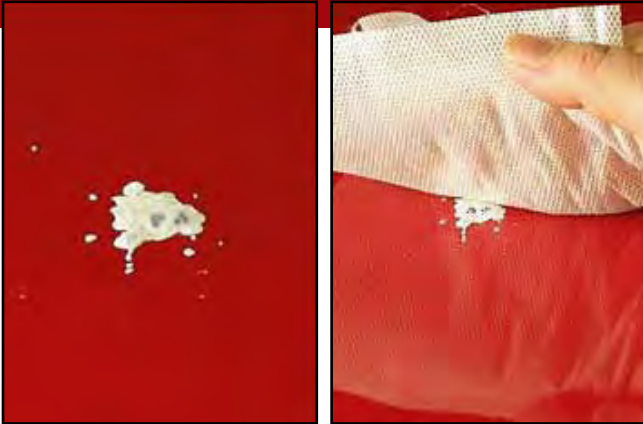
Pre-Treating

A smart way to deal with really heavy dirt, sap, bird droppings and other stuck-on stuff is to pre-treat the extra-dirty sections of bodywork. Hit that nasty spot with a spritz of some extra soapy water or Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer. Soak the offending area liberally, and allow the solution to penetrate before washing the entire car.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

withdrawing deposits



Oh no! Tweety Bird has left a little present on your hood! To remove it and other stubborn deposits, apply a concentrated amount of car soap and water and let it soak before washing. Or use Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer or Mothers FX® Spray Wax to clean up the mess. (And next time, don't park under a tree.)

Washing and Rinsing Your Car

Try to avoid washing a car in direct sunlight, and never wash a car that's hot. Hose down the vehicle with a thick, strong stream of water (but not a narrow jet). Concentrate on loosening dirt and unwanted buildup. If using a bucket of soapy water have it ready before you move on to wetting the vehicle down. You shouldn't let any water dry on the paint while filling up the bucket. If it's unusually hot or you must wash your car in the sun, be sure to keep it wet and cool with regular spraying of water.

shady subject



Hey, what's wrong with this picture? This guy is washing his car in the hot sunlight. But you know better, right? Stay in the shade if you can

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide



rub a dub-dub

A wool wash mitt works best but rinse it often and work from the top down. If you drop it in the dirt it's better to replace it or at least make certain you've removed every speck of debris or you might end up scratching the finish.

Use a clean wash mitt or a large-pore sponge (natural or synthetic will work though neither is as effective as the wash mitt). Some experts recommend using an ultra-soft synthetic or animal-hair brush that's effective for working dirt from cracks. Rinse the cleaning device with the hose frequently, and soak it periodically in the bucket as you clean. Work from the top of the vehicle down, because the lower portions of the car are usually the dirtiest. There's no sense in dragging the filth from the bottom of the car to the top. If the vehicle is excessively dirty, it might make sense to mix a second bucket of water.



keep things moist

If you must wash when it is hot outside apply extra water on cleaned surfaces to keep them from drying, or you will probably get some water spots.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Don't let water dry on any surface as you wash—spray surplus water onto the vehicle after you attend to every couple of body panels. Another key "Don't" involves the mitt, sponge or rag you're washing with. If it falls on the ground, replace it or clean it thoroughly before reuse. No matter how hard you try to shake and rinse it some small particles will be left behind, and they are likely to scratch your paint. It's smart to toss the wash mitt in the washing machine after each car wash (as particles of dirt will certainly be trapped in the fibers), but at the very least submerge it in a bucket of water and give it a good strong rinsing.

wax 'n dry



Before drying off, run a slow flooding flow of water over all surfaces of the car. This will encourage a sheeting action, pulling more water off the paint as the flow passes.

sheeting action



Using Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer, Reflections® Spray Wax and Mothers FX® Spray Wax on a wet, freshly washed car is a quick and easy way to turn up the shine. Just spray one section at a time covering area liberally, spread the instant detailer or spray wax around evenly with a fresh microfiber towel, if using a spray wax let it dry to a haze and remove all promptly with another clean

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Another great way to kick up the shine while saving time is by using a spray wax on your car's freshly washed exterior as you dry it. Mothers® Reflections® Spray Wax and Mothers FX® Spray Wax both offer their own unique benefits, and both can be applied to a wet surface. Work around the vehicle one section at a time. Start by spraying the wax onto a clean towel, or directly onto the paint. Next, spread it around evenly, just as you would with a traditional wax. Let it dry to a dull haze and then buff it to a shine with a fresh towel. It's just that easy. This will leave your car shining like new and with an additional layer of protection between regular detailings.

Drying Successfully

When drying, start with the glass because a dry towel works best there. Dry the vehicle as soon as you finish washing it, and be sure to use soft cotton or microfiber towels. We recommend one in each hand.



what a drag

Cotton or microfiber towels are the best choice for drying. A squeegee or chamois can damage paint when you drag it across the surface.

With cotton towels, quality is important—the thicker the towel's nap, the more pile there is to cushion the dirt and debris picked up while drying. Also, make sure the towel has not lost its softness, or it may be too abrasive on the finish. Even though microfiber has less of a nap than cotton, it dries well without scratching. Microfiber towels are able to hold more water than cotton, pound for pound, and use super-small synthetic fibers that won't scratch your paint. If you can't dry the entire car quickly enough you'll probably wind up with water spots. A quick burst of detailing spray (try Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer) on the offending spots followed by a towel will remove all but badly etched water spotting which requires a cleaner or polish and some extended attention.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

A valuable step in the drying process involves further washing. It's difficult to thoroughly clean jamb areas on any vehicle without getting water in the interior. Hit the difficult-access sections after drying the rest of the vehicle. A clean, damp cotton towel can swipe away most of the offending dust and dirt, and a follow-up with Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer will provide an easy clean.



More Drying “Don’ts”

We've discovered some drying "Don'ts" that may surprise you. First off, don't use the drying towels to remove dirt that you missed while washing—you risk scratching your paint.

We also don't recommend using a natural or synthetic chamois for everyday drying. The chamois material, especially a natural chamois, develops a large amount of friction when being pulled across your paint, almost to the point of suction. The problem: this "dragging traction" is sufficient enough to distort and/or strip wax from your paint. Also, there is very little nap to a chamois (synthetic or natural), so any particles not washed off have a higher chance of being rubbed directly onto the paint and causing scratches and swirl marks.

Another sensible "Don't" is to stay away from squeegees. They can pick up dirt and drag it through your paint for as long as you wipe. So unless you're dealing with glass, don't squeegee.

Be sure to use limited amounts of detergent when washing cotton car towels, and don't dry them with fabric softener—it leaves trace chemicals in the towels that can contaminate your wax. Also, a hot wash with a cold rinse for your cotton towels can help reduce lint.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tire Care

You can use Mothers® Tire & Rubber Cleaner to clean off dirt, soil and old dressing from the surface or, if you're washing bucket-style use soapy water to scrub the sidewalls. To remove heavy deposits you can use a firm nylon or natural bristle brush to really bear down on them. Usually it's better to clean the tires and wheels before washing your car from the top down (that way you can take care of the dirtiest areas first, and avoid splashing wheelwell grime on an already washed car).



tiresome subject

If you're using soapy water to scrub the tires' sidewalls, a firm nylon or natural bristle brush makes the job faster. Usually it's better to clean the tires and wheels before washing the rest of your vehicle, so you take care of the dirtiest areas first, and avoid splashing wheelwell grime on an already washed car.

Part of properly cleaning your vehicle's tires should include taking care of them in the long run. Regular treatments with a tire dressing such as Mothers® Protectant, Reflections® Tire Care or Mothers FX® Tire Shine can help protect tires from UV exposure, cracking, fading and turning brown. You can apply this type of product directly on the tire, but it's much more efficient and cost-effective to spray it into a closed-cell sponge, and then rub the sponge onto the tire with a light buffing action.

Another caution: Don't use Mothers® Back-to-Black® (or a similar type of restorative) on your tires. Heavy restorative chemicals like that are designed for exterior trim only. Let's face it—if your tires need restoring, you probably need new tires. Also, avoid solvent-based tire and rubber protectants. Check the bottle for distilled petrochemicals—they can do bad things to the longevity of the tire surface.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

sharp dressed tire



Instead of spraying a tire dressing directly on the sidewall, apply Mothers® Protectant, Reflections® Tire Care or Mothers FX® Tire Care to a sponge and then wipe it on. By doing this, you will avoid wasting the product and you'll achieve much neater result.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Wheel Care

Maintenance of painted, anodized and clear-coated aluminum wheels is not much different than cleaning body paint. First, wash off any deposits with soapy water. If the wheel is heavily soiled with super-sticky brake dust or road grime, some wheel cleaners can help remove them.

Mothers® Wheel Mist® All Wheel and Mothers FX® Wheel Cleaner are formulated for use on painted wheels and other coatings that need a gentle approach. However, when applying them do so with a hose nearby so you can rinse off the cleaner within a couple of minutes.



quick rinse

When spraying on Mothers® Wheel Mist® All Wheel, Wheel Mist® Chrome/Wire or Mothers FX® Wheel Cleaner keep a hose handy so you can rinse it off before the product dries on the wheel.



see clearly now

Frequent application of Clear-Coat Wheel Polish not only removes embedded brake dust but also helps to prevent the buildup of it between cleanings.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Even though the basic approach to cleaning is simple, not all wheels are the same, and therefore require different types of chemicals. For instance, if you're not sure whether your wheels are uncoated aluminum or not, do a spot test. Rub a small amount in a low-visibility area with Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish. If it doesn't turn black, stop immediately. There's a coating of sorts on that wheel, and you must use a different product. Be sure to check your owner's manual or with the wheel manufacturer to make sure the cleaner you choose is not going to harm your wheels.



keep rolling

Don't let wheel polish dry on the wheel—wipe it off immediately. If it does dry, just reapply the product and wipe it off before it dries again.

To remove stains and brake dust, a gentle polish is just the thing you need to help keep brake dust from sticking. Wheels that aren't clear coated can use an aluminum polish such as Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish.

Polished Aluminum and Magnesium Wheels

When cleaning polished aluminum wheels without a clear-coat, or open metals like magnesium, use Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish, a proven and popular product. Rub a thin layer of polish onto a portion of the wheel until a black residue appears. Add more polish as you go along, and don't be in a hurry to remove the dark residue because it acts as a secondary polishing agent. Once the wheel is sufficiently clean, wipe it dry with a clean, dry cotton towel so that you don't let the polish dry on the wheel—make sure you turn the drying towel frequently.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide



coated or uncoated

If you're not sure whether your wheels are uncoated aluminum or not, rub a small amount in a low-visibility area with Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish, Billet Polish or PowerMetal®. If it doesn't turn black, then stop immediately. Your wheel is likely coated, visit the Clear-Coated, Painted and Anodized Wheels section of this Detail Guide.



have a ball

Mothers® PowerBall® can also be used with Mothers® Mag & Aluminum and Billet Metal polishes. Simply apply the product to the PowerBall® with your fingers and spread it around. Slight spritz of water on the ball will ensure even application. Start the drill on slow, then begin increasing the drill speed. Remove excess with a clean terry cloth or microfiber towel to reveal a top quality shine.

Or, to get the job done in a fraction of the time, use Mothers® revolutionary PowerBall® and PowerMetal® to bring out the maximum shine in your wheels. Simply attach the PowerBall® to any standard drill, pour Mothers® PowerMetal® right on the PowerBall® and begin polishing. Start out on the "low" setting, then slowly increase the speed. The Powerball's® unique closed-cell foam allows it to compress tightly to get into those hard-to-reach places. After just a few minutes you'll be able to use a clean terry or microfiber cloth to wipe the polish away revealing an amazing shine that used to require hours of polishing.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Wheels of Chrome and Roughcast Metal

Some wheels need extra cleaning power such as chrome wheels and those made of roughcast metals. In this case, strong cleaners like Mothers® Wheel Mist® Chrome/Wire can be employed. Take extra care to prevent the cleaner from coming into contact with other parts of the car, and don't let it sit too long before hosing off. Be sure your wheels are chrome or roughcast, because Wheel Mist® can damage clear-coated and painted wheels. When doing chrome wheels, you can chase the cleaner with a chrome polish to properly finish the job.



chrome chaser

When working on chrome wheels, chase the cleaner with a chrome polish to properly finish the job.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Cosmetic and Exterior Trim

Exterior Plastic, Rubber and Trim

More maligned than exterior metals, more abused than automotive glass, more rejected than your ride's rubber; this is the story of exterior plastic and trim. Take heart, there are remedies close at hand. First, understand the condition of the plastic items you plan to work on. Is the buildup a light layer of atmospheric grunge or has the coloration and consistency of the plastic changed? Is the plastic and rubber in jeopardy of falling apart, or are there just a few areas that need buffing? What sort of polymer is it—rubber-based trim or hard plastic? Consider what you're working on before approaching it with a chemical.



soak to restore

Regular treatments with Mothers® Protectant preservative will greatly improve the longevity of rubber.

Even though plastic is a popular component of exterior adornment these days it doesn't last forever. It holds up well for a long period of time with minimal cleaning and maintenance, but deteriorates if you don't take care of it. There are two general types of plastic to be concerned with—trim and molding plastic, which is opaque and usually matte-finished; and lens and light plastic, which is transparent and/or shiny. If the piece is opaque, coated plastic or urethane (used on trim and moldings), then treat it with a regular application of a high-quality dressing like Mothers® Protectant. The outermost layer will last much longer, preserving the appearance and structural integrity of the piece itself.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide



rubber match

Neglected black trim items or those that have become impregnated with wax residue may require a thorough soaking with Mothers® Back-to-Black® to restore them.

In the case of opaque plastic and urethanes left exposed and dirty, where the surface is eroded and oxidized, dried out and faded, you can revitalize it with a plastic restorative agent. Mothers® Back-to-Black® is a good example of a formula designed for this purpose. Repeated applications over several days can help to bridge the gap between tired or sunburned molecular bonds. When washing your car, you may notice that exterior components (such as trim, molding, bumpers, door handles, vents, seals and others) have faded from black to gray, their surface crispy and cracked. This is where restoratives like Back-to-Black® shine (pun intended). Remember this: once plastic has deteriorated so much that it needs Back-to-Black®, then lighter chemicals like Protectant can't save it anymore. At this point Back-to-Black® is the only option.



plastic fantastic

For transparent or shiny items, Mothers® Plastic Polish can help them not only look better but also last longer. If discoloring is extensive try Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish as a more aggressive first step. Yet another option is to use Mothers® PowerBall® with PowerMetal® or Plastic Polish to get the job done in less time.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Clear and transparent-colored plastics can readily benefit from treatment with a plastic polish. Mothers® Plastic Polish has proven itself effective on signal lenses, head and taillights, clear emblems, plastic convertible top windows and center caps. The Mothers® product has the added benefit of leaving behind a fine layer of polymers that protect your plastics from future environmental torment. Plastic with stains and yellowing will also look better after being treated with a plastic polish. If the discoloring is extensive try Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish which is slightly more aggressive than plastic polishes. If you do use an aluminum polish on your plastics then chase it with plastic polish. This method is well worth the extra time and effort.

Of course saving time is also key. Using Mothers® Plastic Polish with the amazing PowerBall® will get the same job done in just minutes with amazing results. Or, for a more aggressive approach to weather beaten plastics, use Mothers® PowerMetal® with the PowerBall® and then follow with a quick coating of Plastic Polish. Your plastic will look like new in no time at all.

Restoring Rubber

Rubber is often used to surround bumpers and other external parts that regularly move out of alignment with the body structure. Like opaque plastics, regular treatments of Protectant or similar high-quality penetrating preservative will greatly improve the longevity of the rubber no matter what color. If the item has gone beyond the easy save and needs some resuscitation, then stronger plastic and rubber restoratives like Mothers® Back-to-Black® are again the smart remedy. Applied heavily and allowed to soak, these restoratives can bring lost luster back to the rubber. Try multiple coats if at first you don't succeed.



marvelous metal polish

Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish, Billet Polish and PowerMetal® are all flexible enough to use with brass, aluminum alloys and magnesium, and for billet aluminum, aluminum engine parts, accessories and more. With the proper technique, all of these polishes can be used with the PowerBall® as an excellent way to turn up the shine factor.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Use an aluminum-specific cleaner (Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish and PowerMetal® are flexible enough to use with brass, aluminum alloys and magnesium) for billet aluminum, aluminum engine parts, accessories and more. You'll know the aluminum polish is working when you rub it onto the surface and it turns black (which is actually a secondary polish, as mentioned elsewhere in this guide). For a quick solution, use Mothers® PowerMetal® along with the PowerBall®. You'll get the same great shine in just minutes. Don't let any metal polish dry on the metal.

Mothers® Billet Metal Polish is a much finer grade of polish (you might compare it to the difference between 80 grit and 400 grit sandpaper) and is ideal for high-quality billet, forged and finely cast aluminum, brass, and other metals. The instructions are the same as with Mothers® Mag polish, but you'll get even better results with Billet Metal Polish. For fast results, spread Billet Metal Polish around with a clean towel or PowerBall®, buff to a shine using the PowerBall® and then wipe clean with a fresh towel.

Chrome and Metal Trim



chrome poly-protection

In addition to giving chrome a crisp sparkle, Mothers® Chrome Polish protects it with advanced polymers that resist smudges and fingerprints. This polish also works great on glass.

It's important to know what sort of metal you're dealing with when polishing. Certain cleaners can maul the surfaces of incongruent varieties of metal. Chrome is quite durable, for example, and some chrome cleaners can be powerful stuff. Be careful what else you expose to a chrome cleaner (like Mothers® Wheel Mist® Chrome/Wire), because rubber, paint and aluminum can suffer some damage from this chemical. Strong wheel cleaners are effective on all chrome including bumpers and pipes too.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Mothers® Chrome Polish is popular with detailing shops because of its balance. Strong enough to clean quickly, but gentle enough not to harm the metal or its neighboring parts. That balance is an important feature of any well-designed metal polish—it's very easy for the mixture to be either too powerful or too weak. There's always been a lot of chrome on cars, so a good chrome polish is handy to keep around. You'll find this gleaming metal on exhaust tips, bumpers, emblems, mirrors, wheels, headlight bezels, under the hood and everywhere else. Another plus to using Mothers® Chrome Polish is the layer of protective agents left behind that resist smudges and fingerprints. Chrome-specific polishes are not as fierce as chrome cleaners but can still discolor plastic and rubber if left sitting.

Convertible Top, Fabric or Vinyl

Your convertible top can benefit from being washed with car wash just like the rest of the vehicle, but it needs further attention to last as long as it should. Whether dealing with a vinyl convertible top or fabric, the material itself is more porous than the rest of the car's exterior, and dirt will work its way deep into the weave. Mothers® Car Wash's most important feature is how the cleaning agent works without breaking down the top's waterproofing.



soft touch

When scrubbing a convertible top don't use a wire only nylon or a natural fiber and preferably one that's not too stiff.

It's best to wash the top first and remove all surplus dirt. Pre-treat tough stains with an extra blast of undiluted Car Wash, agitating it into the top and then letting it soak for a few minutes. Apply the Car Wash liberally, thoroughly coating the top material. Follow that with a firm scrubbing. Remember to hit the seams too, but don't be as firm there.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Do not use a wire bristle brush, only nylon or a natural fiber, and preferably one that's not too stiff. Employ your common sense—you don't want to use a bristle that looks like it'll chew through the top material. After cleaning and allowing the top to dry (or you can dry it with a soft cotton towel), there are two paths you can take. If the top is vinyl give it a light coat of Mothers® Protectant. On a cloth top, brush the whole surface in one direction (front to back).

on the bleach



If you must use bleach, dilute it with water (less than 25 percent bleach), and be sure to wet the surrounding areas and rinse thoroughly. Too much bleach will break down the fibers and damage other components. Use bleach only as a last resort and not very often.

If your top is white and you must use bleach, dilute it with water (less than 25 percent bleach). Also, be sure to wet the surrounding areas and rinse thoroughly. Too much bleach will break down the fibers and damage other components. Mothers® Car Wash is gentle and bleach free. The same tip applies for tonneau covers, vinyl and fabric hardtops, other exterior automotive fabrics and boat covers. Most convertible tops will have either a plastic or glass rear window, so consult this guide's sections on glass or plastic care accordingly. Bleach is a last resort due to its harsh nature.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Preparation, Sealing & Waxing

Contaminant Removal

The clay bar is not supposed to be a well-kept secret. It's normally sold as part of detailing kits such as with Mothers® California Gold® Clay Bar Paint Saving System, and even though we try hard to promote it, many people still don't understand. It just works. Have you ever drawn your hand across your hood just after washing expecting smoothness only to feel lots of little bumps and bits of dirt everywhere? Late-model paints, once cured, are harder than old-fashioned enamels (especially the clear-coat), and will show minor abuse quickly. Tiny bits of sharp stuff like dust and metal fragments can stick into that clear-coat and normal washing won't remove them. If you don't get rid of them, the Grim Reaper is coming for your paint.



easy lube

Before using the clay bar apply a layer of detailing spray on a freshly washed surface. This film will serve as a lubricant for the clay bar so it doesn't stick and leave behind any deposits.

The same effect of "dragging traction" encountered when drying with a chamois, which we described in the "Drying Don'ts" section, is what makes the clay bar so effective (but in a positive way). First off, the car must be freshly bathed to use the clay, or the bar will choke on all surface-bound dirt and probably scratch the paint. When lightly rubbed over the surface of your clean paint, lubricated by a coat of detailing spray, the clay will pick up embedded particles in your paint that would otherwise remain after washing.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

slide! slide!



To remove deposits simply slide the clay bar over the lubricated surface. Be sure to knead the bar regularly to expose fresh clay.

Clay bars pull out and shear off embedded particles and surface-born contaminants with a safe and effective lubricated mechanical action. The clay bar must be sliding on a film of detailer or it will stick to the paint and skip and leave trace clay deposits (which come right off with the clay bar). While using a clay bar, knead it regularly (remold the working surface so fresh clay is exposed). When using instant detailer for clay work it can be wiped off in the same fashion as it would when used as a detailing spray. If the instant detailer dries it can be removed by spraying on more and drying it off immediately. If you drop the clay bar throw it away—period. This is why it's smart to use only a section of the clay bar while working, not all of it at once.

wax on, wax off



Since a clay bar is so effective at removing deposits it takes off wax as well. Plan on re-waxing the finish after using a clay bar.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Clay Facts: Clay bars will remove the wax from your vehicle's finish so be prepared to re-seal the entire clay-barred portion of your paint. (For that reason don't use a clay bar unless your paint really needs it; otherwise you'll just be making more work for yourself.) So if you plan to polish, seal and wax, do it after using a clay bar. When using clay consider the brand of clay you use—some are very hard and aggressive.

Mothers® California Gold® Clay Bar is more malleable and not as stiff as other clays. This means it has minimal chance of scratching the paint and it will be easier to both use and remold. Clay works well on plastic, trim and glass as well as on matte-finish plastics that are free of coatings. Clay bars can remove paint over-spray from chrome and paint and just about any other hard or shiny surface. Mothers® Clay Bar is safe for all automotive paints.

Polish, Clean and Smooth the Surface

The initial goal of preparing your paint is to eliminate all impurities and pieces of debris from the surface. Thorough washing followed by the clay bar should remove all offending particles and substances and leave the paint ready for polishing. This process of smoothing the paint's surface rounds off the edges of surface-depth scratches, evens out the crinkling from any minor blemishes and erases the etching left by water spotting and more. It's like sanding a piece of wood with sandpaper but with a much, much finer medium.



no more nicks?

Removing scratches may require a stronger polish and rubbing against it from varying directions. Don't use too much pressure though, or you might damage the surrounding paint.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Of course, some scratches are just too deep to polish away—and not all marks and nicks can be fixed with elbow grease. If the damage is deep enough to catch your fingernail you may not be able to remove it entirely. If all else fails try a slightly stronger polish such as Mothers® Scratch Remover. When working a scratch with any polish you should rub against it from various angles opposite the direction of the scratch.

Tips on Polishing and Waxing



chemical mask

Here's a neat time-saver: Apply a rubber/plastic preservative, like Mothers® Protectant or Back-to-Black®, to all non-paint surfaces before waxing or polishing to help keep that unpainted area from being stained by waxes.

When applying polishes, sealers, glazes or waxes use a clean, 100-percent cotton towel, microfiber cloth, foam wax pad or suitable applicator. Moisten the applicator only when using paste products, because liquids already have water in them. Don't goop on too much material—thin layers work better. If you're using liquid waxes and polishes, pour them on the applicator instead of directly on the paint; otherwise they may leave dark, super-waxed streaks. The exception to this rule is Mothers FX® Spray Wax and Reflections® Spray Wax which can be applied directly to the paint surface.

Apply the material on only one section or body-panel at a time—don't try to do the whole vehicle at once. Whether you use a straight or circular motion is not as important as the amount of pressure. Don't use too much—work with a soft hand, letting the applicator and wax or polish to do its job. Just be sure to rotate the applicator frequently and work with new surfaces to reduce the chance of paint damage.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

a real smoothie



Polish before waxing in order to smooth the surface and bring back the luster of your paint.

Apply the material on only one section or body-panel at a time—don't try to do the whole vehicle at once. Whether you use a straight or circular motion is not as important as the amount of pressure. Don't use too much—work with a soft hand, letting the applicator and wax or polish to do its job. Just be sure to rotate the applicator frequently and work with new surfaces to reduce the chance of paint damage.

Keep clean towels with you to remove any waxes and polishes that get into spots they don't belong such as on trim. Let the product dry to a haze before rubbing it off. Use a 100-percent cotton or microfiber towel when removing polishes, waxes, etc. Rotate the towel to a clean area frequently, and shake it out occasionally or start with a new towel altogether.

no streakers



Less is more when applying wax or polishes-several thin layers go a long way-and don't use a lot of pressure. Also, pour the material on the applicator or towel, not directly on the paint, to prevent streaks from forming.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

You can treat your paint with varying degrees of polish in preparation for sealing and wax. Some polishes are very strong and can damage the finish if not used properly—this sort of polish may be best left to body-care professionals. A mild polish used repeatedly and extensively is safer than a more aggressive polish which can cause paint damage.

For instance, Mothers® Reflections® Car Wax is a premium-grade synthetic polish designed to give a hard, fast shine by working smarter, not harder. Using Mothers® Micro-Encapsulation Technology it's composed of a high-tech molecular combination of resins, polishes and conditioners. As you apply it the molecules break apart, distributing the resin and conditioners, while the polish removes surface contaminants that can dull the finish. As Reflections® dries, its high-gloss resins and conditioners bond with the paint, leaving the polishing agents suspended so they can be buffed away for a bright shine. Following Reflections® Car Wax with a treatment of Reflections® TopCoat will further bolster the deep, rich shine that only Mothers® can deliver.

Or, for a high-tech shine that offers second-to-none protection, try Mothers FX® SynWax®. FX SynWax® is engineered using synthetic polymers designed to give your car the kind of shine you've come to expect from Mothers®. And because of its synthetic structure, FX SynWax® is easy to apply and remove. Unlike a natural carnauba wax, FX SynWax® can be applied and left on for hours at a time, yet still be removed easily and cleanly.

If you're dealing with minor water spotting and lightweight scratches or perhaps atmospheric deposits or light chemical etching from bird droppings, an entry-level cleaner/polish such as Mothers® Phase 1 Pre-Wax Cleaner (the first of its three-step system) will do the job. This light cleaner/polish is minimally invasive but still effective, consistent and easy to use. It can be applied several times in a row to slowly erase light surface damage—so polish to your heart's content!

In case of more noticeable damage in the paint, a polish with more "power" may be necessary. Keep in mind that it's a more assertive variety of polish, and being too forceful with it could damage your color or clear-coat. Don't rub too hard—let the product do the work. Mothers® Scratch Remover borders on the "aggressive" but is still user-friendly and easily applied. Best for your chewed-up keyholes, hood and trunk lips, door jambs and door edges, Scratch Remover is stronger than the Pre-Wax Cleaner and can help smooth out more obvious paint damage. At the risk of sounding repetitious, keep in mind that when you hit the paint with a hard polish don't forget the potential damage overuse can cause.



Minimize Imperfections


If polishing is the most important step to rendering your car's paint to a glorious, shining visage, then an application of a is the way to go. Polishes and cleaners can smooth edges and erase

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

erase minor scratches, but sealers/glazes such as Mothers® California Gold® Sealer & Glaze handle the stuff that polishes can't quite fix. Functioning as a sort of gap-filler these sealer/glaze combos hide imperfections such as spiderwebbing, swirl marks and light scratches.

stuart little's



If you looked at your paint under a magnifying glass here's what you might see gouges, scratches and old wax buildup. Use both polish and sealer to get your finish to look like the drawing on the right instead of the left.

Designed to work in conjunction with other phases of Mothers® Ultimate Wax System®, the Mothers® Phase 2 Sealer & Glaze is used after a complete polish treatment when the paint surface is most exposed. To put this in perspective, imagine you're plastering cracks in a sheetrock wall but at a microscopic level.

glazed over



To properly finish a paint-detailing job a sealer/glaze conceals any remaining spots or blemishes.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Sealers and glazes can be used without re-polishing the surface and applied over prior coats of wax. Darker paints respond much more visibly to a sealer/glaze—in most cases lighter colors and whites don't have as much visual depth and the effect of a sealer/glaze is less noticeable. In some cases, show vehicles are treated to frequent coats of sealer/glaze and see no wax at all—this approach is fine, and will probably promote a deeper luster than sealer/glaze and subsequent waxing together, but it affords only minimal protection from the elements. Wax acts as the hard candy shell of paint treatments, and without it the paint isn't as well protected.



it's elemental

Although a sealer/glaze has the advantage of allowing for repeated applications without re-polishing it should not be used in place of wax which provides a hard shell of protection from the elements.

Wax and Shine



don't forget to brush

Wax can accumulate in the nooks and crannies around emblems and trim pieces. Get rid of that unsightly buildup with a small brush before it has a chance to harden.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

The practice of wax application and removal is not complicated but needs to be done thoroughly and correctly. Consistent surface coverage and thickness leave a shine far superior to uneven application, insufficient removal or ineffective rubbing. The formula for success is simple: select a body panel to work on, and apply your wax evenly and lightly, in parallel movements. Then buff the hazed wax with a 100-percent cotton towel or microfiber cloth. Rub the paint until no wax remains. Don't forget to turn the towel frequently, and shake it out as well (downwind and away from the car, of course). Be careful to avoid getting wax on plastic and rubber that can absorb it and become discolored. It's better to leave a little space between the paint and the suspect plastic/rubber and then touch it up later with careful, small movements of the applicator.

If you're following a complete treatment of polish and sealer & glaze, look for a high-quality carnauba wax with no cleaning agents—such as Mothers® Natural Formula Pure Carnauba Wax. You're essentially sealing the sealer & glaze, and adding a protective shield. One good coating should be enough to keep things shiny and bright for months depending on your local climate and conditions.

If you're working on a light-colored vehicle (white, yellow, beige, silver, etc.), a single-step cleaner wax may be better suited for the job. This product is carnauba wax but with minor polishing agents that break down during application. Carnauba cleaner waxes (such as Mothers® Original Formula Carnauba Cleaner Wax) can take two steps out of the finishing process for lighter-colored paints that don't have as much inherent visual depth.

After you finish each section of paint remember to go over the nooks & crannies and associated parts and trim items to catch any wax left behind that would otherwise turn into annoying little bits of white crud. If you overlook these areas until after the waxing process is finished a detailer's pick or soft nylon bristle brush can work well to remove the residue.



Maintenance

Quick Detailing: Between washings dust and light road film can be removed without water. By combining the use of a car duster (frequently referred to as the California Car Duster) and a detailing spray (such as Mothers® Reflections® Spray Wax, Mothers FX® Spray Wax and Showtime® Instant Detailer), you can keep your ride much cleaner between washings. A regular practice of "dusting & detailing" can also extend the time between washings. A light coating of dust can be swept away with the car duster and chased with a treatment of detailer.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

time after time



No time to wash? Just use a car duster and your choice of Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer, Reflections® Spray Wax or Mothers FX® Spray Wax. These products will save time and water. (Just as long as your car isn't too dirty.)

The trick is to know how much dirt is on the car and what sort. If there's a thorough layer of dust, but it's light and not stuck to the paint, you can run the car duster over your vehicle to remove all but trace amounts of dirt. Then you hit it with a spray wax or instant detailer to complete the job. In some cases you can't dust off the grime—rain has turned atmospheric residue to a fine mud or there's some sort of muck adhered to the paint, such as bird droppings or tree sap. Some things can only be removed by washing with soap and water.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks

getting cornered



Use a soft, natural bristle brush to loosen clingy dirt and push it into an accessible corner. Then use your vacuum's crevice tool to suck up all the debris.

if you don't succeed...



Repetition is the key to success when cleaning stained carpet. Several sprayings of carpet cleaner, along with brushing and then rubbing with a clean towel in between applications, works best in pulling grime away from the fibers. The whole process should both start and finish with vacuuming.

baby me



When taking care of leather you should think of it as your own skin. No, we don't mean you should rub on baby oil, but it should be treated regularly and gently with the right type of cleaner (test an inconspicuous area first).

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



feeling kneady?

Follow cleaning with a good leather conditioner that has protective oils such as lanolin, (the same stuff found in a high-quality skin cream). You can even knead it into the surface by hand.



soft or hard plastic

Don't use the same chemical for soft and hard plastics. Use a penetrating protectant on soft or matte-finish (no gloss) vinyl, and a plastic polish on hard or shiny plastic. Apply the chemical to a towel to avoid spots on the windshield or door gloss.



no smelly amonia

Cleaning tinted windows requires special care. Don't use ammonia-based cleaners-and make sure the cloth is made of cotton or microfiber. Specialized glass cleaners are also better for removing that new car haze on the inside.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



tough spots?

When you're cleaning the outside of the glass, hard-water spots may require a bit more effort, or you can try Mothers® Chrome Polish to remove them. It may also help with the haze on those hard-to-clean glass windows on a convertible top.



withdrawing deposits

Oh no! Tweety Bird has left a little present on your hood! To remove it and other stubborn deposits, apply a concentrated amount of car soap and water and let it soak before washing. Or use Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer or Mothers FX® Spray Wax to clean up the mess. (And next time, don't park under a tree.)



shady subject

Hey, what's wrong with this picture? This guy is washing his car in the hot sunlight. But you know better, right? Stay in the shade if you can.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



rub a dub-dub

A wool wash mitt works best but rinse it often and work from the top down. If you drop it in the dirt it's better to replace it or at least make certain you've removed every speck of debris or you might end up scratching the finish.



keep things moist

If you must wash when it's hot outside apply extra water on cleaned surfaces to keep them from drying, or you'll probably get some water spots.



sheeting action

Before drying off, run a slow flooding flow of water over all surfaces of the car. This will encourage a sheeting action, pulling more water off the paint as the flow passes.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks

wax 'n dry



Using Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer, Reflections® Spray Wax and Mothers FX® Spray Wax on a wet, freshly washed car is a quick and easy way to turn up the shine. Just spray one section at a time covering area liberally, spread the instant detailer or spray wax around evenly with a fresh microfiber towel, if using a spray wax let it dry to a haze and remove all promptly with another clean

what a drag



Cotton or microfiber towels are the best choice for drying. A squeegee or chamois can damage paint when you drag it across the surface.

tiresome subject



If you're using soapy water to scrub the tires' sidewalls, a firm nylon or natural bristle brush makes the job faster. Usually it's better to clean the tires and wheels before washing the rest of your vehicle, so you take care of the dirtiest areas first, and avoid splashing wheelwell grime on an already washed car.

MOTHERS®

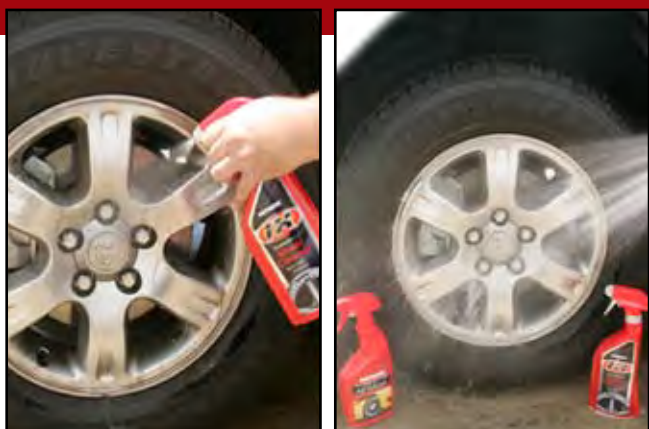
Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



sharp dressed tire

Instead of spraying a tire dressing directly on the sidewall, apply Mothers® Protectant, Reflections® Tire Care or Mothers FX® Tire Care to a sponge and then wipe it on. By doing this, you will avoid wasting the product and you'll achieve much neater result.



quick rinse

When spraying on Mothers® Wheel Mist® All Wheel, Wheel Mist® Chrome/Wire or Mothers FX® Wheel Cleaner keep a hose handy so you can rinse it off before the product dries on the wheel.



see clearly now

Frequent application of Clear-Coat Wheel Polish not only removes embedded brake dust but also helps to prevent the buildup of it between cleanings.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



keep rolling

Don't let wheel polish dry on the wheel-wipe it off immediately. If it does dry, just reapply the product and wipe it off before it dries again.



coated or uncoated

If you're not sure whether your wheels are uncoated aluminum or not, rub a small amount in a low-visibility area with Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish, Billet Polish or PowerMetal®. If it doesn't turn black, then stop immediately. Your wheel is likely coated, visit the Clear-Coated, Painted and Anodized Wheels section of this Detail Guide.



have a ball

Mothers® PowerBall® can also be used with Mothers® Mag & Aluminum and Billet Metal polishes. Simply apply the product to the PowerBall® with your fingers and spread it around. Slight spritz of water on the ball will ensure even application. Start the drill on slow, then begin increasing the drill speed. Remove excess with a clean terry cloth or microfiber towel to reveal a top quality shine.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



chrome chaser

When working on chrome wheels, chase the cleaner with a chrome polish to properly finish the job.



soak to restore

Regular treatments with Mothers® Protectant preservative will greatly improve the longevity of rubber.



rubber match

Neglected black trim items or those that have become impregnated with wax residue may require a thorough soaking with Mothers® Back-to-Black® to restore them.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



plastic fantastic

For transparent or shiny items, Mothers® Plastic Polish can help them not only look better but also last longer. If discoloring is extensive try Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish as a more aggressive first step. Yet another option is to use Mothers® PowerBall® with PowerMetal® or PowerPlastic® to get the job done in less time.



marvelous metal polish

Mothers® Mag & Aluminum Polish, Billet Polish and PowerMetal™ are all flexible enough to use with brass, aluminum alloys and magnesium, and for billet aluminum, aluminum engine parts, accessories and more. With the proper technique, all of these polishes can be used with the PowerBall® as an excellent way to turn up the shine factor.



chrome poly-protection

In addition to giving chrome a crisp sparkle, Mothers® Chrome Polish protects it with advanced polymers that resist smudges and fingerprints. This polish also works great on glass.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



soft touch

When scrubbing a convertible top don't use a wire bristlebrush only nylon or a natural fiber and preferably one that's not too stiff.



on the bleach

If you must use bleach, dilute it with water (less than 25 percent bleach), and be sure to wet the surrounding areas and rinse thoroughly. Too much bleach will break down the fibers and damage other components. Use bleach only as a last resort and not very often.



easy lube

Before using the clay bar apply a layer of detailing spray on a freshly washed surface. This film will serve as a lubricant for the clay bar so it doesn't stick and leave behind any deposits.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



slide! slide!

To remove deposits simply slide the clay bar over the lubricated surface. Be sure to knead the bar regularly to expose fresh clay.



wax on, wax off

Since a clay bar is so effective at removing deposits it takes off wax as well. Plan on re-waxing the finish after using a clay bar.



no more nicks?

Removing scratches may require a stronger polish and rubbing against it from varying directions. Don't use too much pressure though, or you might damage the surrounding paint.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



chemical mask

Here's a neat time-saver: Apply a rubber/plastic preservative, like Mothers® Protectant or Back-to-Black®, to all non-paint surfaces before waxing or polishing to help keep that unpainted area from being stained by waxes.



a real smoothie

Polish before waxing in order to smooth the surface and bring back the luster of your paint.



no streakers

Less is more when applying wax or polishes-several thin layers go a long way-and don't use a lot of pressure. Also, pour the material on the applicator or towel, not directly on the paint, to prevent streaks from forming.

MOTHERS

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



stuart little's

If you looked at your paint under a magnifying glass here's what you might see gouges, scratches and old wax buildup. Use both polish and sealer to get your finish to look like the drawing on the right instead of the left.



glazed over

To properly finish a paint-detailing job a sealer/glaze conceals any remaining spots or blemishes.



it's elemental

Although a sealer/glaze has the advantage of allowing for repeated applications without re-polishing it should not be used in place of wax which provides a hard shell of protection from the elements.

MOTHERS®

Detail Guide

Tips and Tricks



don't forget to brush

Wax can accumulate in the nooks and crannies around emblems and trim pieces. Get rid of that unsightly buildup with a small brush before it has a chance to harden.



time after time

No time to wash? Just use a car duster and your choice of Mothers® Showtime® Instant Detailer, Reflections® Spray Wax or Mothers FX® Spray Wax. These products will save time and water. (Just as long as your car isn't too dirty.)