

It is inevitable that if you drive your car you will unfortunately get some chips and scratches in the surface of your paint. No one likes them, but it is a reality of road wear and tear. Touching up chips and scratches is well within the abilities of most “do it your self” car enthusiasts. I will take you through the process and provide the information you will need to do a professional repair job.

You will need a few things to get this job done properly. Most of these things you can pick up at your local auto supply:

1. Paint- go to the dealer and get the EXACT color to match your paint. “Black” is not just “Black”.
2. Small #2 paint brush
3. Tooth picks
4. Q-tips
5. Wax and Grease Remover
6. Meguiar's Unigrit Sanding Block or 3M 2000 grit sandpaper
7. Compound, Polish & Wax

After assembling these items you can begin by washing your car. Pay extra attention to the areas that you intend to paint. Dry off your car. Make sure that the paint is completely dry; any moisture left in the paint will create problems as you move on. It's not a bad idea to let the car dry overnight.

You are now ready to start the touch-up treatment. Use a wax and grease remover along with a Q-tip to clean all the chips and scratches. You may need to clean these chips a couple times to make sure that all the wax and residue embedded in these blemishes is removed. Most of the time this works great, but if there is rust or loose flaking paint around the scratch, it will need to be removed. A pencil with a new eraser tipped with sandpaper will create your sanding tool. Simply take a hole punch and punch out a bit of your 2000 grit sandpaper and glue

it to the tip of the eraser. This tool will do the trick to eliminate rust and loose paint. Dip the sanding pencil in water before you begin. Keep the chipped area wet while sanding. Try to keep the area you work on as small as possible. Rotate the sanding pencil over the chip about 10 times and this should remove any unwanted particles. Clean the chip with a Wax and Grease Remover and dry with a clean terrycloth towel.

It's time to start the touch-up itself. I start by using the tip of a toothpick. The paint flows off at the perfect rate for most small nicks. If the stone chip is sizable, you might want to use a small brush. Touch up bottles include a brush, but beware these brushes usually too big to do a proper job. The most important step of the entire job (aside from purchasing the correct color) is to paint only the inside of the chip. You do not want the new paint to overlap the existing paint. You can avoid this by applying several thin layers of paint; don't try to fill the chip in one pass. Make your way around the car touching up all the nicks and scratches with a single thin coat of paint. Wait a couple of hours for the paint to dry and repeat the process. It may take 4-5 coats of paint with the toothpick to fill the scratches to the original thickness of the paint.

Stand back and take a look at your work. Is the surface smooth and the chip is blended to your liking? If so, the job is done and the time has been well spent. Sometimes this is only the first step to a final result. Four to five layers of touch-up can raise the surface of the paint and create a "bump". To get a perfect finish the repairs must be color sanded. This will level the "bump" back the original paint. A final polishing will make the repair virtually impossible to see.

To color sand, use a sanding block by Meguiar's or 3M 2000 grit sandpaper. Keep the surface wet during this process by dipping the sandpaper in water. When sanding use a soft touch,

go slowly and sand lightly until the surface feels smooth. Use your fingertips to feel the paint, if there is a high spot you need to sand a bit more. You will notice scratches from the sanding; use 3M Perfect-It Rubbing Compound to eliminate the marks. Rub in the same direction that you color sanded. A foam applicator pad works best for this step. Follow with a 3M Hand Glaze and polish out any of the remaining scratches. When you are satisfied with the results, apply a coat of your favorite wax to complete your project.

With the rock chips and scratches repaired properly it should be nearly impossible to tell that they ever existed.

Good luck...until next time

Wax on

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