

Automotive Upholstery Care

There's nothing quite like that "new car smell", but chances are, time has caused your vehicle to smell like a combination of tennis shoes, tobacco and wet dog. There's no magic potion to regain the original luster of your car's interior, but with a little elbow grease and detailing, you can breath new life, and a fresher scent, into tired upholstery.

Automotive upholstery comes in a variety of materials and fabrics including vinyl, leather, cloth and velour. Maintaining the durability and cleanliness of automotive upholstery can be quite expensive, as many upholstery professionals charge expensive rates to remove the smallest stain. Fortunately, there are a number of inexpensive tricks that you can do to clean up the kind of minor accidents you'll encounter during your daily drive.

These automotive upholstery care tips can involve the use of common household products that are easy to use and readily available. However, you must keep in mind that major stains or marks might require the assistance of a professional automotive upholstery service to avoid further damage caused by improper treatment.

* Cleaning Automotive Upholstery

Common automotive upholstery, like many fabrics, can be easily cleaned. Eliminate all surface dust using a small vacuum, and then use a crevice tool for detailing between small cracks and spaces in the upholstery. Leather and vinyl upholstery must be cleaned using a suitable cleaning solution with protector. This added protection helps to maintain a pliable leather surface, and prolongs its beautiful appearance.

* Spills

It's bound to happen to any commuter: you hit the tiniest bump or hit the brakes, and you've got a spill on your upholstery. When it happens, try to soak up as much of the liquid from the surface of the upholstery as you can, as quickly as possible. On cloth or velour seats, use a cotton rag or wads of paper towels to soak up the liquid. You'll need to apply heavy pressure to get as much of the liquid as possible from the upholstery.

* Heavy Stains

Heavy stains can give you a heavy heart, but don't be too quick to bring out stain removing chemicals that can damage upholstery. For most colored stains on automotive upholstery, especially noticeable ones, try dabbing the affected area with a baby wipe. If that does not lift the stain, try pre-treating the spot with a little soda water.

* Odor Removal

Aside from obvious sources like spilled beverages, automotive upholstery can easily pick up odors that circulate throughout the rest of the vehicle. After a while, the scent of the upholstery itself can be quite overwhelming, even after the odorous perpetrator has long since vanished. Cigarettes, drive-thru fast food bags and even innocent cups of coffee will all leave a lasting impression. In most cases, deodorizing sprays can clear the air. Make sure that the windows are open when you spray, to let harmful fumes escape. If your stinky culprit is cigarette smoke, more drastic measures can be in order to drive the odor away. Try to snuff out the smoke smell by shampooing the carpet with a quality commercial product. If the smell persists, you'll need to seek professional help.

* Leather Upholstery Care

There is nothing more luxurious than a car with leather seats. Automotive leather is the pinnacle of upholstery options, but can also be the hardest to maintain. If your automobile is clad in leather, you've already made quite an investment, and you know that it requires meticulous care. Most leather interiors undergo more wear and tear than fine leather furniture, and require the same degree of care. As with any type of leather, automotive leather upholstery reacts unfavorably to extreme temperatures. Premature deterioration, cracked surfaces and a dull appearance can be caused by severe hot and cold, water and excess dryness.

* Spills on Leather

Unlike fabric seats, sudden spills on leather upholstery can be easily cleaned with a damp cloth. Leather upholstery must be maintained with protectant. Purchase protectant specially developed for leather automotive upholstery, and apply it regularly to preserve the supple feel and natural moisture of the leather. Your beautiful leather seats can easily become a sticky, grubby mess. Avoid build-up by wiping away surface residue and dust on a regular basis.

Automobiles are big investments, and maintaining your car will help retain its value. With proper automotive upholstery care, you'll be able to keep your automobile looking and smelling just like a new car.