

## The Right Car Wax for You

[Car wax](#) adds longevity and shine to your cars finish, but only if you choose the right wax. Some car waxes will cover your cars plastic parts with residue; others will actually make your cars finish less smooth as the wax scratches the finish or forms a haze over it. When you go to choose from the shelves upon shelves of car waxes at your local auto store, here are a few questions to keep in mind.

Which is more important to you, depth of color or shine? A natural car wax like Carnauba wax will shine slightly less brightly than artificial waxes, but will give the color depth. Artificial waxes, which include most spray on and liquid waxes, shine beautifully but give a less rich color, and can emphasize minor flaws. Artificial waxes are particularly bad with dark colors. Experts suggest that dark cars be waxed only with natural waxes. For lighter cars, either natural or artificial waxes are good, depending on whether you want your cars finish to be shinier or to have more richness of color.

Is there much plastic on your car? Some car waxes react poorly to matte plastic, especially the porous, dark kind so popular on recent models, and deposit a residue that may need extra attention with a special cleaner to remove. If your car is detailed with a lot of plastic, find a wax that is rated as working well with plastic.

How durable do you want the car wax to be, and how long are you willing to spend in applying it? Liquid waxes performed the best in durability and cleaning tests during a Consumer Reports comparison test of waxes. They also took the most time and effort to apply well, largely because spreading them evenly and rubbing out the streaks took considerable extra buffing. Spray on waxes were the fastest to apply, but they lasted the least amount of time and were the least effective at cleaning. Consumer Reports recommended them mainly for new cars whose finishes were in excellent condition, for owners who were willing to wax frequently, and for stopgap treatments in between treatments with liquid or paste wax. Paste waxes took about as long to apply as liquid waxes, and were about as durable. Although paste waxes used to be notoriously time consuming to apply, Consumer Reports noted that now they are packaged with applicators that have cut their application time significantly, even and made them slightly easier to apply than liquid waxes.

When you choose a car wax, consider what visual qualities are most important to you, whether you need to take the plastic detailing on your car into account, how long you are willing to take to apply wax, and how often you are willing to apply wax. Be frank with yourself about your goals, and do not feel that you should opt for a high effort, high upkeep wax just because the experts recommend it. Unless the experts are going to come and maintain your car for you, pick the car wax that is right for you and your car.

## About the Author

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