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This month I'm writing about detailing the interior of your car. The interior of your daily driver takes a lot of abuse. The wear and tear of just getting in and out of your car can scratch and damage the driver's seat, not to mention the dirty shoes scuffing the door panels and floor mats. Sometimes your interior tends to get overlooked for the simple reason; that when you finally get a free Saturday to detail your car, you just spent too much time detailing the outside and you never get around to cleaning the inside properly. Most of the time it's vacuum and a promise to get back to that chore later. Maybe the next time you're planning on doing some detail work, reverse the process, start with the inside and work out. I have to tell you that this process will take some time and there are a few problems that can arise, so be careful. If you're ready to go to work, with a little luck and elbow grease, your interior will look like new.

You will need a bucket, a brush, (I use one about the size of my hand) interior shampoo, vacuum, and some clean towels to start. Begin by vacuuming the inside completely and removing the floor mats. Fill your bucket with warm water, dip your brush into the bucket and shake off the excess water. I like to begin by scrubbing the carpets with water; by doing this you can see if there is any soap residue left behind from the last detail. You would be surprised how many carpets I've cleaned, that there is so much soap remaining; you don't even need to add any. Use only enough cleaner to do the job; more is not necessarily better. I do the carpets and floor mats first, because they take the longest to dry.

Now it's time for the door panels and seats. When cleaning the door panels, start from the bottom and work up. This will help eliminate streaks that could happen if you start at the top. The same thing goes for the seats, when cleaning your seats start with the bottom cushion and then do the seatbacks. Try to clean the whole seat at once and then dry them completely. By cleaning

leather upholstery first with water you will eliminate the possibility of streaking and blotching when you apply the leather cleaner. Be extremely careful, pay extra attention when scrubbing. Some leather seats won't handle vigorous cleaning. Often it's better to use a terry cloth towel soaked in a bucket containing a mixture of interior cleaner diluted with water. Follow the directions on the product for the proper ratio. Soak a towel, wring out the excess and wipe down the seats. This is a lot safer than using a scrub brush. Use a clean terry cloth towel to wipe dry.

Now that I've explained how the gentle process works, your seats may benefit from using a scrub brush for cleaning. Use your bucket of warm water and a bottle of interior cleaner. Remember that an initial once over with water before the addition of the cleaner will prevent blotching and streaking. Instead of spraying your cleaner right on the seat, I like to spray it on the brush and then scrub the seat. Do one surface at a time, clean and dry each section as you go. Work your way around the entire interior. Watch out for excess spray that may land on a completed panel or seat. If this happens, wipe it off immediately. Use a clean, lint free towel to dry.

Now it's time for some protection. With your leather interior it is very important to use a product like "Lexol", "Hide Food" or any high quality product to keep your leather in excellent condition. Sometimes I use my hands to rub on the product. This allows you to massage the leather, cover all surfaces, and it's not too bad for your hands either. Use a towel to wipe off any extra conditioner, polishing the leather as you go. If you have a vinyl interior you may want to use an "Armor All" style product or "Pledge". At a later date I will discuss the pros and cons about using products like these.

To complete your interior, use a detail brush to get into the air conditioning vents and all the nooks and crannies. Don't forget your sun visors and mirrors.

Good luck, wax on.