



## **38 Hot Ideas To Keep Your Used Car Looking New**

*By David Leonhardt & Corey Rozon*



## 38 Hot Ideas To Keep Your Used Car Looking New



Everyone has their own secret tips for keeping their used cars looking as new as the day they drove them off the lot. We decided to make this a community-driven book, so we put the question out to you, Joe Car Driver, to see what things you do to keep your car shiny, clean and retaining that new car smell.

We received many suggestions, from the hilarious, Tip #37 – “Give it to your grandmother to drive until you are ready to sell it” to the ridiculous, Tip#15 – “Don't drive it” to the familiar Tip#6 – “Perform regular maintenance, such as an oil change” to the not so well known, Tip#11 – “Do a thorough claying of the car from front to back”.

With all your suggestions we have compiled, in this FREE e-book, the top *38 Hot Ideas To Keep Your Used Car Looking New*.

Enjoy!

# 1

## Tennis Ball Trailer Hitch Covers



Let's start small... Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](http://1in8motorsports.org) suggests one of the best ways to keep rust from accumulating on your chrome trailer hitch is to take a tennis ball, cut a slit in it and slide over the ball of the trailer hitch.

We always wondered why dogs like to chase cars... now we know.

# 2

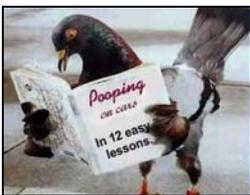
## Always Use Protection



“After shampooing my fabric seats and floor mats”, says Sarah Lee Marks of [My Car Lady.com](http://mycarlady.com), “I spray fabric protection on them and leave the car doors open or the windows down to allow proper drying. This keeps stains and dirt to a minimum and will go a long way to preserving the interior of your vehicle.”

# 3

## Clean Bird Droppings



“Don't park under trees or places where birds hang out,” says Jeffrey Geibel, APR Principal of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](http://geibel.com) “Tree sap is bad for the finish, and so are bird droppings, so get them off as soon as you can.”

# 4

## Prevent Cracked Dashboards



“ArmorAll the heck out of the dashboard and any other plastic type of materials in your car that will be exposed to the sun,” says Kristen Ziraldo of Niagara-on-the-Lake, “The ArmorAll will protect it from fading and keep it from cracking.”

# 5

## Have De-Icer Spray Handy



For those of use who live in the cold white north, especially in the dead of winter, Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](http://1in8Motorsports.org) suggests to always carry a bottle of De-Icer spray with you.

De-Icer will help you get into those frozen locks, but if you forget to close that sunroof you are going to need a little more help.

# 6

## Perform Regular Maintenance



One of the easiest ways to keep your used car looking new is through regular maintenance. Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](http://GEIBEL Solutions Marketing) suggests that the most critical basic maintenance items for your car to reach 100,000 kilometres are doing such things as changing your oil and filter every 3,000 to 5,000 kilometres, having a coolant flush every two years and getting the automatic transmission serviced at 30,000 or three years.

If nothing else, make sure to get an annual check-up for your car.

# 7

## Takin' Out The Trash



“Clean out all garbage every time you get home,” says Brenda Lott of [Nature is Amazing.com](http://Nature is Amazing.com). It’s great that drivers are becoming more environmentally conscience and not throwing their trash out the windows anymore, but you still have to remember to clean out that car once and awhile. Let’s repeat that – do not let your car look like this!

# 8

## That New Car Smell



“Cars can start smelling stale in the winter,” says Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](http://1in8 Motorsports.org) “But soak a small rag in Febreze and put it under the seat. You'll have a new car smell for months.”  
Or if you are not into Febreze as [Raj](#) suggests “Place car air fresheners in hidden areas: new car smell, no tacky trees”.

# 9

## The Key Is In The Details



“Every 2 years get a full detail,” says Rick Stratton founder of [Feed.us](http://Feed.us) “I just did this on my 2004 Volvo V70R and it looks like new. The trick is finding a good detailer”.

# 10

## Wash Me Please



If you are not able to find a good detailer in your area, Brenda Lott of [Nature is Amazing.com](http://Nature is Amazing.com) suggests the least you can do is wash the inside of your car’s windows twice a year. Not only will your car retain that new car look, but you will be able to see better, drive safer and maybe even avoid a potential collision that will make your used car not look so new anymore.

# 11

## Molding The Clay



Dan, an executive with the Canadian Government, spends a whole day every spring detailing his two cars himself. Starting with a good and thorough hand wash, including a spray and wash on the underside of the hood and engine bay he then moves onto a thorough [claying](#) of his cars from front to back. Although it may look like a piece of clay, it is in fact a synthetic Poly-Elastic resin material specifically made to remove embedded surface contaminants from your car. After the claying has been performed Dan touches up of all paint chips, which involves painting, sanding, starting with a 600 grit wet sandpaper and moving up to 1500 grit, then adding the clear coat and again sanding and buffing. He finishes up by changing the wipers blades and removing, cleaning and storing the winter tires. He finishes the day off by checking all the bulbs and cleaning the inside of the car.

# 12

## Crack Kills



Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](#) has another suggestion to keep your car running like new. As the car gets up there in age things are going to start to wear down, so make sure you look for regular wear and tear, especially checking for cracks in all the belts and hoses. It is better to spot these issues before you head out on a long road trip.

# 13

## Let Sleeping Dogs Lie



Jennifer L. Jacobson, founder of [Jacobson Communication](#) and an author of the upcoming book "42 Rules of Social Media for Business" often takes her dog Pepper with her in the car, "I have a 2008 Volvo V50 with a gorgeous leather interior, and Pepper often has long toenails and muddy paws. My solution is a \$50.00 hallway rug from Bed Bath and Beyond. It matches my car, and fits perfectly across the back seat, protecting the leather. When people ride in the back of the car, I can roll up the rug and put it in the trunk, thus avoiding the lived in "puppy owns my car" aesthetic".

# 14 Pre-flight Check



“Pilots check their aircraft prior to each flight,” says Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](#) “but if you ask the typical car owner when the last time they checked the tire pressure, fluids (oil, transmission, coolant, brake fluid, etc.) they would look at you with a blank stare. Having owned only six cars in the last 37 years, many of them driven beyond 100,000 miles, I suggest checking your car weekly; it takes less than 10 minutes”.

# 15 Don't Drive Your Car?



Chris Pulford, of the Yates Street After Hours Night Club has a suggestion for one of the easiest ways to keep your used car looking like new “Don't drive it,” he says. Sarcastic? Yes. True, also yes. There are many alternatives to driving, such as telecommuting, shopping online, etc. and whenever possible, walking or biking. It's not just that the car will look and drive like a much newer car, but you'll increase your fitness and decrease pollution, all the while saving fuel dollars and repair bills.

# 16 Seek Shelter



“Park in a garage as often as you can, or can afford,” says Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](#) “Street parking is an invitation for a break-in or sideswipe. BMW = Break My Window”.

# 17 **Paint Job on the Fly**



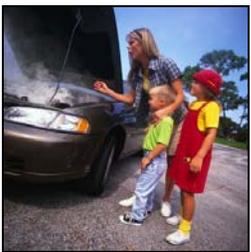
As your car gets older the paint can start to chip and small rust spots can set in. “Remove rust and repaint those areas yourself,” suggest Brenda Lott of [Nature is Amazing.com](http://Nature is Amazing.com).

# 18 **Good Ole’ Rusty**



If you are concerned about rust there are a couple of things you can do to prevent it. From using a spray on rust protection to installing an electronic rust protector, or something as simple as washing and waxing your car as Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](http://1 in 8 Motorsports.org) suggests, “Salt can really create problems for exterior car paint, so if possible, give your car a good waxing before really bad weather sets in”.

# 19 **Damsel In Distress**



“Don't drive to failure,” says Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](http://GEIBEL Solutions Marketing) “Many items on a car need to be replaced at regular intervals and you should know what these items are and when to replace them. You don't want to drive until something breaks because it usually starts to break something else. For example worn brake pads will eventually score the brake rotors and a worn wiper blade can scratch the windshield”.

# 20

## Junk In The Trunk



“Invariably something always gets spilled or leaves an ugly dirt reminder in the cargo area of the car,” says Sarah Lee Marks of [My Car Lady.com](http://MyCarLady.com). “Furthermore sometimes when changing a tire you need something to protect your back/knees when working on a road emergency. When first acquiring a new car I make my own trunk mat from the leftover house carpet we all seem to save in our garage. The easiest way to get it perfect is to create a pattern using newspaper. Lay the paper down in the back and use a pen to outline the shape of the interior cargo area. Cut the paper to size, lie out the carpet and cut to the shape of the pattern. This will save the trunk floor and will be easily removable when you need something to protect your clothes during an emergency road repair”.

# 21

## I’ve Been Everywhere



If you want your car to look like new Brenda Lott of [Nature is Amazing.com](http://Nature is Amazing.com) recommends, “Removing any old, faded stickers from your windows.” Such as those CAA or AAA stickers that have now bleached in the sun. Also all those old oil change reminders. If you’re a bumper sticker kind of person, those should be removed to.

# 22

## No Smoking



In order to retain that new-car-smell for as long as possible Brenda Lott of [Nature is Amazing.com](http://Nature is Amazing.com) has this suggestion, “Don't let anyone smoke inside your car”.

# 23

## Searching For My Lost Shaker



“Rubber floor mats can save expensive carpeting,” suggest Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](http://1in8Motorsports.org), “especially from salt”. If you live anywhere there is snow and ice, chances are there is also salt, which can ruin your carpeting.

# 24

## The Drive Thru Is Now Closed



“Don't let kids, or anyone else eat or drink in the car. Ever,” says [Wendy Stone](#) “It might be a bit impractical in Canada, but it works if you can manage it. No smells, no mess, fewer stains. Interior stays fresher and cleaner, which makes a big difference”.

# 25

## Stuck On The Side Of The Road



“If you plan to keep your car to 100,000km and beyond know when you need to replace items such as shock absorbers, and even when it's a good idea to replace the starter or alternator before they fail,” Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](#). “Parts and sensors do wear out, and those \$20 sensors control the car's computer, which tells the engine and transmission what to do, to a much bigger extent than you would imagine”. Jeff goes on to suggest that at 100,000km most of these sensors should be replaced. And unless you want them to fail on a cold snowy night, Jeff also suggests replacing the starters and alternators around the 125-150,000km mark.

# 26

## Remember Your Rubbers



“If you live where it snows, get winter mats,” suggests Rick Stratton founder of [Feed.us](#). “Or buy an extra set of mats when you buy the car, and put them away for when you sell it”. In fact, it might be worth buying upgraded mats with deeper grooves than the ones the dealership supplies, in order to avoid spillage.

# 27

## Wash, Rinse, Repeat



They say cleanliness is next to godliness. We think [Steve Cypher](#) concurs with this suggestion: “To keep the interior from getting prematurely worn, vacuum it out thoroughly at least once a month. Shampoo the seats and floor mats at least once a year to remove dirt and grime and clean all hard surfaces, such as the dashboard, with a damp chamois, rinsing it often in clear water”.

# 28

## Don't Forget Your Leathers



“We bought a Toyota Prius in 2005,” says Miriam J Hall of [Green Gardens to Go](#). “There was a long waiting time, so when the dealership called and said they had one, but not in the colour we had asked for. The exterior is grey, but the interior is a light tan. I took one look and decided we would need to take proactive measures. The front seats were easy; I bought two leather seat covers that stretch over the seats. The back was a bigger challenge. I found three leather like covers with elastic bands, and I spread one of them across the seat and then attached the other two to the head rests and tucked them into the crack. This arrangement is a little precarious, as it needs to be rearranged after the kids get restless, but it does save the upholstery from the inevitable spills”.

# 29

## A Little Spray Will Do Ya



“Spray waxing is super,” says Jack Boyne of St. Catharines. “I use [Meguiar's](#) Detailer after I wash the car. If you haven't time to do the whole car, at least take time to do the horizontal, or flat surfaces. These take the brunt of summer sun. The spray actually softens the wax surface and allows you to shine it up. When the wax starts to get thin, your polishing cloth drags on the surface and it's time for another wax job. Periodically you should use a cleaner to remove layers of old wax.”

# 30

## When Your Dreams Turn To Dust



“Vacuum, vacuum, vacuum,” pleads RV and automotive writer [Janet Groene](#), “Small crumbs and grains of sand add up to a gritty, but often invisible, sandpaper that abrades automotive carpeting and upholstery. Clean up small spills and stains instantly, before they soak in and set, and blot, don't rub.”

# 31

## I Wash My Hands Of It



“Learn to wash your own car,” says Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](#). “Commercial car washes often recycle the water, and the brushes are brutal on the finish. A car wash kit only costs about \$25, and you surely know someone with a faucet and hose. Also only use automotive-purpose cleaner products”.

# 32

## Two Loops In The Back



Ken Vrana of [1 in 8 Motorsports.org](http://1in8motorsports.org) has this tip to offer, “We're a motorsports organization and I can tell you car bras cause more problems than they save. Depending on the weather conditions were you live, they can cause huge paint fade issues even when used for only a day or two, especially in very hot areas and areas with heavy salt air content”.

# 33

## Blowin' In The Wind



“Moms with messy kids or dogs that shed should consider the old bed sheet trick,” recommends Sarah Lee Marks of [My Car Lady.com](http://MyCarLady.com). “Find an old bed sheet and cover the back seat. Tuck the bottom of the sheet under the bottom cushion by pulling it forward. Cut small slits to slip over the seat belts. Safety pin the loose fabric hanging over the back of the seat, creating a quasi-fitted effect. When the sheet needs to be cleaned, remove and into the washer it goes. This is a lot less expensive or time intensive than repeated shampooing or purchasing replacement seat covers for factory seat cushions”.

# 34

## Not Just For Ears Anymore



If you really want to get in there to do a deep cleaning [Raj](#) suggest to “use Q-Tips to clean the borders of consoles and buttons”. That is self-serve detailing, which isn't so bad if you turn on the radio while you work.

# 35

## Turtle Power



“Wax your car at least twice a year,” recommends Jeffrey Geibel of [GEIBEL Solutions Marketing](#). “Waxing helps maintain the finish, which is very critical if your car is frequently parked outside, especially in cold winter or hot southern climates”.

# 36

## Clean Up After Yourself



“Take out any unnecessary items,” Brenda Lott of [Nature is Amazing.com](#). “This also prevents your vehicle from being broken into”. A smashed in window and ripped out stereo will sure take that new-car-look out of your car.

# 37

## Owned By A Little Old Lady



If your goal for keeping your car looking like new is only so you can sell it, Kristen Ziraldo of Niagara-on-the-Lake has a suggestion for you. “Give it to your grandmother to drive until you sell it”. This way you can honestly say a sweet little old lady only drove this car on Sunday’s to go to church.

# 38

## Dirty Feet, Clean Seat



Get a simple plastic cover for the back of your front seats. Every time somebody gets into the back seat of your car, their boots or shoes scrape against the back of the front seats. Mud, slush and whatever else might be just outside your vehicle will get left behind. Better it gets left on a disposable plastic cover than on your seat fabric.



## **About the Project**

This e-book is a free product being offered for anyone to download on behalf of [Monster Auto](#). If you are Canadian, Monster Auto is the easiest used car / new car classified website available.

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