

Vehicle Myth #3: I can wash my vehicle with mild dish soap



More than one-third of car owners use damaging non-automotive products when washing their cars-products that could contain harmful detergents, abrasives or additives. And almost half of motorists don't wax their vehicle. Waxing at least twice a year is recommended for maximum protection.

If you are not maintaining your vehicle's exterior, you could be leaving money on the table at trade-in time. It's a fact, a clean, well-maintained car can be worth up to 50 percent more than one in 'fair' condition, according to the Kelley Blue Book.

The DOs and DON'Ts when it comes to do-it-yourself car washing:

- Don't wash cars in direct sunlight.
- Do wash cars in shade or in cooler temperatures in the early morning or late afternoon.
- Don't use dish detergent. Do use a formulated car wash.
- Do fill your bucket with warm water.
- Do use a soft terrycloth towel or washing mitt.
- Do spray the car often with water.
- Don't scrub the car all at once. Do complete one section at a time, rinsing repeatedly to prevent the soap from drying on the paint.
- Do use soft terrycloth towels or scratch-free fabric to dry the vehicle.
- Don't neglect waxing the vehicle.
- Do prep the car for waxing, using cleaner/polish to remove contaminants.

The myth of not having to wax your car because you have a clear-coat finish is just that, a myth. Clear-coat finish is only as thick as a piece of paper and can become damaged from nicks, chips, the effects of sunlight, UV radiation, acid rain, salt, dirt and air pollution. Car wax helps to protect the car from rust seeping into to minor nicks and chips.

