Please watch the full video to see all the steps and procedures discussed below.

In this chapter, we are going to walk through the actual cleaning steps while referring back to our 1-page master guide. Have it in front of you for the next few minutes so you can hand scribble in notes as you see fit.

3 BUCKETS

Before we can start cleaning, remember to always to prepare your 3 buckets before any water ever touches the car. You do this to avoid water drying on the paint, as you hurry to fill your buckets with water and soap...(As you can see the in the RULES, #1 is to fill up Wheels, Wash, Rinse for each section, so you might as well get them done now).

With your 3 buckets and 3 grit guards, make sure the bottom of each bucket is relatively clean before you add any soap. When the grit guards do their job, you will see trapped dirt from the previous wash, IF you’ve forgotten to wash it out after your last use. Quickly rinse out the bucket with water and replace the grit guards. Then repeat the process quickly for any mitts, brushes, or woolies that may have not been cleaned after the last wash. If they were already clean, then start filling the buckets with the appropriate soap and or water. The Wheel bucket gets AMMO Brute wheel soap. Roughly 3-4 squirts, and fill up about half to full. Remember, the wheel mitt in this bucket may never ever be used on the paint or placed in the wash bucket. This was principle #4 Cross-contamination in chapter 102.

Next, fill your Wash bucket with 3-4 squirts of AMMO Foam, 2 on the bottom of the bucket, 1 on the mitt and 1 on the inside of the mitt. Fill it up to 3/4.

Lastly fill your rinse bucket with only water to 3/4, and leave it to the side for now.

ENGINE

The first step in the Cleaning sequence is the engine. You can choose to do the engine or not, or perhaps do it every other wash or every other, other wash...it doesn’t matter, but if you choose to clean it as part of the system, then doing it first is important. So for the sake of continuity, lets assume you are going to give the engine a maintenance clean, not a full-blown engine detail.

Before you get started with any section, take a look down to the RULES to make sure to adhere to the directions prior to possibly damaging the car or hurting yourself. In this case, make sure the engine is at most warm to the touch, but never hot. Avoid soaking any part of the engine with water, especially the alternator or any electrical units. Make sure to wear protective gloves and glasses.

After opening the hood, step 1 is to quickly remove any leaves or debris stuck in the HVAC vents or hood jambs by hand. If you have an older engine, or are very concerned about water, you can cover any sensitive parts in a plastic bag, tin foil, or saran wrap, but most modern engines can handle a light spray of water with no issue.

In a modern plastic filled engine, adding protection from light water spraying may be unnecessary. However, older engines should be protected from water sprays, including alternators, wires, fuses, or anything electric, just for piece of mind.

Remember our methods. Pre-rinse, Wash, Rinse and Dry. First, pre-rinse the engine with a wide nozzle sprayer to lightly coat the plastics. Next, spray AMMO Plum wheel cleaner to help cut through the grime, or use a heavy degreaser if you are working on an older leaking engine.

Quickly agitate the crevices with your wheel brush and your wheel woolie for the hard to reach areas. Do not allow the product or soapy lather to dry! Remember, the warmer the engine, the faster it will dry. And if it does, the lifted dirt will only relocate itself to a new area on your engine without being washed away. You are, in essence, just moving the dirt around the engine bay, which is useless. Then, lightly rinse the cleaner away with a wide-angle nozzle using the least amount of water necessary to remove the suds. Next, use a terrycloth towel to dry the surface and jambs. If you have access to a compressor or master blaster, use it here with your towel to work even faster, but they’re NOT essential, so don’t worry if you don’t have them. Keep in mind that this is not a long process, maybe 4-5 minutes at the most. You are simply maintaining the engines appearance and this should not be an all day project. Finally, close the hood until the first latch catches, but not all the way. You will need to get back under the hood at the end of the wash process so don’t make more work for yourself.

WHEELS

Next in our CLEAN sequence are the wheels. Take a quick glance down to remember the rules. Always start and finish 1 wheel from beginning to end. Do not spray cleaners and let them sit on the other 3 wheels as you work on the fourth. This will allow the cleaner to dry and potentially damage your wheel. Likewise, the wheel should not be hot. Do not spray cleaners on the rotors, especially if they are carbon ceramic.

First, rinse the rim, tire, and wheel-well with H2O. The goal here is to knock off the majority of heavy brake dust and dirt. Then, reach into
your previously filled wheel bucket and use the long wheel woolie. Starting at top-dead-center or 12 o’clock, work half-way around to the right, and then top down to the left. We do this to avoid bringing brake dust from the bottom up to the top because the flow of water will carry away most of the brake dust. No sense it working over-yourself. Dunk the tool in the water as it becomes full of brake dust. If you have big or painted calipers, you can clean them with the woolie, brush or mitt depending on the space available on your particular car. Before you put the woolie away, quickly clean the wheel wells if they are dirty.

Next, use your lug nut brush to agitate the lug holes, value stem, and tight spots on the rim and lightly clean the tire as well. If the tire is extremely dirty, you may need a stiff bristle brush or to scrub by hand with your wheel wash mitt. Otherwise, a quick wipe with your brush should be sufficient.

Then, use your designated wheel mitt to clean the rear of the rim spokes by curling your hand in the mitt, then quickly reach and wipe behind the spoke. Finally, clean the face of the rim with your wheel mitt, and immediately rinse the wheel tire and wheel well. Leave them wet for now and move to the next wheel and start this process over.

**EXHAUST**

In the Master Guide, I added the Exhaust in this cleaning section. After the 2nd wheel is done, you obviously have to move to the other side of the car to start cleaning wheel 3 and 4. On the way there, you will pass by the exhaust. Use the wheel bucket and tools to quickly clean the exhaust tips as well. Although the carbon build up is considered contamination, its far less damaging then the shards of brake dust, so the principle of cross-contamination does not apply here. As always, use your judgment based on your particular exhaust material, size, and shape.

Be sure to finish wheels 3 and 4 after the exhaust and leave them rinsed or wet for now. We will dry them after washing and drying the paint. The wheel cleaning process should not take more than 5-10 minutes, depending on the intricacy of your rim design and how much fun you are having.

With the wheels and exhaust cleaned and still wet, take a quick look at our rules to make sure the paint is cool and that we are out of direct sunlight. Never let products dry on paint and always work from top to bottom, but leave the nose, trunk, and lower rockers for the last wipe. Step 1 is to rinse the paint from top to bottom. I’m using a hose and rubber nozzle because this is what 99% of car owners have, if you have access to water. If you have a pressure washer or foam cannon set –up for cars, then feel free to use it. Pressure washers are extremely helpful, but NOT essential, as part of the requirements for this beginner series, so keep that in mind.

There are 2 purposes when rinsing the paint:
1. To knock off the heavy dirt so your cleaning soaps and tools have less work to do.
2. To add lubrication to the paint in anticipation of the wiping or agitation required. So focus on pre-rinsing the lower areas of the car, as they tend to be dirtier. Keep in mind, the same methods in our master guide apply for paint. Pre-rinse, wash, rinse, and dry.

**PAINT**

With the paint pre-rinsed, and before it dries, use wash mitt #1 on the top of the car, working your way down. However, the traditional top-down method we’ve all heard about is not the most effective technique to SAFELY cleaning the paint to minimize the fine scratches that I call LOVE MARKS. Instead, think of the direction as down and around, starting at the roof and working around the glass and down the hood and top part of the doors. Leaving the front bumper, lower rockers, and trunk as the very last areas to clean as these are typically more dirty than the top parts of the car.

At no time should you be scrubbing or putting heavy downward pressure. Keep in mind, if your paint is protected properly, cleaning becomes easier…but not unnecessary, as we mentioned in our magic pill discussion earlier. For heavy areas that need a bit more agitation, be sure to use an active flow of hose-water if you feel adding pressure or multiple wipes is required in a particular spot.

Although this process sounds a bit complex, in reality it’s not. If you want perfect paint, then perfect steps need to be taken. It’s just a logical progression if our concern is removing dirt from the surface of your paint safely.

Quickly rinse the soap off the paint, and then the wheels. Do not let the paint dry. If you need to get out of direct sunlight and you have a garage or can borrow shelter for a few minutes, moving the car is a good idea.

**DRYING**

The drying method is by far the most over-looked process that is usually just an after thought. *Just get the water off the car…what’s the big deal?* Well, a few things:
1. No car wash is perfect. Always missed spots, dust, etc.… I don’t care who you are or how many steps you take…it’s just a fact.
2. Traditional drying tools: Chamois and beach towels, water blades and squeegees are designed to either absorb water or to push water. Both of these methods are just as dangerous as washing your
car with a contaminated wash mitt, with respect to scratching the paint.

Chamois are designed to absorb water, not to pick up contaminants safely. So when it rolls over tiny left over dirt or dust, it doesn’t pick it up, but instead rolls it over the paint. If you notice, the chamois no "hooks" to pick-up and hold contaminants equivalent to MF towels. Second, I’ve never met anyone who cleans his or her chamois after every single drying session or throws it in the washing machine. Instead, the dirty contaminated towels get thrown in a plastic tub waiting to scratch the paint on the next drying process.

The water blade or squeegee is designed for glass. Using it on the paint is a bad idea. Here’s why: For the blade to be effective, it needs to make direct contact with the surface it’s drying. Think of windshield wiper rubber. If it doesn’t make direct contact, it leaves a streak in the glass. So as the rubber is touching your paint and pushing the water away…as it encounters the left of tiny contaminants and grinds them into the paint during the wipe. Rubber definitely does not pick up contaminants. So these products are extremely efficient at the least important attribute to preserving your paint.

They move water quick, no arguments there. But do they pick up left over dirt or add lubrication? No. This goes against our core principles, so it’s not a recommended tool.

The proper way to remove standing water from your car after the rinse is with a MF towel and drying lubricant. However, MF towels do not pick up water easily when they are dry, so first soak them with a hose until saturated, and then ring it out so it’s damp. Now the towel becomes absorbent and attracted to water, plus it’s still a MF towel. The hooks pick up any left over dirt that will inevitably be somewhere on the paint as you dry. This tool is the best of both worlds when drying your paint.

Then if you combine it with the drying lubricant AMMO Hydrate, you’ve virtually eliminated the chance of creating love marks during the drying process, because the MF towel combined with the thick lubrication offers the glide and protection needed as you wipe. This small change in your cleaning regimen will reduce the chances of scratching and increase the longevity and shine of your paint.

**HYDRATE**

To use Hydrate, spray 1 or 2 squirts of the thick or viscous product on the folded towel. Keep in mind this is NOT spray wax. This is much thicker and can only be used when standing water is on the paint. Next, wipe the paint from top to bottom in straight lines. As you wipe, you will notice faint streaks. This is normal. It’s the lubrication doing its job. Within a few seconds, Hydrate will be absorbed into the layer of sealant you should already have on the paint, but if you don’t, that’s OK. As the towel becomes saturated, wring it out, give another quick light squirt of Hydrate, and repeat the drying process around the car. Make sure you look at the towel after each wipe. I guarantee you will notice a few specks of dirt trapped in the fibers. This is exactly why we use a MF towel and not a chamois or blade. Rotate the towel as it becomes dirty. Once all 8 sides become dirty, get a new towel and prime it with water as you did before.

You can use the towel on glass as well. No sense in switching back and forth with unnecessary tools.

**USE AIR ALONE?**

Some of you are asking: Why not just use air to blow off the rinse water? Great question:

1. As part of this particular series, it doesn’t fall into the 100% absolutely necessary category. So by default, it must stay in the really really nice to have, but not essential.

2. Air, as the primary source of drying, does not pickup the left over dirt that will remain after a wash.

3. This process takes longer, is much louder, and doesn’t leave behind a shiny protective layer like that of the MF and Hydrate method.

Having said this, having compressed air is so good as a combination with the Hydrate method that I debated a long time in considering this tool as essential. Blowing out the areas that no towel or finger can reach is wildly helpful, when trying to avoid the clean-car-drip that everyone experiences after a car wash that drives us crazy.

**DRY WHEELS**

With the paint dry, now dry the still wet-wheels with the Hydrate method and a different MF towel that will only be used on the wheels and not the paint. Much the same idea as tiny dirt spots left on the paint, I promise you…the wheel will have a missed spot. So be prepared to see black streaks in your MF towel. Designate it as your wheels and doorjamb towel going forward. Wheels tend to scratch very easily because of the brake dust, so avoid dry wiping, as much as possible. Quickly tap-dry the rubber tires and wheel-wells with a terry towel before opening up the car door closest to your last wheel. Use your terry towel to wipe the kick panel, underneath, and sides of the door.

**DOOR JAMBS**

If you do not dry the underneath of the door, and only dry the kick panel here, when you open and then close the door the water from
underneath, water splashes and attracts dust as you drive. It’s really annoying to clean the car perfectly but miss the one spot that you see every time you get in the car. Spend 2 seconds drying the underneath of the door frame.

With all the doors open from cleaning the jambs, make sure to remove the rubber and carpet floor mats while you’re there to save the extra steps. Be sure to avoid throwing the carpets in a leftover puddle from your wash and just keep them to the side for now.

If you don’t have rubber mats, then skip this step. Next, Put all rubber mats together on the ground, and squeeze your Foam wash mitt over the mats to fill the grooves with soap. Then, use your wheel brush to agitate the dirt, rinse, and quickly dry with a MF towel before leaning them up against a wall and out of direct sunlight. If you notice in the RULES section, direct sunlight may cause the rubber to discolor and don’t ever add dressing to floor mats or pedals for safety.

SPOT CLEAN
I encourage you to quickly look around for any drips or spills in your carpets and Alcantara or cloth seats if you have them. If so, use a few squirts of Shag Fabric cleaner and an interior brush to agitate the stain or blemish. Then immediately blot dry with a MF towel. If the stain persists, use the scrub pad and repeat the process again. The key to cleaning interior stains is to get to them as quick as possible, so quickly spot cleaning on your weekly or biweekly wash can be a lifesaver.

VACUUM
Next, vacuum the interior by starting on the driver-side, closest to the center console. There’s always fun stuff stuck in this crevice, then work your way back towards the door, looking underneath the seat, not only for dirt but for a baseball, tennis ball, softball or water bottles that can slide under the pedals under heavy braking. This is actually more common than you might think, so avoid it if you can. Once the foot-well is done, vacuum the seat bottom and seat-back crevice. Then, use your finger to spread open the seat bolster to allow the vacuum crevice tool to get in between the seams. This may sound insignificant, but over time, the dirt trapped in this area will cause the stitching to breakdown and wear out as you get in and out of the car. I only recommend using a thin crevice tool, as flat head or wide body nozzles are not effective at getting in the small spots, plus the increased size decreases the strength of the suctioning power compared to a narrower orifice. Once the front area is done, push the seat forward and vacuum from the center to the door, then the seat etc….and work your way around the car. The trunk, passenger rear, and passenger front. This process should not take more than 10-15 minutes if you maintain a weekly or biweekly regimen.

LEATHER & PLASTIC CLEAN
Next, lightly spray AMMO Lather on a MF towel and quickly wipe any leather plastic or vinyl. For most of the material, this is really just a healthy dusting to remove grease from your hand and accumulated dead skin cells. If a stain is found, use the interior brush or scrub pad with lather, and gently agitate the material until a lather is built, then quickly wipe it away before it dries. Again, this is 5 to 10 minutes at most, during a maintenance wash.

GLASS: 3 TOWEL METHOD
Our last cleaning step is the glass. I’m not going to lie; this is a pain in the butt and the source of a lot of frustration not only to beginners, but pros as well. The issue with glass is pretty simple, its obviously clear so you see any tiny blemish, and 2nd it’s the part of the car you are constantly looking at or thru, and 3rd you are fighting a build up of grease on your cleaning towels. The problem arises because we are subconsciously trained to not use a lot of towels, but it seems to me the instant one side of the glass towel hits the grease…that’s it, that’s side done. But we flip it over and push harder, tighter circles and so on…The bottom line is if you continue to use it, it’s only going to smear and streak. So a reasonable way to fight this frustrating game is the three-towel method.

First is your throw-away towel. It’s just a clean MF towel. This is used to pick up the grease and junk on the glass. It won’t look pretty at this stage and that’s OK. Get into the edges, and find the black grease or heavy dirt. This towel protects the glass towel from getting dirty too quickly.

If your glass feels bumpy or sticky during this process, you may need to clay the glass to pull out the contaminants. Its pretty simply, pull out a piece of clay cut or tear it into this size shape and flatten like a hamburger. Use glass cleaner as a lubricant and move the clay back and forth quickly to pick up the junk. Dry it with the first towel again. Remember, if your glass doesn’t need it, don’t waste your time.

The second towel is your glass towel. Typically it’s a tighter MF weave, also known as a waffle weave. Now, spray another few squirts of glass cleaner and quickly wipe while rotating the towel to clean dry sides. Then immediately follow up with the 3rd towel, which is the closer. It will remove any left over glass cleaner that might dry and leave a streak.

I know it looks like extra work but it’s actually quicker because you are doing less chasing of streaks. The trick here is to rotate towels as
they become too damp. The slightest bit of grease or grime will ruin the effectiveness of the towel and cause you a nightmare chasing it around the glass.

Repeat the three-towel method on the inside and outside of the windows, from the driver-side around to the passenger-side, until you get to the interior windshield. The interior windshield is a completely different beast. There always seems to be a build-up of grease, and a yellowing or fogginess on the glass that’s not really anywhere else. The plastic material on our dashboards heating up and releasing gases, especially in new cars, usually causes this. Our breath and defroster consistently hitting the windshield isn’t helping either. So in addition to the three-towel method, you first need to use a degreaser on the glass. Cutting ISO 50/50 is a great solution. Once you put it in its own bottle you can use it for a long time. You have 2 options, spray it on the towel or on a scrub pad…but do it outside the car and avoid drips, as the alcohol and your dash do not play nicely. You will see little dots on some cars. Once degreased, repeat the 3 towel steps but you must have all new towels. Do NOT use the ones from the rest of the glass. If you can, pull it out into the sun or look thru the glass into an overhead light. You’re sure to miss a spot, that’s just how it works. Just be sure to use a clean towel for spot clean ups.

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