

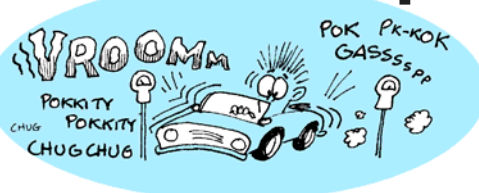
Motor Watch

MotorWatch is an indefatigable protector of the American public's right to have safe defect-free motor vehicles

March/April 2007

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Car Care Tips



Driving down the risk of a breakdown can start with regular transmission cooling and servicing. Here are some smart tips for maintaining tip-top transmissions from the experts at **Automatic Transmission Re-builders Association (ATRA)**:



- 1) Start slowly. Hard accelerations create friction and heat in the transmission.
- 2) Shift smartly. Most of the friction and wear in the transmission occurs during shifts. If you can get a feel for when your transmission is just about to shift, you can ease on the gas a bit at the same time.
- 3) Support the system. Regular service can help your transmission run cooler and last longer.
- 4) Keep cooler. If you travel in extremely high temperature or carry a lot of weight in your car, an auxiliary transmission cooler can add years to your transmission's life. atra.com

A/C system non-use for periods longer than a month can result in destruction of the A/C compressor when the A/C is operated again. This is a result of the oil draining out of the compressor and into the condenser resulting in lack of lubricant when the A/C is operated after a long period of non-use. To prevent this from happening, start the engine and allow it to reach operating temperature. With the engine at idle, switch the A/C on high and allow it to run for at least 30 seconds to get the oil circulating back into the compressor.

Fighting Stains

Keeping a car clean can mean a higher resale value. Cars that are in premium or immaculate condition can bring as much as 50 percent more in resale value.

While many people love and appreciate their cars interior—they haven't an inkling on how to maintain it and keep it clean and stain free. Here are some techniques that will help.

GENERAL INTERIOR CLEANING

It's best to work fast. Stains set with time and heat, making them hard to remove. Some items, like fruit juice and soft drinks, may turn yellow with heat and age.

Quick and thorough drying is the key to ring prevention. Use a hair dryer, heat lamp, or air hose but don't scorch the upholstery! If a ring forms anyway, re-clean the entire panel.

Use small amounts of liquid cleaners; avoid saturating the area. Try to wet only the cover, not the padding underneath. Rub gently from the outside of the stain toward the center. Repeat until it is removed. Finish with a damp cloth dipped in warm water and wring out.

In a pinch, clean spills by squirting the spot with shaving cream to help lift the spill. Rinse with cold water. If the dirty spot is only slightly dirty, you can clean it with cornmeal. Use a stiff brush to work the cornmeal into the rug or seat fabric. Then simply vacuum it out. Rub soiled cotton fabric with an art gum eraser or squares (purchase at arts and crafts or stationary store).

RID INTERIOR ODORS

Wad up sheets of black-and-white newsprint newspapers and put them inside the vehicle to absorb the odor. The black newsprint contains carbon particles which will absorb smells. Also try placing shallow bowls of white vinegar or baking soda around the inside. Keep the car closed up tight for a day to let the carbon, vinegar, or baking soda penetrate the interior.

Another way to remove lingering odors is to sponge the area with a solution of baking soda and water (1 teaspoon to 1 cup). Shaklee Basic-G works well.

INTERIOR & EXTERIOR SPOT CLEANING

Here are cleaning suggestions for general interior and exterior spot cleaning:

Nylon and polyester seats — interior — carpeting> Use mild household cleaners made specifically for this purpose. Dip a soft cloth in the cleaner and wring it out. The \$.99 Wal-Mart Foaming Carpet Cleaner also works great. No need to buy the expensive brand.

Leather Upholstery> Prevent leather from cracking by polishing regularly with a cream made of 1 part vinegar and 2 parts linseed oil. Clean with a damp cloth and saddle soap. Seasonal cleaning is a good idea. Saddle soap works well. Rub a damp washcloth in the saddle soap until you create lather. Shampoo the area one panel at a time. Finish with a cloth dipped into warm, clear water. Be sure to get all the pleats, folds, crevices, and seams.

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(Fighting Stains continued from page 1)

Vinyl upholstery> Scrub it with a soft brush and wipe it off with a clean, damp washcloth. Never oil vinyl as this will make it hard. It's almost impossible to soften again. For cleaning, try sprinkling baking soda on the vinyl or soak a rough, damp cloth with vinegar and scrub. Wash with a mild dish washing detergent. Rinse thoroughly with plain water.

CLEANING STAINS FROM THE INTERIOR

Use the following tips to remove specific stains from nylon, vinyl, cloth, and polyester interiors (leather isn't included). If one type of cleaner isn't available, use the other one(s) suggested.



Alcoholic Beverages> Immediately dilute by sponging with cold water followed by a mix of cold water and glycerin (available at drug stores). Rinse with vinegar for a few seconds if the stain remains. These stains may brown with age. If wine stain remains, rub with concentrated detergent, wait 15 minutes and rinse. Repeat if necessary. Rinse with plenty of warm water.

Ball-Point Pen Ink> Apply slightly warmed glycerin (available from a drug store). Blot frequently with paper towels keeping the stain moist with more glycerin while working. Finish up with cleaning solvent. Other possible cleaners: denatured alcohol and petroleum jelly.

Blood> If still wet, rub off as much as you can at first. Then, take a cloth soaked in cold water and wet the spot. Immediately sponge it off with cold water, wiping as you go. This is to keep it from setting. In two quarts of warm water, mix two tablespoons of dish detergent with 1/4 cup (sudsy -- not regular) ammonia. Use a sponge. Wet the stain, rub gently, and blot with paper towels. Repeat as needed. Rinse it right away with cold water. If stain remains, try hydrogen peroxide or a bleach that is safe for the fabric.

Candle Wax & Chewing Gum> Apollo Chewing Gum Remover (Freezing Type P/N 2492 available at a janitorial supply) quick freezes and embrittles chewing gum, candle wax, acrylic latex paint splatters and other materials for easy removal from all hard surfaces, as well as from carpeting, upholstery and fabrics. Otherwise use a dull knife to scrape off as much as possible. Try to blot as much into a piece of fabric or brown paper bag by pressing a warm iron over the blotting fabric or paper. Pull out the remaining wax using a dry-cleaning solvent. Finish by washing with detergent and rinsing with cool water. Freeze chewing gum with an ice cube and carefully scrape

the gum off using a dull knife. If needed, use some dry cleaning solvent. Sponge the area with water to remove any sugar stain left behind.



Chocolate & Cocoa> First, wipe it up with a napkin or paper towel. Then wipe with soapy water followed by cool water. Remove any grease stains with dry cleaning solvent. If stain remains, sponge area with hydrogen peroxide. Wash again.

Crayon> Remove melted remains with the ice treatment, as with chewing gum. Finish the job with the lipstick-removal procedure that follows.

Coffee, Tea and Deodorants> Sponge area with vinegar. If stain remains, soak with denatured alcohol. Wash with detergent and hot water. Rinse completely.

Cosmetics & Lipstick> Carefully wipe from the outside toward the center with dry cleaning solvent to loosen the stain. Remove any remaining stain with a mild household cleaner rubbing in the detergent until the outline of the stain is gone. Wash with warm water and detergent and bleach, safe for fabric, until the area is clean.

Egg> Scrape with dull knife. Soak with cold water for at least 30 minutes. Remove remaining egg with dry cleaning solvent. Finish with detergent and warm water and rinse completely.

Fruits/fruit drinks> Sponge with cold water to dilute. Soap may set the stain. Start with cool water until all traces of the drink are gone. Then use soapy water followed with a plain water rinse. If the color remains, wash with detergent and bleach that is safe for fabric.



Glue> Try loosening it by saturating the spot with a cloth soaked with vinegar. Consult the container of glue for solvent instructions. Cement glue can be removed by rubbing with cold cream, peanut butter or salad oil. Super glue can be removed using a special solvent designed for this purpose.

Grease or oil> First, use kitty litter or cornmeal as an absorbent. Soak up as much as possible and vacuum the absorbent away. Pre-treat it with detergent or cleaning solvent. Brake cleaner spray (available from auto parts stores) works well too. Because cleaning solvents dissolve the stain and cause it to bleed into unaffected areas, use them sparingly.

Start at the outside and work inward, using plenty of cleaner. Change the cloth often. Always use cleaning solvents in a well-ventilated area. In a pinch, pour salt, talcum or facial powder onto the grease to soak it up. Baby wipes also work well.

Mildew> Pre-treat as soon as possible with detergent. Wash thoroughly. If any stain remains, sponge with lemon juice and salt. Dry in the sun. Wash using hottest water, detergent, bleach safe for fabric. Note: Mildew is very hard to remove! Treat promptly.

Milk, Cream, Ice Cream> Sponge or soak with cold water as soon as possible. Do this for 30 minutes. Wash, using detergent. Remove cream grease stains with dry cleaning solvent. Wash again.



Mustard> It's a hard stain to remove! Allow to dry and then scrape off as much as possible. Sponge with mild detergent.

Nail Polish> Sponge with polish remover or banana oil. Wash. If stain remains, sponge with denatured alcohol to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. Wash again.

NOTE: Some fabrics will react with nail polish remover (acetates and triacetates). First, try the polish remover on an out-of-sight place to see how it reacts. Other solvents: Carburetor cleaner and degreaser, acetone, paint remover or dry cleaning solvent.

Paint> *Water base:* Scrape off paint with dull blade. Wash with detergent and hot water. Rinse with cool water. *Oil base:* Sponge stains with turpentine, cleaning fluid or paint remover. Follow with sponge and hot water. For older stains, sponge with banana oil and then with dry cleaning solvent. Wash again.

Perspiration> Sponge fresh stain with ammonia; old stain with vinegar. Soak with warm water. Rinse. Wash in hot water. If fabric is yellowed, use bleach sparingly. If stain remains, dampen and sprinkle with meat tenderizer or pepsin. Let stand 1 hour. Brush off and wash. For persistent odor, sponge with colorless mouthwash.

Road tar> Carefully scrape off as much as possible. Gently wipe toward the center of the stain with a cleaning solvent sold for removing road tar. In a pinch, mayonnaise or Rain-X works okay.

Rust> Soak in lemon juice and salt or oxalic acid solution (3 tablespoons oxalic acid to 1 pint warm water). A commercial rust remover may be used.

CAUTION: Handle poisonous rust removers carefully. Keep out of the reach of children. Oxalic acid or any rust remover will damage paint.

Skunk spray> Mix a bottle of hydrogen peroxide with two tablespoons of baking soda and a dash of dish soap. Scrub the affected area until the smell is gone, wash the area again with plain soap and water, and then rinse clean. Note: Tomato juice doesn't work.



Soft drinks> Sponge off immediately with cold water and alcohol. Follow up with soapy water and rinse with plain water. Note: Heat and detergent may set the stain.

Urine> Blot up excess moisture with paper towel. Pour club soda on the spot and continue blotting. Lay a towel over the spot and set a heavy object on top to absorb all the moisture. To neutralize rub with a vinegar/water or lemon/water mixture. To deodorize rub with ammonia/water mixture.

White water rings and spots> Dampen a soft cloth with water and put a dab of toothpaste on it. Or apply a paste of salad oil and salt. Let stand briefly. Rinse and blot with a dry cloth.

Vomit> Scrape up as much as possible. Follow with a solution of 1/2 cup of salt to 2 quarts of water. Rinse with plain water. Wash with soap and water, and rinse again with plain water. Deodorize like urine (above).

CARING FOR YOUR CAR'S UPHOLSTERY

Making these habits part of your daily routine can add to the life of your car's interior and increase the resale value of your car.

- Park your car so that it faces a different direction every day. Doing so prevents the sun from repeatedly bleaching the same area of upholstery.
- Keep the sunroof or windows slightly open during hot days. This saves the interior from damage caused by the heat loosening bonding adhesives and cracking vinyl.
- Use a dashboard cover or cardboard shield to protect the interior.
- Vacuum seats, carpets, and interior regularly to prevent dirt, dust, and food crumbs from being ground into the upholstery. Once a spill combines with food, it can be very hard to remove.
- Avoid using pointed vacuum cleaner attachments that can tear the upholstery.
- Spray fabric upholstery and carpets with a good fabric protector to repel stains.

CLEANING STAINS FROM THE EXTERIOR

When working with paint finishes, it is always best to soak the contamination in order to soften it before trying to remove it. Avoid any rubbing or scraping as this will mar the finish. If necessary, use a soft cloth, wadded up nylon sock or soft plastic dish scrubber. Never use a Teflon Scotch-Brite scrubbing pad, as it will scratch the paint or glass.

Bird droppings> Pour Alka-Seltzer on the droppings as soon as possible. After the bubbling stops gently wipe away the dropping and rinse with plenty of water. Note: Droppings are acidic and will damage the paint if not removed right away.

Insects & Bugs> Soak with repeated applications of soapy water (using car wash soap) until softened and can be gently scraped off. Note: Bug guts contain acids which can damage the paint if not removed right away.

Stickers, bumper stickers, and adhesive labels> If the sticker is vinyl or plastic, use a hair dryer an old plastic credit card to lift it, working from an edge. If the sticker is paper, soak it with a sponge or cloth saturated with white vinegar for an hour before peeling with a credit card. Use Goof-Off or Goo-Gone on left behind adhesive.

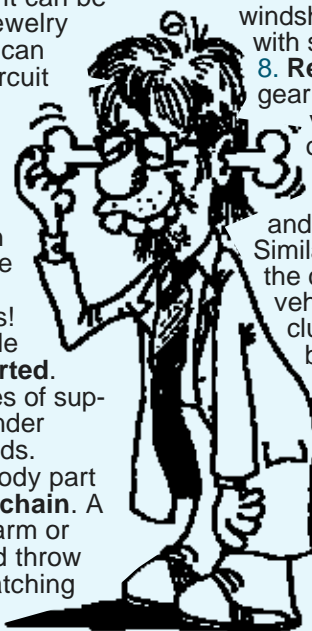
Tree Sap> Tree sap can be easily removed if wiped before it dries hard. Soften the sap with mayonnaise, waiting 10-15 minutes for the mayonnaise to penetrate and wipe off with a cloth. Rubbing alcohol, WD-40, or Rain-x are substitutes. Wash the area thoroughly afterward.

Precaution disclaimer: Before applying any cleaner or other remedy on the paint or fabric, make sure it won't cause harm by testing in an inconspicuous area.

10 Dumb Things People Do

Here are ten dumb things that people do with their cars that can be expensive or even dangerous. Avoid doing the following:

1. Wearing **loose clothing** while working around a running engine. For example, if the loose sleeve gets caught in a belt pulley it can be disastrous. Also, wearing jewelry such as rings and watches can create an electrical short circuit and cause serious burns.
2. **Long hair** in the vicinity of a running engine is a good way to get instantly scalped. Always keep hair tied up out of the way when working near moving engine or driveline parts. This includes spinning drive shafts!
3. Never get under the vehicle unless it is **properly supported**. Avoid these dangerous types of support: trolley jacks, bricks, cinder blocks, and cheap jack stands.
4. Catching a fragile underbody part by **improper use of a tow chain**. A chain hooked on a trailing arm or strut rod will bend them and throw off the wheel alignment. Catching the engine cradle can cause it to shift creating alignment problems/steering pull.* Always hook onto an underbody part that is capable of the force generated by the tow chain without being distorted or bent. Look for the manufacturer's tow or tie-down hooks.
5. Disconnecting or **connecting a battery** while the ignition key is turned on. This can cause a voltage surge which can burn out the engine control computer or other electronic onboard devices.*



6. **Spilling drinks** into the console. Many electronic devices including electronic control modules are located in the console and will be damaged by the spill.*
7. Using Armor-All or other similar **protectant on the dash** vinyl. These products will produce out-gassing oils which will coat the inside of the windshield causing problems with safe night vision.
8. **Resting your hand** on the gear shifter on a stick shift vehicle. This places strain on the transmission shifter forks, causing accelerated wear on the forks and their attendant shift rings. Similarly, **resting your foot** on the clutch pedal of a stick shift vehicle places strain on the clutch throw-out (release) bearing.*
9. Improper or over use or of strong **gasoline additives**. Some gas additives attack the fuel pump and cause it to prematurely fail. Use of gasoline with high alcohol content or overuse of alcohol gas additives can damage the fuel pump, fuel injectors, hoses, and fuel tank sending unit.*
10. **Overfilling the gas tank**, i.e. nursing it full. This puts liquid gasoline in the part of the gas tank meant only to deal with gas fumes, the Evaporative Emission System (EVAP). The additives in the gasoline will damage the EVAP canister causing it to spew its contents of activated charcoal into the hoses and solenoids and turning on the check engine light.*

*This is very expensive to fix!