

Finish Care Do's and Don'ts

June '07

Scott Langley (2 WINDY)

While taking care of your Miata's finish isn't rocket science, there are plenty of tips and tricks to make the process easier, safer, quicker and even more enjoyable. With that in mind, this month's article is designed to give you some "quick hits" for your Sunday afternoon wash therapy. As in many things, there is always more than one way to do something and goodness knows there are plenty of products out there to use. Let me know if you have some good tips, techniques or products to recommend!

The Do's:

- Do use microfiber drying towels, they really do work!
- Do wash, polish and wax in the shade, never on hot paint
- Do use a car wash mitt, not a washcloth... it has more area to hold dirt away from the paint
- Do use a car wash soap, not dish soap... unless you want to strip the wax off the car!
- Do wash your mitts and towels in the laundry
- Do raise the barndoors on an NA to clean the headlights!
- Do rinse your mitt frequently, especially if the car is really dirty
- Do put an extra coat of wax on the nose and lower part of car
- Do use a Bug & Tar remover or WD-40 to easily remove tar
- Do remember to wipe your wipers with the wash mitt
- Do wash the dirtiest parts of the car last
- Do wash your wheels last, or wash them first and change the water in the bucket
- Do wipe down the windows inside/out with the microfiber drying towel after drying the car
- Do get the car squeaky clean before polishing/waxing
- Do use a claybar to remove contaminants, tree sap, paint overspray, etc.
- Do use applicators designed for applying polishes/waxes (sponge or microfiber)
- Do put your towels & applicators through the laundry, don't reuse dirty towels
- Do use a polish or cleaner wax to remove oxidation before applying your last-step wax
- Do lightly spritz some water on the paint if dried polish or wax is hard to remove
- Do lightly spritz some water on your wax applicator before applying wax to help get a thin layer
- Do apply waxes in light, thin coats... any more is just wasting product
- Do use microfiber or 100% cotton towels. 100% cotton includes all stitching and borders
- Do turn your towel frequently when removing polish/wax and change towels when needed

The Don'ts:

- Don't use a dirty bucket or tools
- Don't use wheel cleaner on a hot wheel
- Don't wash the drying towels with the towels you use to remove wax
- Don't forget to wash or wipe down the door jambs and the bottom of the hood & trunk
- Don't forget to wash under the fuel filler door
- Don't let the car dry on it's own, it'll spot (not an issue if you're polishing/waxing afterwards)
- Don't use a wash, mitt, towel, wax applicator after it's been dropped on the ground!
- Don't get polish/wax on plastic & rubber trim, some products will stain

I saw a quote where someone said, "Find a product you like and use it often". That really applies to taking care of your car. What brand of wax or type of towel you use isn't nearly as important as using them often and doing it right. So, get out there and make that Miata sparkle! Getting it dirty is only half the fun!

Disclaimer: the ideas and instructions stated above are not entirely original and are provided for your information and convenience. Use at your own risk. Your results may vary. Contents may settle during shipment. Not responsible for accidents. Always read the fine print! Trademarks and logos are the property of their respective owners. :O)