



PRINTABLE CAR EXTERIOR CARE CHECKLIST

The Safe At-Home Car Exterior Care Routine

Use this practical checklist to clean, dry and protect your car's exterior while keeping tools separated and friction under control. Print it, work from top to bottom, and stop when a defect needs more than gentle maintenance.

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The four rules to keep in mind

Rinse first to remove loose grit before touching the paint.

Use separate tools for wheels, tires, paint, glass and trim.

Wash from the roof downward and dry promptly with clean microfiber towels.

Cleaning and protection can reduce contamination and improve future washing, but they do not repair deep paint damage.

Before you start



Choose a suitable washing area

Prepare the hose or another way to pre-rinse and rinse the vehicle.



Set up two wash buckets

Use one for automotive shampoo and one for rinsing the wash mitt; grit guards can be used if available.



Separate your tools by surface

Keep paint towels and mitts apart from wheel and tire brushes.



Prepare a pH-balanced automotive shampoo

Do not use dish soap as a regular car shampoo.



Gather clean microfiber towels

Use separate towels for paint, glass, wheels and tires.



Check product compatibility

Verify suitability for clear coat, matte or satin finishes, chrome, plastic, wraps and wheel coatings.



INFOGRAPHIC *Keep tools separated for paint, wheels, tires, glass and exterior trim.*

The low-friction washing sequence



1 Pre-rinse the exterior

Rinse away loose dirt and grit before making contact with the paint. A pressure washer may be used to remove loose grit when operated from a safe distance.

2 Start at the top

Wash the roof first, then work downward. Use a soft wash mitt and avoid carrying dirt from lower, dirtier areas onto cleaner panels.

3 Rinse the mitt regularly

Use the rinse bucket to release contamination before loading the mitt with shampoo again.

4 Clean wheels and tires with dedicated tools

Keep wheel brushes and tire products away from painted panels to prevent cross-contamination.

5 Rinse thoroughly

Remove shampoo and loosened contamination from all exterior surfaces.

6 Dry promptly and gently

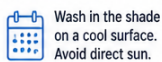
Use clean, absorbent microfiber towels or a suitable air blower. Reduce standing water to help limit mineral spotting and water marks.

THE SAFE WAY TO WASH YOUR CAR AT HOME

Follow these 5 steps to clean your car safely and protect its finish.



PRO TIPS FOR BEST RESULTS



Wash in the shade on a cool surface. Avoid direct sun.



Use the two-bucket method: one for soapy water, one for rinsing.



Rinse your wash mitt frequently to prevent scratches.



Use products made for automotive use and follow label instructions.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS



Never wash a dirty car dry.



Avoid household dish soaps.



Don't use abrasive tools.



Regular washing protects your paint and maintains value.

A little care goes a long way—keep your car clean, shiny, and looking its best!

PROCESS DIAGRAM Follow the safe order: pre-rinse, gentle wash, thorough rinse and careful drying.

After washing: contamination and finish check

Inspect bird droppings, insects and tree sap

Address bonded contamination with suitable automotive products rather than increasing scrubbing pressure.

Check marks that remain after gentle cleaning

They may be bonded contamination, mineral etching, oxidation or a clear-coat defect.

Do not keep escalating product strength or pressure

Aggressive correction can remove paint or clear coat when the finish condition is unknown.

- Inspect deep scratches and exposed metal**
These require an assessment beyond routine home washing.
- Look for peeling clear coat or severe oxidation**
Routine cleaning cannot repair failing clear coat or severe finish deterioration.

Choose protection after the surface is clean and dry

Option	Best used as	Important reminder
Spray wax	A temporary protective layer after cleaning	Apply only to clean, dry paint and follow the product's compatibility guidance.
Paint sealant	Temporary paint protection that can make future washing easier	It protects the finish; it does not repair scratches or clear-coat failure.
Ceramic spray	A temporary protection option for clean, dry paint	Check compatibility with the vehicle's finish and any existing coating.

CAR PAINT PROTECTION

CHOOSE THE RIGHT OPTION FOR YOUR VEHICLE

Paint protection products help shield your vehicle's finish from environmental contaminants, UV rays, and everyday wear. Here's how the popular options compare.

1

SPRAY WAX





Quick application



Accessible maintenance protection

2

PAINT SEALANT





Useful when longer-lasting protection is desired



Follow stated product conditions

3

CERAMIC SPRAY





Maintenance protection



Results depend strongly on preparation



No option repairs deep scratches or failing clear coat



Do not apply over loose dirt



Durability claims are not universal guarantees



BEST RESULTS: Always wash your vehicle thoroughly and ensure the surface is clean and dry before application.



A little care today keeps your finish looking its best.

COMPARISON DIAGRAM The main at-home protection choices: spray wax, paint sealant and ceramic spray.

! Know when to stop

If gentle cleaning does not improve a defect, stop increasing pressure or product strength. Deep scratches, exposed metal, peeling clear coat and severe oxidation need professional assessment rather than increasingly aggressive home correction.

Home maintenance helps control contamination and add temporary protection; it does not replace professional paint repair or correction when the finish is seriously damaged.

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