

# Detailing Tips

From

## Mark's Clean Car Service

1. Lights. I have seen some guys try to detail cars in their garage where the lights are horrible. Don't be this guy! Go to Home Depot and fix the problem before you go any further. If you can't see it, you can't detail it!

2. Time. Plan your time efficiently. If you have two weekends before the car show and you have the whole car to detail, plan on spending enough time to address the complete picture. Consider the fact that out of the 4 days you have to get ready for the show, your kids might have a baseball game (or two) and your presence is mandatory at a wedding 4:00 on Saturday. Leaving you with not much time to detail your car. Just be aware of your time constraints. Time yourself on tasks, two hours max on the motor, two hours max on the door jams, ect. Make sure that you don't have to rush through the process. This is your time; make it work for you.

3. Tools and Detail Brushes. All sizes and shapes are necessary. Use a detail brush around the rubber and cracks. Q-tips are always handy. The little wooden stir sticks from Starbucks work well with a towel wrapped around them for cleaning air conditioning vents and tight spots. The right tools for the job can be found in many places and from numerous sources.

4. Towels. Micro-fiber towels work the best for me and are well worth the investment. Terry cloth towels work well also, but should be used mainly for wheels, tires and motor stuff. Clean towels are a must! I can't emphasize this enough! Don't use the

old beach towel that has been in the garage for sixteen years. Even when you buy new towels, wash them first.

5. A score sheet. A score sheet is a handy item to have around when preparing for a car show. You can read all the things the judges are going to look at and evaluate. After you get done waxing your car you can refer to the score sheet and judge your car yourself. This will give you a good idea if you have missed anything.

6. Door Jams. The door jams can take a lot of time. The in-between spaces including the bottom of the door, all latch mechanisms and hinges will take an extraordinary amount of time. This is an area that the judges pay special attention to and so should you.

7. Fender wells, wheels and tires. A jack is handy for these jobs, either to take the wheels off or just to raise the car to make for easier access as you work on your car. Use a light to examine the backside of the tires and the fender wells. This will help immensely.

8. Underside and Suspension. You can start by going to the self-serve car wash and spraying the complete undercarriage and removing the unwanted build up. You can spend a lot of time getting this part right. This is extreme detailing and will require your attention to make your car show worthy. This step may not be necessary if you're competing at an entry-level stage.

9. Spend the extra time to double-check your work. Keep in mind this is a work in progress. Constant improvement will bring great rewards.

10. Be comfortable. Get yourself a roller seat! Once you start using one for detailing, you won't be able to live without it.

11. Clean your work area. With a clean garage you will turn out better work. If your floor is dirty, and a gust of wind blows through the garage and blows all the dust on your almost completed work, you just know how happy you'll be. Spend some extra time before start your detail program and clean up your work area.

12. Wax your car. Rub the wax and polish in good. It makes a difference if you spend more time rubbing in one good coat of wax apposed to two coats of wax applied quickly.

13. Detailing is constant improvement. Things are rarely 100% in the automotive world. Strive for perfection. It will take time and effort.

14. Start and complete one thing at a time. A lot of people jump from one thing to another and never finish anything. If you start with the painted surfaces, apply your five coats of polish and wax and complete the task. Now move on to the next thing. This process works for me.

15. Smile and have fun. This is a hobby! The financial rewards are very few and far between. Enjoy yourself and have fun. The challenge of constantly improving your car and the rewards of success will make all the extra effort worthwhile.

Until next time,  
Wax on,  
Mark