



FALL Car Care

Your Vehicle's Glass

The health of your vehicle's windshield is crucial to safe driving. A damaged or dirty windshield can greatly inhibit your ability to visualize and react to road conditions. Clean windows can make a vehicle's overall appearance shine. The best way to find out which cleaning agent works the best for you is to try several until you're satisfied with the results.

SIMPLE STEPS TO ENSURE CLEAR VISION

There are many windshield-enhancing options on the market today. It's in your best interest to take advantage of this product diversity. Some of the most popular additives are water-repelling agents that can enhance your vision on rainy days.

If you're skeptical about these additives, invest in a good set of wiper blades. Your local auto parts dealer can get you the right wipers for your vehicle.

One small ding on a windshield can turn into a big problem if it is not corrected as soon as possible. Consider additives that promise to protect against windshield dings that may be caused by loose rocks on the highway.

If you're planning on giving your entire vehicle a good cleaning, you should always wash your windows last. Otherwise, soap residue is likely to end up on your windows after washing your vehicle's body, leaving unsightly marks that can impact your sight lines while driving.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MATERIALS

The trick to finding the right glass-cleaning material that works the best for you is



to experiment. Look for bottles that boast “streak free.” If you have tinted windows, opt for ammonia-free cleaners.

Over time, ammonia can cause the tint film to change colors and become weak.

Use microfiber towels to

wipe down your glass. Set aside a few towels that you will use strictly for windows. Using these towels to dry off a

dirty car will leave the chemicals you used on your vehicle on the glass, undoing your hard work in the end.

Find the Right Detailer

Your car is exposed to many different elements that can leave your exterior and interior a mess. It may be in your best interests to hand over your keys to a professional and let them make over your vehicle.

Whether you use your car or truck for business or personal use, a clean environment is a must. If you're using your vehicle for a delivery or rideshare job, a clean car can ease the mind of your customer. There are several options you should weigh while deciding on a detail service.

CALLING IN THE PROS

Is your vehicle suffering from the hazards of the road? Hot summers can see asphalt kicking up on your trim and creating unsightly black marks. There are products to erase these marks, but a professional detailer uses commercial-grade chemicals for a better clean, not to mention the amount of elbow grease you can save.

Life can be busy. Sometimes you may find yourself ignoring the cleanliness of your vehicle to focus on more pressing issues. Your local professional detailer can take some of the load off your busy schedule and give your vehicle a fresh look. They will focus on both the inside and out of your ride to get it shining like it did the day it came off the lot.

CHOOSING A DETAILER

A study by IBISWorld concluded that the detail market is a \$10 billion-dollar industry. You have many options from

which to choose. One of the best advertisements a detail shop has is word of mouth.

Talk to your friends, check review-based websites and even stop in to your local detail shops to choose the right one for you. Also, be sure to shop around for the best deal. Detail

shops have a lot of competition, so they typically offer attractive prices and may offer specials from time to time.

DETAILER OR DEALER?

Whether you choose your local detail shop or dealership for your professional overhaul

is up to you. Dealerships may have higher overhead expenses than your independent detailer. That means you can likely expect to pay more for a detail at a dealership.

If your vehicle is already scheduled for maintenance at your dealer, it may be convenient

to have them detail it while it's already there. Your independent detailer may have gotten his experience working in the detail department at a dealer, making them a bargain with dealer-level experience. Consider all options to fit your budget and schedule.



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Fall Road Trip Prep

Before traveling to your local hotspot or across the country for a fun fall trip, make sure your vehicle is ready for the open road.

Vehicle repairs can be expensive anywhere, but if you break down miles away from the nearest town, your tow bill is likely to be more than the actual repair. It's important to take proper precautions before leaving home.

Fall marks the beginning of the busy holiday season. Perhaps you are planning a long-distance trip to see family, friends or new places. AAA reported that the number of year-end holiday travelers in 2015 topped 100 million, the largest amount on record. Read on for a few ways to ensure that your vehicle will be in tip-top shape while you're amongst the millions hitting the road.

NECESSARY SERVICE ITEMS ON YOUR VEHICLE

Before leaving on your road trip, there are several parts of your vehicle that you'll want to ensure are in good working order. Inspect your tires for any evidence of uneven wear. It is a good idea to invest in an inexpensive tire depth gauge and air pressure gauge for simple checks.

Your vehicle relies on many different fluids in order to do its job. Make sure your oil change is up to date. During most oil changes, the technician will top off the rest of your necessary fluids to a safe level. Be sure to pay attention to coolant, transmission and brake fluid levels before you leave.

IS ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE WORTH IT?

Unfortunately, the reality of being on a road trip is sometimes being stranded on the highway. If you subscribe to a roadside assistance service, help is just a phone call away.

Most of these services will come to the rescue with numerous perks, including tow reimbursement and tire changes. They can even deliver fuel if you happen to run dry.

HOW TO PLAN FOR ROADSIDE EMERGENCY

Being prepared for trouble on the highway can make you feel less helpless if a situation arises. Having an emergency kit in your vehicle at all times can be critical if things go wrong. Most vehicles come stocked with a spare tire, jack and tire iron in case of a tire emergency. Don't forget to pack extra medications, water a list of emergency contact numbers and first-aid materials in case of an injury.

The Department of Motor Vehicles recommends packing extra fluids — including oil, coolant and brake fluid — as well as triangle reflectors, a simple set of tools and jumper cables.





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Protect Your Car's Carpet

A damaged interior can greatly reduce the value of your vehicle, and your carpet can take the brunt of the abuse. There are several ways to protect it from life's inevitable messes. Muddy feet, young children and spills are just a few hazards that may damage your carpet. Vehicle after-market retailers offer many kinds of protection for your vehicle's carpet.

FLOOR MATS

Many companies offer laser-cut floor mats that are intended to fit your specific vehicle. Using a universal floor mat may provide some protection, but a custom-fit mat will cover practically every inch of your carpet, from door to door and footwell to trunk.

Look for all-weather floor mats. Made of a durable

material and designed with high side walls, they will contain water, mud and other hazards that are bound to make it into your vehicle.

REMOVING STAINS

The key to eradicating any stain is to attack it as soon as possible. This isn't always feasible if you're in a vehicle. Luckily, with a little elbow grease and helpful products,

you can usually take care of it later.

Pick a carpet cleaner that you feel confident will remove your stain. Then find a good brush. (One with soft-bristles will work best.) Apply the solution and allow it to soak into your carpet for about 10 minutes before working your brush in a circular motion. Allowing the cleaner to soak will help break down the stain

and make brushing it out much easier.

AVOIDING STAINS

While it's not always possible to avoid stains, there are several different ways to prevent them.

If you have small children, it's a good idea to ban eating or drinking on short rides. If snacks and drinks are required for longer rides, buy

spill-proof cups. These containers are good at preventing spills that may wind up in your carpet.

Be aware of the weather conditions. If you're expecting rain, plan to park in areas that avoid having to get your shoes wet or muddy. With some ground rules and a little preparation, you can ensure your carpet stays in great shape.

Touch Up Your Paint Job

You have likely incurred one or several scratches or dings on your vehicle. Imperfections come with daily driving and are oftentimes unavoidable. An overloaded semi-truck or trailer can chew up the highway and spit out fragments that eat up your paint job if you're following too closely.

Luckily, there are many different ways to fix up the inevitable flaws to your vehicle's paint job. There are a few different factors to consider before deciding how to go about repairing your dings and scratches.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLOR

Touch-up paint is your best friend if you only have small scratches or dings to correct. A bottle of touch-up paint is relatively inexpensive and can be applied at home. Before purchasing a bottle of paint, it is crucial to find the correct paint code for your vehicle.

Look for this code on the tag located in the door jamb. This will tell your dealer or local parts store which paint you need. Even a plain white car will have a unique blend of colors (and code) to obtain the exact hue of white. Buying the paint from the dealer will ensure the best match.

GETTING HELP FROM A PROFESSIONAL

Your dealership or local body shop has likely seen the exact kind of damage you are experiencing with your paint job. If the damage seems too overwhelming to fix yourself, take it to a local professional.



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There, they can recommend the best remedy for your problem.

It may cost a little more than a do-it-yourself job, but the end result will be more than worth the frustration and special tools you may

need to attain your vehicle's original perfection.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT STYLE OF PAINT

Chances are, if you're driving a car that was manufactured since 1985, your vehicle

uses a clear coat. A clear coat works as a protective layer to the initial coat of color.

It is a UV protector and makes it easier to temporarily repair individual areas of a vehicle's body.

If you're restoring a classic

and want to keep it original, go with a single-stage paint. A single-stage paint is generally easier to permanently repair because you can usually correct heavily damaged areas without painting the entire affected piece of the body.

To Wax or Not To Wax?

Waxing your vehicle not only gives it a “like new” shine but also will protect your paint job. While it might be monotonous, waxing is an important part of your vehicle’s cosmetic maintenance. Today’s vehicles use a clear coat to protect the original paint job. Think of wax as an extra layer of clear coat that you are able to apply yourself. It’s a good idea to wax, because if the initial clear coat fails, your paint has no protection.

BENEFITS OF WAXING

A quality wax job leaves your vehicle shining and gives it an attractive appearance. The shine is caused by the wax reflecting the sunlight. This gives it that showroom shine and also reduces sun damage to your paint.

Using wax regularly keeps dirt from sticking to the surface of your vehicle, making it easier to clean and less likely to obtain scratches left from dirt.

BEST WAX FOR YOU

When spray wax hit the market several years ago, car enthusiasts and professionals didn’t take it seriously. However, today’s spray wax is comparable to most traditional waxes that have been used for decades.

You are likely to get the similar results from either type of wax. The traditional wax requires more time but may help you catch small problem spots that you would miss by using a quick spray.

HOW AND WHEN TO WAX

When it comes to how often to wax your vehicle, many experts recommend doing it as the seasons change. A fresh coat of wax right before the temperature begins to rise will add a fresh level of protection against the sun’s UV rays. Also,



applying wax right before winter to protect from snow and salt on the roads is a smart preventive practice.

Waxing will be less effective

if not done properly. Be sure to thoroughly wash and dry your vehicle prior to waxing. Also, choose a shady spot, as sunlight may cause the wax to dry

instantly. Evenly apply the wax with the included applicator in small circular motions. Refer to your product’s directions on how long the wax should sit.

Finally, wipe off any residue with a microfiber towel. You now have a greater level of protection and an attractive shine.

Your Vehicle's Tires

Your tires do more than perpetuate your vehicle's motion. Did you know that having proper air pressure in your tires can benefit your fuel economy and elongate your tire's lifespan? According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, proper tire maintenance can extend the life of your tires by 4,700 miles. Here are some tips that can help.

HOW TO PROPERLY MAINTAIN TIRES

Tires should be rotated every 5,000 to 8,000 miles. Failing to rotate your tires properly means risking uneven wear. This will ultimately shorten the lifespan of your tires.

Many of today's vehicles feature a tire pressure monitoring system. An indicator light will illuminate on your instrument cluster when a tire drops significantly below its recommended air pressure. If your vehicle is not equipped with these monitoring sensors, you can purchase an inexpensive tire gauge to regularly check your tire pressure manually. Just consult your owner's manual or the inside of your door-jamb to find your vehicle's proper tire psi.

TIME TO REPLACE YOUR TIRES?

You know your tires are getting old, but how can you know when you need a replacement set? The most important part of tire life is its tread. You can use a simple, inexpensive tool called a tire depth gauge to determine if your tires' best days are behind them. NHTSA recommends replacing tires once the tread is worn to 2/32 of an



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inch.

Your local dealership or tire shop can tell you when you're due for a new set. Rather than just following the unique code that is on the sidewall of your tire, get a professional's word on which tires are

meant for your vehicle. Don't be afraid to shop around for the best deal, either. Sometimes you can score a buy three, get one free deal.

NITROGEN OR AIR?

Is your tire's valve-stem cap

green? That means it was originally filled almost entirely with nitrogen rather than the standard mixture of nitrogen and oxygen. A study administered by NHTSA shows that tires filled with nitrogen were more likely to

pass a road hazard test than a traditionally filled tire. Nitrogen also is better at holding pressure in drastic temperature changes.

Consult with your local tire shop to see if nitrogen is right for your tires.