

A MIRACLE DETAILING

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Boynton Beach, Fl

Two Bucket Wash Method

You've spent good money on your vehicle, now the question arises, "How do I take care of it?" Proper washing is one of the most overlooked and misunderstood areas and sadly improper washing damages and dulls your vehicle's finish.

If you look at the vehicles in the parking lot around you in direct sunlight you will notice many of the vehicles have a scratched surface. These microscopic scratches seem to radiate outward in a "spider-web" effect from a central light source like the reflection of the sun. Many of the swirl marks are the result of improper washing and drying techniques. They are caused when grit is abraded against the paint's surface.

Much has been written on how to properly maintain a vehicles appearance and while most of these tips certainly aren't new, perhaps they may help you think about things in a different light.

Vehicle enthusiasts range from those who religiously wash or quick detail their vehicles daily, to those who love caring for their vehicle but only get the chance to wash them weekly or bi-weekly. Both categories of enthusiasts cringe at the very thought of taking their car or truck to a car wash, AKA "tunnel-o-swirls". Here are some ideas and tips that will help you maintain your vehicles appearance and teach you ways to avoid, or at least minimize creating swirl marks. Remember: Quality products create quality results.

Car Wash Shampoo

Car wash shampoos have come a long way since their introduction and they are still evolving. There was a time when we all just grabbed dish washing soap but those days are long gone. Dish washing soap is designed to eat away grease and food! The same attributes that break down the grease on dishes will strip your car wax and dry out your plastic moldings and rubber seals!

High quality car wash shampoos will clean a car's surface, enhance the gloss and leave the car wax or paint sealant intact to protect your paint. Some of the factors that establish a great car wash shampoo are foaming ability, lubricity, pH balance, concentration, gentleness and even gloss enhancers. High end car wash shampoos tend to cost more per ounce but they are also more concentrated so if you do the math, you may find that you are actually getting a better deal with a premium car wash shampoo.

Generic car wash shampoos lack many of the attributes of the higher quality car wash shampoos. You will also find that the cost of the bottle of car wash shampoo does not necessarily mean it is less expensive.

Which shampoo will work best for you? It is often advisable to stick with the same brand as your wax, sealant or coating. If your paint is protected with Zaino Z-2 then use Z-7 Show Car Wash. If your paint is protected with Blackfire AFPP then use BFWD Conditioning shampoo. If the paint is coated with a Cquartz coating then Reset is a good choice etc.

Car Wash Mitts



Wash mitts can be microfiber style (both short nap and the longer fuzzy monster looking type), sponges, synthetic and genuine sheepskin. The Merino Wool Sheepskin Wash Mitt is a great choice: They are soft, hold lots of water and car wash shampoo and they rinse cleanly. Natural Sea Sponges are some of the softest material known to man and hold a large volume of water and soap solution. You want to avoid shop rags, old t-shirts, and beach towels as the nap, or thickness of these items is so small that you can easily exert too much force onto the wash surface and inadvertently push surface dirt around instilling “washing swirls.” Also, these wash “rags” do not release trapped dirt as easily. The thicker mitts offer room for dirt to hide that is away from your car until your mitt is rinsed.

Car Wash Buckets

I recommend two (or even three if you want a separate bucket for the wheels) white five gallon buckets for swirl free washing, one of the greatest ideas to come along is the two bucket method of car washing. As the name implies you use two separate buckets to wash your car. One bucket holds the soapy car wash solution and the other holds clean, clear rinse water so you can rinse your mitt after each pass over your car. This keeps those dirt particles you just picked up on the surface from going back into the clean car wash solution and being picked up again by the wash mitt.



This brings us to the next topic....Grit Guard® Inserts. If you aren't using them...you should be!!! The Grit Guard® Inserts are a round plastic insert grate that sits on the bottom of your bucket suspended from the bottom by four lateral fins. Dirt from your wash mitt drops to the bottom of the bucket and is kept at the bottom of the bucket, ensuring that your wash mitt doesn't pick up the dirt you just washed off of the car. When you finish washing your car and lift the Grit Guard® Insert up and you will see how well it works. The Grit Guard® Insert should be used in both the wash and rinse buckets for optimum protection against instilling swirl marks. The Grit Guard Washboard works in conjunction with the Grit Guard Insert in your wash bucket to separate the grit from the mitt!



Hose Nozzles

Yes, even your hose nozzle is an important part of your car wash procedure. There is nothing like trying to wash your car with an inadequate or leaky hose nozzle. I like a High Flow Fireman's Nozzle. It offers a wide range of spray patterns as well as the very important open flow. The open flow option is especially important when rinsing your car to get the water to sheet off instead of beading up which will cut down on drying time and the possibility of water spots.



Drying Towels



I prefer the ultra-soft extra thick premium microfiber drying towel material. It achieves maximum water absorption, leaves a streak free finish and avoids scratches even on soft delicate paints.

Microfiber waffle weave drying towels are very soft, safe and effective. The waffle weave act like little pockets and absorb tons of water and when used properly used are extremely gentle on your vehicles surface.

It generally takes only two towels to dry vehicle to ensure a spot and streak free finish. The first towel picks up the majority of water and the second towel picks up any residual moisture ensuring a streak free finish. Another benefit is that you just wash them with my other microfiber detailing towels so that each time you go to wash your car your microfiber drying towel is clean and fresh with no chance of dirt from the last car wash.

Keep in mind that just like other products, there is a difference in quality when it comes to microfiber drying towels, they are not all the same so be sure to use only high quality.

Now that we've discussed the tools for the job, let's just give you a rundown of how to wash your car in a manner that gets it clean and reduces the chances of your putting swirls into the paint.

- Always wash your car in the shade! This will keep your car wash shampoo solution from drying on the car before it is rinsed off. If at all possible, it is best to wash your car on a relatively calm day as even a slight breeze can put particles of dirt in the air. These dust particles are attracted to the wash/rinse water on your vehicle and act like sandpaper when rubbed between the drying towel and vehicle surface. The breeze will also tend to dry your car for you and this can cause streaks and water spots.
- Use two buckets with a Grit Guard® Insert in each bucket. One is for your shampoo solution and the other is clean rinse water for your wash mitt.

- Fill a 5-gallon bucket 2/3 full with cool water. Add recommended amount of shampoo to the water. Using a stiff jet of water, fill the bucket to fully activate suds. Fill the second bucket with clean, water for rinsing your wash mitt.
- Thoroughly rinse the vehicle's surface to remove the loose dirt and grime before you begin your car wash procedure.
- Only use high quality car shampoos and wash mitts.
- When washing your vehicle remember to always go from high to low, never the opposite. Generally the dirtiest parts of your vehicle are those parts closest to the ground. Wheel wells, rocker panels and bumpers tend to have the largest accumulation of grime and you don't want to bring that junk back onto the paint surface and risk scratching it.
- Load up your wash mitt with your car wash solution and wring it out over the wash surface. This acts like a "pre-soak" and helps loosen surface gunk. It also adds more sudsy water to the surface more lubricity to help safely wash the grime away without scratching.
- Keep your wash areas small and rinse your wash mitt frequently in the second clear rinse water bucket.
- Wash in straight, overlapping lines as opposed to circles and remember to be gentle with the wash mitt on the first pass. This first pass will pick up the majority of the dirt, and loosens the remaining dirt for pick up on the second pass.
- Rinse your vehicle by opening up your hose to the open flow setting or by removing the nozzle let the water run or sheet over the surface instead of spraying. This helps in two ways. First, generally when water has "sheeted" off of a surface it tends to leave less residual droplets behind. This means less to drying time. Second, since there is less water to pick up, there is less chance of you leaving water behind to "spot" the vehicle.
- When you dry your car, use only high quality microfiber waffle weave drying towels and wring out often. Gently dry the surface without much pressure. You don't need to rub the surface...you're just picking up the bulk of the water! Once you have picked up the bulk of the water, and the first towel is saturated, use the second towel to lightly pick up any remaining streaks or droplets.
- Lastly, if your wax or sealant is still in good shape, go over the vehicle with a quick detail spray and a plush Microfiber Buffing Towel to restore a radiance and slickness to the paint. This last step will give your vehicle that "just detailed" look by enhancing gloss and will also remove any missed drips, water spots or streaks that showed up when you weren't looking.

Keep in mind the above is a maintenance wash, not a detail prep wash (MUCH more in-depth) this will help keep your vehicle clean and virtually scratch free between details. Feel free to ask any questions!