Detailing @ Garage Time - October 2025

At the October 2025 Garage Time session, we discussed products for car cleaning and detailing. Members shared products they use to keep their rides looking the best. Thanks to all of you who provided input at the session and later.

We put this list together based on that input and grouped them. Some products will have more detail and others are just listed.

As with any product, we recommend that you look at the manufacturer's online product descriptions, read the directions (!) to see how the product should be used and try it on an inconspicuous area first.

Exterior - Some products that members have used and recommend

Meguiar's ScratchX

Fine scratch and blemish remover.

California Duster

A California Duster works by using a special baked-in wax on its cotton strands to lift and trap dust, pollen, and other light debris from a vehicle's surface.

CMX Surface Prep

Proper surface prep before applying any ceramic coating, sealant or wax. Has biodegradable grease-cutting chemicals to dissolve oils and lift surface-clinging contaminants.

CLX 3D Ceramic Matte Tire Protection

Non-glossy, it provides a clean natural look.

Dual-Action Buffer

Tire Shine

Exterior - Clay Bar

Ceramic Sealer

These work well to refresh the finish on a car that alread have a ceramic coating.

Synthetic Clay Bar

Can be used instead of a real clay bar. Lasts up to 25 applications and can be cleaned. Easier to handle and use than a clay bar.

Chemical Guys Clay Luber

Used with a natural or synthetic clay bar to keep the surface moist when treating the paint.

Interior - Some products that members have used and recommend

Ammo Lather Interior Cleanser

I have found it works the best of the half dozen or so leather cleaners I have tried.

Ammo Silque leather balm

This makes your leather interior look great and lasts a long time

Whiteboard eraser or handled inside window brush

Handy for cleaning inside car windows to remove film and "gas-out" residue.

Battery-powered vacuum and attachments

Provides portability and avoids having to run an extension cord to clean the trunk or interior. Major electric tool brands have something similar. Accessories are easily purchased on Amazon.

Gummi Pflege Stift Rubber Care Stick

Gummi Pflege is a special rubber treatment that conditions rubber weather seals on car doors, windows and trunks reducing squeaks, rattles, wind noise and potential water leaks. while protecting them against the effects of heat and UV rays.

California Dash Duster

A California Duster works by using a special baked-in wax on its cotton strands to lift and trap dust, pollen, and other light debris from a vehicle's surface. The duster's design lifts dust instead of pushing it around, and the wax causes the dust to bond with the strands, preventing it from scratching the paint.

Griots Garage PFM Crinkle Glass Cloths

These will clean glass streak-free with a woven microfiber.

Seat Doctors leather and vinyl dye

They will match the color on a chart or to your VIN number. I have used it for touch ups on wear spots.

Engine - Some products that members have used and recommend

Lemon Pledge

Provides a "natural" look to hoses and rubber parts. After using, place the cloth under the front seat to provide a lemon scent in the car.

SD-20 grease remover

This is an easy-to-use spray-on wipe-off product for removing grease or oil. Easier than using a liquid, especially on larger surfaces.

Washing and Drying - Some products that members have used and recommend

Bucket grill

This grill fits into the bottom of the bucket and keeps from dirt and grit from getting on your sponge as you rinse it. Avoids potential for scratching the paint.

Metro-Vac Dryer

Does a great job of drying a car or motorcycle. Provides heated air at a strong velocity to dry the vehicle and blow out water under trim. Has a long power cord, long hose, several attachments and two heat settings.

Battery-powered vacuum and attachments

Provides portability and avoids having to run an extension cord to clean the trunk or interior.

Major electric tool brands have something similar. Accessories are easily purchased on Amazon.

Microfiber Towels

Absorbent. When washing, let air-dry. as heat can. break down the fibers, it is easier on the fabric.

Foam Cannon

Disrtibutes a layer of soap over the entire car. Some attach to a prreessure washerr while others use a garder hose.

Macguiar's Hybred Ceramic Detailer

Proper surface prep before applying any ceramic coating, sealant or wax for adhesion and a lasting bond.

p12s Total Auto Wash

A German product available on Amazon; it is a powerful automotive cleaning product that offers surface safety.

Ammo Titan 12 degreaser

Works on any oil stains, it is a strong, safe degreaser that can be used on paint, plastic trim, engine bays, interiors with oil based stains, wheels, and undercarriages.

Turtlewax Hyper Foam Wash and wax

Technique Tip

Many detailers separate the areas being washed into normal and rough areas. The painted surfaces of the car are the normal areas and tires, the engine, wheel wells and and so on are designated as the rough areas. They then use only certain wash mits or sponges for each area, keeping scratch-generating dirt and grime away from sensitive areas.

Other products that members have used and recommend

Bar Keeper's Friend

Good for remove stains, rust, tarnish, mineral deposits, and more from various surfaces. Can be used on a wide range of surfaces, including stainless steel, porcelain, ceramic, and glass without causing damage.

Plastic razor blades

Less likely to scratch than metal blades. Work well on metal surfaces, plastic and glass.

Blue Job metal polish for motorcycle exhaust pipes

The best product that I have found to remove the "bluing" from motorcycle exhaust pipes. I apply it with a small cotton pad on a drill or rotary tool.

Rust Prevention Magic

Good treatment for bare metal as it provides protection from rusting. Parts need to be heated, then treated and let to cool.

Chemtronics Electro Wash

It will clean electrical devices and will degrease anything with no residue or harm to plastics.

Dioxit It

For electrical metal to metal contacts and grounds to keep out any corrosion.

Technique Tip - Swirl Reduction

One thing that I do is always wash, wax, dry the car, and remove these products with strokes parallel to the ground on the sides, and front to back on the top surfaces. I never swirl on a product or take it off that way. When you see swirls or lines in the paint, it is due to light hitting the scratches and reflecting. By moving in one direction, you have all of the scratches or lines going in the same direction, and they are less visible in the light. I picked up the parallel wash/wax tip many years ago from a concours Corvette owner.

Technique Tip - Using cleaning compounds

When using cleaning or polishing compounds, always start with the least agressive first so if that does not accomplish your goal, you cann. always move up to a more. agressive product. That can save work from scratches if using a stronger product first.