“The Learn Auto Body and Paint DIYers Cheat-Sheet to Automotive Bodywork and Paint Success”

- By Tony Bandalos

• How to paint a car, truck, bike, boat or small plane no matter what your age or level of experience

• The do’s and don’ts of auto body and paint. Plus other important facts.

• A true manual that takes you through a complete start to finish process on auto body and paint repair.

*This manual was revised and shortened from our original “85 page auto body and paint manual” Although our main 85 page manual was great, this book gets to the point much faster. We hope you enjoy and get a lot out of it.
Hey, It’s Tony here and I just wanted to say THANK YOU for getting this guide.

I think it will save you a lot of time and money to know this stuff and I hope you think the same after reading it.

Now, when it comes to body work in general, there are MANY ways to skin a cat.

As you know, there are a lot of guys who have their own SYTLE when it comes to body work and paint.

As an example, some guys will say when painting base coat clear coat, you need to paint over 600 grit, and some guys like myself will say 400 grit.

And when I spoke with the man himself, Jon Kosmoski CEO and founder of *House of Kolor*, he agreed with me.

My #1 recommendation when going out to learn this stuff is to start and learn from one instructor that you like, know and trust.

Follow his style all the way through from A-Z. Otherwise, you’ll just get confused with all of the other talk out in the community and you’ll be in paralysis of not knowing what to do.

Just like my martial art analogy...

When you’re taking a martial art like Karate, normally you’d want to learn it all from one instructor. Learn the style, the discipline, the training, and the mindset.

You go from white belt to black belt, all in one style and one form of martial art. After you graduate, you can move on to another way of teaching and start Judo for example.
This is exactly what the famous Bruce Lee did. He mastered a few different styles, then, in the end he formed his own style called Jeet Kun Do.

Taking the best short form, direct attack and take down techniques from all styles and then creating his own martial art style.

It’s the same with auto body work. The more you learn about it, apply it and do it, the more you’ll start to come up with your own style and short cuts.

And it all comes from doing and by in the trench down and dirty experience.

This is exactly what I did.

I started painting at 13 years old back in 95’. My father ran a successful auto body shop for years before I was born. Yes, I was born into the art and the style, but I watched for many years before I even touching a putty knife or a filler spreader in terms today.

My parents got divorced when I was about 8. I was totally away from my fathers shop it until I was about 13 when my father discovered that I had painted and sold my stepfathers scooter for a profit.

When he learned that I did that and seen that I had an interest in automotive mechanics and body work, he quickly supported me and showed me the ropes.
In this guide I want to give you all of my fathers and my own short-cut techniques that are PROVEN to achieve winners for show stopping jaw-dropping looks on a car.

And it doesn’t matter what you’re working on. You could be restoring a classic rust-bucket, an Import tuner, or anything.

You’re going to get a combined 40 years of auto body combat knowledge in a short simple easy to understand direct format.

And if you follow them, you WILL get the same results. So at this point, you’re either with me, or your not.

If you aren’t, then no problem.

Go and find somebody that you want to learn from, go for it and Good luck!
...and If you’re still here with me, then you’re in for a real treat!

Let’s get start with the basics because when it comes down to it, surface preparation is 80% of the job.

**PREPARING YOUR SURFACE FOR BODY FILLER**

One of the most important steps in applying fillers is surface preparation.

You want to start by cleaning and washing the repair area (or entire car) with soap and water to remove any dirt. Be sure not to use a car soap that has any wax in it.

Your best bet is to use a basic dish soap. That’s what I do. It’s a basic degreaser and great for washing cars or parts before you do body work and paint.
If you’re not washing the entire car and you plan to only work on a section of the car, then clean the area with a wax and grease remover to get rid of wax, tar, etc.

Make sure you use a cleaner that will remove silicone which is found in automotive waxes... and like I said, a dish soap works well for this. I like to use Dawn dish soap.

Mask any trim, parts, or other panels that could be damaged and scratched by grinding and sanding. Use a GOOD masking tape tape to protect them.

I say good because if you use a cheap brand the glue from the masking tape will stick to the trim and it will be a pain to clean off.

If you use a brand name like 3M, or American Tape, then you can leave the tape on for a week and not have any problems.

Try to avoid keeping it in the sun as that will shorten the life of that one week period to only a couple days.

Grind the area to remove the old paint using a 16-24 or 36 grit disc working 3” inches around the area to be filled. The rest of the area up to 6” from center can be sanded with an 80 grit so you can feather your filler.

**On small dents and dings less than 1/4” deep, you do not need to grind down to bare metal. You can just use your DA and scuff the paint with an 80 grit paper.

Now some experts will disagree with me on this, but I’ve tested doing this for years and never had any problems. A lot of guys in the industry do it like this as well.

Some people will say to not apply filler over paint, and I agree if over large areas where you know thick filler needs to be added. The same goes for filling over fiberglass.

Where would you grind to metal over fiberglass? Exactly. Just have a 40-80 grit scuffed surface, then lay your kitty hair or basic putty filler.
On deeper dents or dents that you need to use a stud welder, use a 16-24-36 grit grinding disc to remove old paint. Grinding also etches the metal to provide better adhesion.

But make sure you only grind to remove the finish. Grinding to much will then and weaken the metal.

After grinding away the finish from the repair area, blow away the sanding dust with compressed air and wipe the surface down to remove any dust.

**MIXING BODY FILLER (BONDO)**

As soon as you open a can of filler you should mix the can to a uniform and smooth consistency. It must be free of lumps and not wet on top. Most times you'll see a glaze over the top. Just mix it into the filler.

Now take the cap off the hardener and let all the air out. Put the cap back on and then you want to "Knead" the hardener

...this is done by squeezing the tube back and forth with your fingers to mix the material. The hardener should be like toothpaste when you squeeze it out.

There is an agent called *Benzoyl Peroxide* that tends to separate in the tube when sitting. So be sure to mix it up before use. You want to use a clean putty knife or spreader.
Place the filler on a smooth, and clean mixing board. I prefer to use a piece of sheet metal, glass, or hard plastic to mix the filler and hardener onto.

Whatever you do, DO NOT use cardboard as a mixing board. It’s porous and can contain waxes.

The waxes get dissolved in the mixed filler and cause poor bonding.

You may have seen me in a video or two use cardboard but as good advice, you shouldn’t use it.

Remember to put the lid back on the filler can to keep dust and dirt out of the can.

Add hardener according to the proportion indicated on the can. Too little hardener will result in a soft, gummy filler that will not adhere, or just take much longer to cure.

Too much hardener can result in pin-holing and or not giving you enough time to apply and shape it out.

Like my father always said:

“for each golf ball size glob of filler use 6-8 drops of hardener. If the filler is as big as a baseball, then squeeze about a 5” inch bead of hardener.

You can always add a little less hardener to give yourself more time to work with and shape the putty.

The same goes for speeding up the job or if you’re working on a few smaller areas and want it to dry quick.

With a clean putty knife or spreader, use a scraping motion going back and forth to mix the filler/hardener together.
See how I break down this process inside of the LABAP VIP course. You’ll get a lot more in-depth training, and it’s all completely organized and easy to follow step-by-step so you fully understand the whole process from A-Z in an easy learning format.

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And if you like Facebook, you can join the private Facebook group as well.

Moving on...
Scrape the filler off both sides of the spreader and mix it in. Every few back and forth strokes, scrape the filler into the center of the mixing board by circling inward.

What ever you do, DO NOT stir the filler. Stirring may cause air to get trapped into the filler, which can air pockets and pinholes.

You want to use clean tools when removing the filler and mixing the filler and hardener together. So total you will need 1-2 different size spreaders and a paint stick to take the filler out of the can.

**APPLYING THE FILLER TO THE PANEL**

Apply the mixed filler as soon as you are done mixing it.

First, apply a thin coat of filler to the repair area. Press firmly to force filler into the sand scratches and holes. Work the filler in two directions, left to right then top to bottom. This will greatly reduce pin-holing.

Spread filler around 3 in beyond the repaired area. This will give you better adhesion, and will allow you to feather the area down.

When this layer cures, shape it with a rasp, blow dust off, then apply more coats to build up the repair area to a proper contour. If you’re repair area was small, this one coat may be enough filler to get the job done.

Allow each application to set up before applying the next coat of filler.

Build up the final layer of filler slightly above the panel surface. So you can sand or rasp the filler down smooth equal with the existing panel. This is called shaping.

For your final coat of filler, make sure the spreader has a smooth edge. If nicked of if you have dried filler bits on it, it will not make a smooth layer.

You’ll end up with streaks in your filler layer and will have to pick the hardened filler off your applicator and re apply and smoothen out the area.

Avoid using filler in cold temperatures. When the filler, your garage, or panel is cold, the filler will NOT cure properly. Filler should be stored at
room temperature. You can use a heat lamp to warm cold surfaces if you need. Try to work in 60 degrees or above environment. 70 - 90 is a great temperature to work in.

**SHAPING THE FILLER TO THE PANEL**

Allow the filler to cure to a semi-hard consistency. This usually takes 10 to 15 minutes.

Scratch the filler with your fingernail. If the scratch leaves a white mark, the filler is ready to be filed or rasped down to shape.

Filling/Rasping is using that "cheese grater" looking tool or body file to rough shape the filler.

You will knock off the high spots and rough edges. Since the filler is only partially hard, the body file will quickly remove excess filler.

If you do NOT rough shape the filler with a grater, you will waste some time and sandpaper taking it down to shape.

**YOU DON’T ALWAYS NEED TO RASP/FILE YOUR FILLER**

Obviously, if you have a smaller dent or damage and you feel that you’ll cut too much too quickly with a rasp, then just skip it and use a 40-80 grit on a block or a DA to get your shape down.

To use a cheese grater, hold it at a 30 degree angle. Pull it lightly
across the semi-hard filler. Work the file in several directions. Stop filing when the filler is slightly above the desired level.

APPLYING FILLER TO BODY LINES

Maintaining sharp lines when doing filler work can be difficult.

The best way to get straight, clean lines is to file each plane, angle, or corner separately. Apply masking tape along one edge. Then apply filler to the adjacent surface. Before the filler sets up, pull the tape off. This will remove the excess filler from the body line.

You can always just use a long block as well.

After the first application is dry and sanded, tape the opposite edge. Apply masking tape along the body line and over the filler.

Then, coat the adjacent surface with filler. When the tape is removed and the filler sanded, the result is a straight, even line or corner.

APPLYING FILLER TO PANEL JOINTS

Many panels have joints that are factory finished with a seam sealer to allow the panel to flex. Often, both panels of the join suffer damage and require filler.

NEVER cover the seam with body filler. The filler will crack when the body flexes. You can fix the joint buy taping off alternate sides. Just apply tape to one panel. Then apply filler to the other panel.

Pull the tape up to remove the excess filler. Then fill the other panel the same way. At times, you may have no choice and will need to apply new seam sealer.

SANDING FILLER

After filing, you want to sand out all the file marks. Use a 40-80 grit disc on a sanding board or block first if you need to cut a lot off. Then, follow with 80 grit sandpaper until all scratches are removed. Finally, smooth the filler
with a 220-280 grit sandpaper to prep for a 2k primer filler or a sprayable high build polyester putty (what I use now days).

After final sanding, blow with an air gun and wipe with a tack cloth. Doing this removes the dust and also exposes holes. These holes and sand scratches must be filled in with filler or a glaze putty (if found).

Run your hand over the surface to check for evenness.

Do not trust "eye balling". Paint does NOT hide imperfections, it highlights them. A true body man looks and feels with his hands.

Do not be satisfied until the repaired surface is perfectly smooth, and remember if you can feel the slightest bump, paint will make it show up much more.

The dull surface of filler and sanded paint does not visibly show surface imperfections. At the final stage before paint, you will be able to run water over your sanded primer and finished areas to also visually check for imperfections.

**FEATHERING**

Feathering involves sanding the repair area until the filler and old paint blend smoothly into each other.

You must use finer sandpaper, 220-240 grit or finer. Sand until you remove any small lip where different materials on the surface meet. Feathering commonly done by hand or with a DA sander if experienced.

**PRIMERS AND SEALERS**

Primers come in different types- primer, primer-sealer, (2k primer-filler, epoxy-primers and sprayable high build polyester putty.

A plain primer is a thin undercoat made to provide good adhesion for your topcoat. Primers can be used when the surface is smooth so there is no problem with “bleeding".
You may ask, “what is bleeding?” Bleeding is when your colors in the undercoat/old paint seep into your topcoat. Which in turn will discolor your new paint.

A self-etching primer has a type of acid in it to treat bare metal so that the primer will adhere properly. This is good to spray over metal projects. If you’re doing a classic restoration or something.

A sealer is an inner-coat between the topcoat and the primer/old finish to prevent the bleeding you can sometimes get. Sealers are different from primer-sealers because they cannot be used as a primer.

Sealers are sprayed over a primer right before your base coat on the day of your paint job. Sealers are NOT NEEDED on every single job. A good 2k primer, high build primer coat can be used as a great foundation for a paint job.

If you’re looking for a $15k paint job or want to ‘feel’ like you’re getting the best paint job, then use a sealer.

I believe it can make your base lay on nicer but you won’t see a major difference in the overall finished product.

I’ve painted many cars using a sealer before spraying the base coat and I’ve also sprayed many cars using a good ole 2k primer as a foundation and have had very similar results.

If you’re doing a customer job, and he wants the best…and he’s paying for it. Use a sealer.
A primer-sealer is a undercoat that improves adhesion of the topcoat and also seals the old painted surfaces that have been sanded.

So it pretty much solves two potential problems (adhesion and bleed) at once.

A primer-filler is a VERY thick form of primer. It is used when a very pitted or rough surface must be filled and smoothed.

There is also an epoxy-primer, which is a two part primer that cures harder and faster than normal primers. It greatly increases body filler adhesion and corrosion over metal.

Epoxy primers are the closest thing to an OEM primer. You can spray that over bare metal after sanding, then lay filler over that after scuffing those areas or by grinding down to metal.

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DO YOU NEED TO USE THE SAME BRAND PAINT MATERIAL or CAN YOU INTERMIX BRANDS?

Some guys will say to use a complete system.

Meaning all the materials (primer, paint, etc) are compatible and made by the same company and you would use the same brand primer and paints from the same brand through your paint job.

You don’t need to do this fully, but you need to do it partially.

Example: You can safely use any brand of a base coat and spray another brand of urethane clear coat over it.

But remember your base coat needs a reducer or base maker. Generally, you should make sure you use the same brands in that case. So if you're using a PPG base coat, use the same PPG reducer for that base.

You can, if you wanted to spray any brand clear coat over that and not have a problem as long as it’s the normal urethane clear coats that we use nowadays.
You could spray a DuPont, a PPG, a KOH House of Kolor clear over it with no problem.

I would also use the same clear KIT from the same brand. If you’re using a HOK clear, be sure to use their hardener and reducer for the clear coat mix.

Got it?

For your base colors, stick to same brand reducers. For clear kits, stick with the same brand. And of course, if you want to use the same paint, base and clear for the entire system, you can do that too! :) 

PRIMING

Priming is done directly after filling to cover any bare metal as well as filler. After using filler, primer is often sprayed on the repair area. Since primer is very thick, it will help fill small sand scratches in the filler and paint.

For best results when applying primer, spray 2 to 3 coats. You’ll actually save time by following flash recommendations versus spraying coats wet on wet.

Wait a hour or more before sanding the primer, but it can be shorter dry time based on brands.

After the primer dries, you can dry or wet sand the filler to check your work.

Now you’re ready for a step called "guide coating". You just need a cheap can of spray paint. I use the cheap .99 cent stuff. The brand does not matter. Spray a LIGHT mist over the full coat of primer.

Also, you will want a color that you can see well. Just use black. Then, by sanding the area, you can easily find high and low spots. If the spray paint does not sand off, you found a low spot. If it sands off too quickly, you have found a high spot.

Ideally, the primer and spray paint should sand off a the same time. This shows that the surface is flat and ready for sealer.
APPYING GLAZING/ SPOT PUTTY

Once the primer is dry, small pinholes and scratches can be filled with glazing putty. Just mix the putty and hardener according to the back of the tube.

Place a small amount of putty onto a clean rubber squeegee. Apply a thin coat over the primer. Use single strokes and a fast scraping motion. Glazing putty will dry very fast.

**WARNING** — a common mistake is to use glazing putty as a filler. Spot putty is NOT as strong as filler. Only use putty to fill small imperfections in the primer. Do not apply to bare metal or painted surfaces.

Most are designed to be applied over primer. On the flip side of that coin, if you’re doing a cheap job, by all means, you can scuff paint and fill rock chips directly, then prime over it before paint.

Allow the putty to dry completely before sanding smooth with a 400 grit sandpaper. The repair is now ready for final priming, sealing (if you plan to use a sealer), and painting.

**PREPPING THE CAR FOR PAINT**

When painting the entire car you will need to sand the car down for the topcoat to adhere. You want to use 400 grit wet for almost all your topcoats.

Light sanding should be done on all areas where the old finish is in good condition. The purpose is to partially reduce the paint gloss to improved adhesion.

You want to use a sanding block or the palm of your hand if you know what you’re doing. Never use a grinder.

Never use your fingers and sand in one section for an extended period of time as you will sand grooves into your flat surface.

The goal here is to sand the entire panels flat so you see no orange peel. For the base coat/clear coat finishes, you will want to sand the entire surfaces with a 400 grit paper.
Wet sanding is faster and requires less sandpaper than dry sanding and it’s a lot cleaner. No dust.

Remember every inch to be painted must be sanded. If you don’t scuff any glossy surface the paint will peel off over time.

**FINAL CHECKS BEFORE PAINT**

Check all masking tape and paper one last time.

Make sure none of the tape has pulled up or paper has been torn. Inspect all edges and paper closely for openings that could allow overspray leaks. Blow off any dust with a air gun.

Blow air in all areas of the car, trunk, hood, any openings. The last thing you want is dust, dirt or water to flow onto your painted surface while you are painting.

As you blow off surfaces, wipe the vehicle down with a tack cloth. After wiping down be careful NOT to touch the surface being refinished.

Before applying the topcoat (your base coat), carefully read the paint manufacturer’s directions that appear on the paint can. Each has specific formulations for its products.

For this reason, the best source of data on how to apply a specific brand of paint is the label. You’ll want to check:

1. **Viscosity recommendations** - (Base coats are normally a 1:1 ratio with reducer. You never put hardener in base unless you’re spraying an enamel system.

2. **Air pressure** - Spraying base at 26-28 PSI on gun gauge. 28-30 PSI for clear coat.

3. **Use of additives, reducers, thinners, and activators for all products. We have step-by-step videos on all of this and more in the [LABAP VIP area of the site](https://www.labap.com) so be sure to check it out. The value you will get for your small investment will easily exceed 10X your investment.**
4. Application techniques and flash times.

5. Number of coats required — two to three coats for base and the same for clear coats.

6. Polishing and compounding - Final color sanding and buffing if you want to get that PRO show room gloss.

7. Clean up procedures and storage of spray guns.

8. Final detailing and care.

**DETERMINING THE TYPE OF OLD PAINT FINISH**

Before planning any refinishing job, you must find out what type of paint is on the vehicle.

The vehicle might have its original paint or it could have been repainted with a different type of paint.

Here is a method I use to find out. Rub the paint with a white cloth soaked in lacquer thinner to see how easily the paint will dissolve.

If the paint film dissolves and leaves a mark on the rag, it is a type of air dried paint (commonly a single stage enamel paint job)

If it does not dissolve, its either an oven dried or a two part reaction type paint. The systems we use today.

The easiest way to see if a car has been painted is to inspect closely for signs of repainting. Look for masking tape created paint lines, overspray, and other signs of repairing.

If the vehicle has not been repainted, you can use the body color code identification plate to determine the type of paint on the vehicle.
SPRAY GUN OVERLAY PATTERN AND STROKE

You want to apply in a side to side movement of the spray gun to distribute the paint evenly. You want to practice on masking paper to get it perfect.

Any problems with the spray pattern must be corrected before painting the vehicle.

To use a spray gun, hold the gun 6 to 8 inches away from the surface. Normally, hold the gun parallel and perpendicular to the surface. Keep the gun at a right angle to the vehicle. This should be done even when spraying curves in the body.

If you tilt the gun when spraying the sides of the vehicle, an uneven paint film will result. On flat surfaces such as the hood or roof, the gun should be pointed almost straight down.

Avoid fanning the gun with your wrist. Fanning the gun will deposit an uneven paint film. The paint film will be thicker right in front of your gun and thinner on the sides.

The only time you should fan the gun is when you are trying to blend a small repair spot. With a spot repair, you want the paint film thinner at the edges to blend out the spray.

Spray gun triggering involves stopping the paint spray before you stop moving the gun sideways. When you pull halfway back on the trigger, only
air blows out of the nozzle. When you pull all the way back, paint is
atomized and sprayed out.

The best way to learn this is by simply watching somebody spray paint over
and over. Check out the LABAP VIP section of the site here.

During the application stroke, release halfway on the trigger right before
you stop moving the gun sideways. This will prevent too much paint being
deposited when the gun changes direction.

It will also keep air moving through the nozzle to help prevent sudden burst
of paint. Release the
trigger halfway at
the end of each
pass, then pull it
back when
beginning the pass
in the opposite
direction.

Move the gun with
a steady, deliberate
pass, about one
foot per second.
The speed must be
consistent or it will
result in an uneven
coat. Spray edges
and corners first.

Aim directly at the corner or edge so that half of the spray covers each side
of the corner or edge. After all the edges and corners have been sprayed,
spray the face or front of the panel.

Generally, start spraying at the top of any upright surface, such as as door
panel. The gun nozzle should be level with the top of the panel. The upper
half of the spray pattern should hit and cover the masking paper.
Move the gun all the way across the top of the panel. Make sure you hold the gun square with the panel and keep it the same distance from the panel. Think of yourself as a robot spraying even strokes.

You want to make sure each spray gun coat cover about half of the previous coat of paint. This is called a overlay fan pattern. Use a 50/50 overlay for base and clear paints and a 75% overlay when spraying candy paint jobs.

Again we cover how to paint with candy, flake and pearls in the VIP area as well.

Make each pass in the opposite direction. So one half of the spray pattern overlaps the previous coat. The other half of the paint pattern is applied to the unpainted area. For a double coat, repeat, making sure to allow flash time of several minutes between coats.

**TYPES OF SPRAY COATS**

The easiest way to control thickness is by changing how fast you move the gun sideways. If you move the gun slower, a heavier, thicker coat will be applied. If you move faster, paint thickness is decreased.

A tack coat is a mist coat applied to the surface first. It allows the application of heavier wet coats without sagging or runs. The tack coat dries quickly to bond and form a lightly textured paint film to hold the next coats in place. The tack coat will flash quickly, usually in a few minutes.

**OVERALL REFINISHING**

There is no universal way for overall refinishing of a vehicle. However, most experienced painters agree that the following method is an excellent technique. Start by painting the roof, then the rear, then the driver side, front, and finally the passenger side.

It will produce minimum overspray on horizontal surfaces. This will also help keep a wet edge when starting a new section.

Wet edge means that the area just painted will still be wet when starting to paint a new adjoining area.
APPLYING BASECOAT/CLEARCOAT

More and more vehicles have basecoat/clearcoat finishes, it is very important to become familiar with them. You must first spray the color, your basecoat over the repair area. The primer sections first.

When spraying, two medium coats of basecoat should be applied. The basecoat does NOT have to be glossy, and only enough should be used to achieve hiding. Two or three medium wet coats of clear should be applied next. Allow at least 15-30 minutes flash time between coats.

Avoid sanding the basecoat. If sanding must be done because of dirt or imperfections, allow the paint time to dry. Wet sanding the 1000 grit sandpaper will minimize sand scratches.

The sanded area must then be given another coat of basecoat to prevent streaking. On panel repairs, only spray the basecoat where needed. You do NOT have to basecoat the whole panel if the existing color is acceptable.

Use as much of the existing color as possible to help avoid a color mismatch. Do NOT load clearcoats on too heavily. Because they are clear, it is easy to use too much trying to increase the desired glamour effect and you may just come out running the product.

Also do NOT use thick viscosity clearcoats. Clears do NOT perform better when they are under-reduced. Thin or reduce clearcoats according to the label.
REMOVAL OF MASKING TAPE

After you are finished with you base/clear (best time to remove is about 2-3 hours after paint), pull the tape slowly so that it comes off evenly.

Be sure NOT to touch any painted areas because the paint might NOT be completely dry. Fingerprints or tape marks could result.

Never allow paint to dry thoroughly before removing the tape. This could cause the paint to peel off along with the tape.

After your done with your paint job, clean your gun. There are many different ways to clean your gun properly.

Just make sure you follow the steps in the instructions that came with the gun.

I show you my way of cleaning and storing guns in my other videos inside of VIP.

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WET SANDING - COLORSANIDNG

You may need to wet sand the paint surface on larger areas to remove orange peel.

Wet sanding should normally be done with a rubber sanding block. For finishing, 1200-1500 and 2000 and finer grits of wet sandpaper are used.

I like to cut using a DA to speed up the process. This is for experienced guys only and I do not recommend doing this if you’re just starting out. I do have videos on this in the course as well.

I start with a 1200-1500 on a dry disc. It cuts faster, then I wash it with a 2000 grit, then buff.

Wet sand in a small circular motion. Use plenty of water to flush away paint debris. Dip the block in a bucket of water or use a hose to flow water over the area. You also want to use a drop of soap in the water to help clean the surface as you sand.

You do not want to cut too deep into the finish so you want to check the area often while sanding. If you cut through the clearcoat or color, repainting will be necessary.

BUFFING and POLISHING WITH PROPER PADS

Polishing involves using very fine compound to bring the paint up to full gloss. Many finishing systems recommend the use of different buffing and
polishing pads. It is important to use a slow-speed machine to avoid static build-up and high surface temperatures.

Do not push down on the buffer. Let the weight of the machine do the work.

Because the compound has a tendency to dry out, do not try to do too large an area at one time. Always keep the machine moving to prevent cutting through or burning the topcoat.

As the compound starts to dry out, lift up a little on the machine so pad speed increases. This will make the surface start to shine.

You can hand polish small or hard to reach areas, or just use a mini pneumatic buffer. Machine polish the rest of the vehicle.

Instead of a circular action buffer, you should use an orbital action machine for you final polishing.

It will move the polishing compound in a random manner to prevent swirl Marks left from machine compounding.

Final polishing should always be done with an extra fine polishing compound.

**CARING FOR YOUR NEW PAINT JOB FINISH**

A newly refinished vehicle must receive special care, as the paint can take several months to cure.

Each paint manufacturer will have specific recommendations for caring for a new finish. You should avoid commercial car washes and harsh cleaners for 1-3 months.

Hand wash using only water and a soft sponge for the first month. Dry with cotton or micro fiber towels only. Avoid waxing and polishing for up to two months to prevent solvent pop.

The paint is still new and need to breathe, let out chemicals and cure. Some guys ask when the best time is to cut and buff the paint job...
Well, it’s a hard question because if you’re doing a customer job, then you need to get it out asap and those are usually cut and buffed the day after the paint job.

I personally like to wait 2-4 weeks after a fresh paint job, then I’ll cut and buff it to a pro gloss.

I like to give it time to cure and shrink if needed. During that time depending on the clearcoat that you used, you may have some dieback, which means that your clear coat get’s a little dull.

Not to worry, most cheaper clears will give you that effect. It can and will buff out to a nice gloss if you cut and buff it correctly.

If you used a more brand name good quality clear you will have less dieback and can have that same gloss look even after the 2-4 week curing period.

With that said, if you can afford it, get the best clear that you can afford. If you can only afford the $100. clear, no big deal because in reality, if you know how to color sand and buff correctly, you can make that thing shine and pop just like the expensive $300 clear coats.

And I’ll show you EXACTLY how to do this to all of your projects.

I hope you found this short guide helpful and informative.

You know, a lot of guys LOVED my 85 page auto body manual but I’ve had a quite of few guys ask for a more condensed version.
And I thought it was a great time to make a more condensed easy to comprehend version.

So here it is :) 

Be sure to keep coming back to the blog over here to see what I’m working on and to learn the latest tricks in DIY auto body.

Feel free to comment anytime. I am the one who ALWAYS reads and replies to the comments on the blog and I can’t wait to hear form you.

We’ve helped hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world learn auto body and paint for free at our site.

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Thanks for checking out my website and this manual. I really hope you got a lot out of it.
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*To your success!*

-*Tony*