



Detailing your vehicle

Washing a vehicle is one thing; detailing it is quite another. With detailing, every tiny corner of the vehicle is washed, dried, waxed and polished-until it looks brand new again.

There are many private businesses around today that will be more than happy to handle this time-consuming task for you.

Detailing a vehicle starts with a thorough cleaning. A pressure washer can be a great help. Then wipe off the entire vehicle and allow it to dry thoroughly. Follow this up with a new coat of wax. For best results, you should use solid wax that has to be applied by hand. If your vehicle has chrome accessories, be sure to use the right products to really make them shine.

The wheels also deserve some extra attention, partially if you have mag wheels. Cleaning each spoke takes time, but the results are well worth the effort. You can use a special product to make the sidewalls of your tires sparkle and it will make all the difference to the overall gleam of your vehicle. When it comes to cleaning all the chrome details and ornaments, patience is vital!

The downside of all this hard work is that you'll have to redo the entire operation before you know it (unless you keep your vehicle under a tarp in your garage, that is). But if you've ever seen a detailed vehicle, you'll agree the results are worth it—even if they last for only a few days!

FEATURING

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TRY THE NEW PLATINUM WASH

to conquer and defeat the extreme dirt of Spring!

Did You Know?

Winter-specific windshield wiper blades are covered with a flexible rubber sleeve that prevents ice from accumulating. This increases visibility while driving, especially during freezing rain and hail.

Snow removal trucks need to keep their speed below 50 kilometres per hour to be able to clear the roads properly. So be patient when following one of these trucks, and never try to pass it — you don't know what the roads are like ahead.

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Spring time car care

Five good reasons to visit your mechanic this spring



Between salt, potholes, snowstorms and ice, winter isn't the best for our poor cars. If you haven't already made an appointment for an inspection this spring, here are a few reasons why it might be a good idea to do so:

1. TO ENHANCE COMFORT

Difficult road conditions in winter can affect your car in dif-

ferent ways. For example, your alignment might be off, causing your drive to be less than pleasant.

2. TO IMPROVE SAFETY

Winder driving conditions are conducive to rust formation, especially on and around your brakes. Take advantage of your tire change and have a detailed inspection done to ensure your vehicle is safe to drive.

3. TO MAKE YOUR VEHICLE LAST

In addition to skewing your wheel alignment — something that can prematurely ruin your tires — driving on winter roads can damage parts of your engine and reduce the effectiveness of the additives in your motor oil. It's no secret that regularly scheduled maintenance is the best way to maxi-

mize your vehicle's lifespan.

4. TO SAVE MONEY

A springtime inspection will help prevent your car from breaking down and can correct minor problems before they become serious. This will help you save money in the long run!

5. TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Low tire pressure, low oil levels, broken filters, defective climate control — a poorly maintained car burns more fuel, which isn't good for the environment or your wallet!

A well-maintained vehicle provides peace of mind — and peace of mind is priceless.

Why is it important to check your fluids come spring?

Lubricant, coolant, cleaner — there are various fluids in your car that play several important roles when it comes to your engine's health. And since the mechanical components of your car are under heavy strain throughout the winter months, it's important to check your oil and other fluid levels when the weather lightens up in order maintain their effectiveness.

MOTOR OIL

Motor oil is subject to significant temperature variations during the cold season. These changes are responsible for the formation of moisture, which reduces the effectiveness of the oil's lubricating properties. That's why it's important to drain your fluids every spring, even if you don't drive much during the winter. Alternatively, if you use motor oil designed to withstand extreme cold, come spring, it will need to be replaced with one that's more suitable for summer weather.

OTHER FLUIDS

During the summer, coolant prevents your engine from overheating. So it's important to check on it before the summer heat wave finally hits. To preserve the mechanical parts of your car for as long as possible, your brake and power steering fluids have to be carefully maintained — your mechanic will make sure they stay at the

appropriate levels so that your car continues to work at peak performance.

Last but not least, take a second to check your windshield wiper fluid: have you filled it since the last snowstorm? Don't wait until you need it to find out!



During the winter, motor oil undergoes temperature variations that foster moisture formation and reduce its effectiveness. Change it in the spring!



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Spring time car care

Have your car looking spotless in six easy steps

With sunny days once again looming on the horizon, it's without a doubt time to start thinking about having your car cleaned from top to bottom. Ready to roll? Here's a small reminder of the main tasks you'll have to take care of:

1. Lighten your load. Take everything you know you won't be needing this summer out of your trunk (shovels, sand-

bags, etc.) and remove any winter gear (skis for example) that will make your car heavy for no reason. Making your car lighter and more aerodynamic will improve its fuel efficiency.

2. Vacuum. Pick up or throw away everything that's lying around in your car, take out the carpets and vacuum the floors. This will remove all the

dust and gravel that's accumulated over the winter.

3. Clean the carpets. Rid your carpets of any salt stains with a mixture of 1 cup of vinegar and 4 cups of warm water (and a stiff brush, of course).

4. Clean the interior. Use a damp cloth along with specialized cleaning products for each type of surface in your car (leather, fabric, etc.) to clean the dashboard, seats, doors and other accessories.



5. Make the body sparkle. Rinse the exterior of the car thoroughly, and then clean it from top to bottom (the hood, roof, trunk, doors, bumpers, wheels, rims) with products that are suitable for the task (and won't damage the paint). Note that it's far easier to work in cloudy weather, which prevents streaks.

6. Wash the windows. Clean your windows with the help of a specialized cleaning product or with homemade cleaner (such as the one used to clean your carpets).

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Four auto maintenance mistakes to avoid this spring



There's no getting around it: if you want your car to run smoothly for years to come, you need to perform some basic upkeep. Start this spring off on the right foot by avoiding these maintenance faux pas.

- 1. Changing your tires at the wrong time.** Changing your tires as soon as the snow starts to melt is a risky bet. Play it safe and wait until snowstorm warnings wind down and the temperature outside climbs above 7 °C. Anything lower, and the rubber on your summer tires will stiffen and lose traction. It's an equally bad idea to keep your winter tires on year-round. Not only are snow tires less efficient than summer models, but you'll also wear them out twice as fast if you don't make the switch.
- 2. Neglecting spring tune-ups.** Over the winter, the flu-

ids that keep your car running smoothly are put to the test. It's important to check their levels come spring and to refill as needed. Don't forget to take a peek beneath your car as well; rough winter roads often take a toll on your vehicle's underbelly.

- 3. Putting off spring cleaning.** There's more to a good spring cleaning than a shiny, sleek car. Dirt and salt accumulated over the winter can damage the paint and cause rust to form, so get scrubbing without delay.
- 4. Lugging around winter gear.** Bags of sand or salt, shovels, traction aids and ski racks all increase the weight and wind resistance of your car, which drives up fuel consumption.

Still not eager to wash your car this spring? Get ready for rust. You've been warned!



Spring time car care

Commonly asked questions about replacing windshield wipers



Are your windshield wipers streaking, squeaking, skipping or splitting? If so, it's not surprising. Wiper deterioration is a common consequence of winter driving and nothing is harder on them than ice and snow. As soon as wipers are no longer function-

ing optimally, and visibility is compromised, it's imperative to get them replaced. This is quick and easy to do — you just need to know a few basic things.

WHAT TYPES OF WIPERS ARE AVAILABLE?

There are three main types of wipers:

- **Conventional wipers.** These wipers are the most affordable. They're durable and reliable.
- **Aero wipers.** This type of wiper adheres better to the windshield, ensuring a streak-free cleaning.
- **Hybrid wipers.** Offering the best of both worlds, these wipers are basically heavy-duty aero wipers.

WHAT SIZE SHOULD I BUY?

The size of wiper you need depends on the type of vehicle you own. You can consult your owner's manual to find out

how long they should be. Alternatively, you can go to an auto parts store: most have a computer in which you can input your car's information in order to learn what wiper size you need.

HOW ARE WIPERS REMOVED AND INSTALLED?

Removing wipers is usually a simple matter that requires little more than unhooking them. However, the precise method to do so depends on the type and brand.

Installing new wipers is just as easy and involves simply hooking or clipping them on. The packaging will contain instructions to guide you. However, this is a service that most auto shops will perform inexpensively or even for free when you purchase wipers from them.

If your wipers are no longer functioning well, don't wait to swap them out — visibility is essential to staying safe on the road.

What every car owner should know about brake maintenance

When behind the wheel, your safety depends on the proper functioning of your brakes. It's important to understand, however, that critical brake components deteriorate with time. Two items that require regular inspection are the brake pads and the brake fluid.

BRAKE PADS

Brake pads wear down due to friction and usually need to be replaced about every 50,000 kilometres or when there's one-eighth or less of the pad lining remaining. When brake pads are nearing the end of their lifespan they let you know by emitting a high-pitched screeching noise as you brake.

BRAKE FLUID

Over time, brake fluid absorbs moisture and contaminants that make it less effective. It should be replaced about every two years or every 35,000 kilometres. However, recommendations vary by manufacturer (check your owner's manual).

Leaks can sometimes occur but it's uncommon that your car's brake fluid levels will suddenly drop. The most obvious sign of a leak is a puddle under your car that has the consistency of vegetable oil. Your dashboard warning light coming on is another clear indication. Generally, a leak will also change the feel of your brake pedals — they'll feel squishy or spongy when you pump on them. Verify that your brake fluid levels are in order by checking the brake fluid reservoir under your hood. Needless to say, a leak requires immediate attention.

While these are the two parts of the brake system that typically require the most attention, issues with other parts (the rotors, callipers, brake shoes, etc.) can certainly arise. Some signs of these other types of brake problems are grinding, clunking noises and vibrations when braking. If you notice these things, get your car inspected ASAP!





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Taking proper care of your air conditioner



If your car's air conditioning system has ever given up the ghost during a hot car is not much fun. That is why it's important to keep your AC system well maintained. But how do you know if it is working properly? If your AC can maintain your vehicle's inside temperature at least 10° lower than the outside temperature, then things are okay.

When an air conditioning system is unable to do its job, the problem is usually caused by low fluid levels within the system.

If a leak is not the main cause of the fluid loss, then a specialist will have to be consulted. Air conditioning systems are increasingly complex these days, meaning that maintenance work should always be carried out by recognized professionals.

A malfunction in the system could also be caused by a problem with the compressor, which is the key element in the cooling system. If the compressor isn't functioning properly, it will likely have to be replaced. This can be a costly job, so before you instruct

your mechanic to replace it, have it checked out first — some models have sensors that control the temperature and the pressure inside the system. These sensors might just be cutting power to the compressor to avoid overheating.

Lastly, if your car's cabin air filter is dirty or blocked, it may feel like the AC system isn't working at optimal output. Keep an eye on it and have it changed regularly. And don't forget that it is recommended to have your whole AC system checked once a year.

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