

There is a lot of confusion about the difference between a polish, and a wax. Many companies are marketing waxes and paint protectants as polishes and glazes and the terms have become almost interchangeable.

Professionals know there is a big difference.

*Meguiar's* is a true polish manufacture. That is, unlike many of our competitors that can only offer you a few products for cars with cured paint, *Meguiar's* product range runs from the highest quality finishing papers in the industry, to state-of-the-art pure synthetic paint protectants, to everything in-between.

Example: Most companies only offer the following products:

- Car wash
- Pre-wax cleaner
- One or two waxes (usually some type of natural wax or polymer/silicone synthetic protectant)
- Multi-surface vinyl protectant

And sometimes one or more of the following:

- Some type of wheel cleaner, leather treatment, or tire dressing.

Because they offer such a limited selection, and often times don't even manufacture the products themselves, they really have no expertise when it comes to formulating complex products that professionals require as an intricate part of performing their job duties as skilled craftsman. This is why frequently you will see a product whose purpose is to *protect* the paint labeled as a *polish*.

Instead of merely defining the difference between a polish and a wax, below you will find the *Meguiar's 5-Step Paint Care Cycle* and the products and procedures for each of the 5 steps.

### Meguiar's 5-Step Paint Care Cycle



The 5-step paint care cycle outlines the 5 basic but important procedures and the accompanying products that enable you to restore and maintain a show car shine on your car's finish.

Below are the 5 categories of products including pure polishes and cleaner/polishes as they are placed in the 5-step paint care cycle.

#### The 5-Step Paint Care Cycle includes:

Step 1	Product	Procedure
Washing	Wash Solutions	Washing

Washing removes loose surface dirt and loose contaminants that have not yet bonded to the surface. All *Meguiar's* wash products are specially formulated to clean well without stripping wax protection or dulling and drying out all paint types. All *Meguiar's* washes also contain special conditioning agents that leave behind a slick, high gloss surface.

Because most people wash their car more than any other procedure, it's important to use a car wash solution that is specifically formulated for the unique chemistry used to make modern clear coats. Above all, avoid using common dishwashing detergents because these products are extremely harsh and tend to dull the finish down with each use. Dish soaps are also hard on other materials and components such as rubber, vinyl and plastics, remember, when you wash your car with dish soap everything is subjected to the dulling and drying effects high alkaline soaps cause to your vehicle.

Step 2	Product	Procedure
Cleaning or  Surface Prep	Paint cleaners	Removing below surface defects
	Clay bars	Removing above surface contaminants

Surface Prep includes both *paint cleaning* (not to be confused with the washing step), and *claying the finish* (with a clay bar). To help you accomplish these two steps, *Meguiar's* offers a number of safe but effective paint cleaners and an easy to use clay bar kit that includes everything you need to clay your car's finish.

### Paint Cleaners

This includes highly specialized Compounds and Paint Cleaners, which utilize both microscopic and macroscopic **diminishing abrasives™ technology**. *Meguiar's* has pioneered and led the industry in diminishing abrasive technology since 1901. Over the course of these many years, *Meguiar's* has developed more formulas than any other company for performing the delicate procedure of removing a defect in the paint, while at the same time, removing as little paint as humanly possible during the process.

*Meguiar's* diminishing abrasive technology is one of *Meguiar's* most guarded secrets that is so highly sought after by our competitors and which completely separates us from the rest of the competition when you look at the results with your own two eyes. Our abrasive products, correctly used, leave the surface looking as though it were just *polished*, not as though it were just *scoured with a compound*.

Out of all the procedures in the 5-step paint care cycle, cleaning is the most important procedure because the results from your cleaning step will determine the end result for the polishing and protecting steps.

**"A surface won't go clear until it comes clean"**

It is vitally important that all bonded contaminants, surface imperfections, oxidation, pore-embedding stains, and built-up road grime, etc. first be removed in order to bring the finish to it's highest potential for clarity, gloss, depth and shine.

Applying a wax, whether it's synthetic, natural or a blend of both, to a neglected surface that has not been properly cleaned and then polished, will merely act to seal or lock the contaminants to the finish, and will do nothing to improve, or remove the other defects and in most cases will only marginally improve gloss, shine and reflectivity.

### Clay Bar Technology

Clay bar technology evolved as a natural reaction to the need that arose for a way to safely remove bonded contaminants from clear coat paints without resorting to traditional rubbing or polishing compounds and the resulting scratches caused by the sharp, hard abrasive typically used in these formulas.

In the old days, if you found overspray or any type of unwanted substance on the hood, roof or deck lid of your car that washing didn't remove, you could simply go to the garage and grab any old compound, and together with a rag, you could quickly remove the offending contaminants. After that you could simply apply just about any companies wax and presto-chango, the problem was gone.

Not so simple anymore.

If your were to perform that same procedure to a modern clear coat today, you would see a horrible looking scratched-up mess everywhere you applied the compound, and the wax would do nothing to cover the scratches up.

### **Enter the Clay bar**

Clay bars are non-abrasive bars of synthetic clay called *polyclay*. They are somewhat like a high-tech version of Play-Doh®. They work in three easy steps:

1. First, you mold the clay bar into a pancake-looking flat wafer
2. Second, you lubricate the finish with a spray lubricant like *Meguiar's Quik Detailer*
3. Third, you then rub the clay bar back and forth across the paint (somewhat like a bar of soap against your arm)

That's it! You are now *claying your car's finish*. As you're doing this, the clay bar will grab onto, lift, and pullout the contaminants that have bonded to the surface of your finish.

Generally speaking for most cars, only the horizontal surfaces need to be clayed, as it is the horizontal surfaces that contaminants tend to land on and if not removed within a reasonable period of time will then bond tightly to the surface. For extremely neglected vehicles, you can always evaluate the vertical surfaces and if need be, clay them too.

One important thing to keep in mind, if a vehicle's finish has bonded contaminants, it is highly likely that it also has below surface defects, for example, *pore-imbedding stains*. For this reason, *Meguiar's* recommends for best possible results, always use a paint cleaner after claying to insure the finish is clean both on top of the surface as well as below the surface.

Step 3	Product	Procedure
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	<b>Cleaner/Polish</b>	<b>Removing swirls and light scratches</b>
	<b>Pure Polishes</b>	<b>Creating brilliant shine and gloss</b>

*Meguiar's* offers two types of polishes, *Cleaner Polishes* and *Pure Polishes*. Cleaner Polishes are for removing very light or fine defects while restoring a crystal clear, smooth high gloss surface. Pure polishes are for finishes already in excellent condition and are for the purpose of creating brilliant high gloss with deep dark reflections.

If you look in **Webster's Dictionary** under the word **polish**, one of the definitions they include reads like this:

**"A preparation that is used to produce gloss, and often color for the protection and decoration of a surface."**

This definition best describes *Meguiar's* Pure Polishes. *Meguiar's* pure polishes are designed to create brilliant high gloss while preparing the surface for the application of a protective coating.

***Meguiar's pure polishes accomplish this without the use of abrasives.***

Another definition found in Webster's Dictionary for **polish** is,

**"To make smooth and glossy by friction."**

This definition best describes *Meguiar's* **Cleaner/Polishes**. *Meguiar's* cleaner polishes are formulated to very gently abrade the surface with *Meguiar's* Diminishing Abrasive™ and Buffered Abrasive™ technology to remove the finest defects and create a perfectly smooth, high gloss finish.

Depending on what type of paint you're working on, traditional paints like lacquers and enamels, or catalyzed clear coats, *Meguiar's* has the products specifically designed to work on both types of paints, not to mention many other surfaces such as plastics and polyester resins (Fiberglas Gel-coats).

### ***Meguiar's Trade Secret Polishing Oils***

*The trade secret oils Meguiar's uses in both types of polishes are unique to the industry and to this day have never been surpassed for **creating deep, dark reflections and brilliant high gloss** by any of our competitors in over 100 years.*

*The oils Meguiar's uses are also important in maintaining the original condition of the paint by filling in the naturally occurring microscopic pores and surface imperfections thus preventing detrimental substances and elements as simple as **water**, or worse, **acid-rain**, from entering into these pores and microscopic surface imperfections thus causing*

oxidation and chemical etching. These oils act to replace the **original resins** as they wear away through natural processes.

When paint is new, it is the most **impermeable** it will ever be, this means it is a very smooth **non-porous, continuous film**. With age, exposure to the environment and micro-scratching caused by day-in, day-out wear and tear, your paint develops **micro-fissures** in the surface along with other defects. These micro-fissures and other defects act to make the continuous film or coating of paint **more porous**. As this happens, your car's finish becomes more vulnerable to corrosive elements that will attack and degrade your finish.

Remember, waxes, synthetic or otherwise, are meant to be **Sacrificial Barriers** with the intended purpose sealing the surface, while blocking those things that would attack your paint, from coming into direct contact with the paint. Waxes protect your finish by **sacrificing themselves** so that your paint doesn't have to.

An analogy is your skin. In the same way you can clean, polish and protect your skin, you can clean, polish and protect your car's finish. Soap can be used to clean your skin and remove dirt from the pores. Skin lotions can be used to moisturize your skin, conditioning it and making it more clear and beautiful. Protection products like lotions used to protect hands from exposure to chemicals and UV protectants can be applied to help protect your skin from the things that would attack your skin if these harmful things could come into direct contact with your skin.

**While human skin and automotive paint are very different, the analogy is very similar.** With Meguiar's, you can:

- Wash your car's finish to remove unwanted and accumulated dirt contaminants
- Clean your paint with our special paint cleaners and cleaner/polishes
- Polish your paint with our pure polishes to create unequalled beauty
- Protect your paint with our advanced paint protection products
- Maintain your car's finish using our fast and easy to use maintenance products

The unique thing about Meguiar's highly specialized trade secret oils is their ability to restore and maintain the **Optical Clarity** of both single stage and clear coat paints in a way that polymers alone cannot match, the results of which are demonstrated in side-by-side comparison demonstrate.

<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
<b>Protecting</b>	<b>Waxes</b> <b>Paint Protectants</b>	<b>Waxing/Protecting</b>

Paint protection products (waxes by any other name), whether they are based on natural ingredients or synthetic ingredients (or a blend of both) provide a protective film, or **Sacrificial Barrier** (as mentioned above) against Mother Nature and other detrimental or corrosive substances. Without this sacrificial barrier, your finish is susceptible to attack at any time, as harmful or corrosive substances come into direct contact with the surface.

This brings up the topic of **Water Beading**. While most people use the **visual indicator** of **water beading on the surface** to mean their finish is **protected...** it is actually **only an indicator of High Surface Tension**.

**High Surface Tension does not automatically mean the coating that has been applied is actually providing any real or meaningful protective characteristics.**

Meguiar's R & D department has decades of expertise in creating the most advanced **polymer-based formula's** made from state-of-the-art engineered synthetic polymers, which are able to evenly cross-link very tightly to the surface and offer **real** protection on a multitude of surfaces against a multitude of attacks. Our products can also **achieve optimal cross-linking within 15 to 20 minutes** after application allowing the excess product to be removed shortly thereafter.

**Some of Meguiar's Polymer-Based waxes include:**

- [\*\*NXT Tech Wax\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Medallion Premium Paint Protection\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Meguiar's Gold Class Wax\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Meguiar's Cleaner/Wax\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Meguiar's Polymer Sealant\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Meguiar's Flagship Premium Marine Wax\*\*](#)

Even our **Spray Waxes** contain high performance, engineered synthetic polymers, as do some of our **Car Wash** products.

Besides acting as sacrificial barriers to protect the underlying surface, a premium wax can also increase the visual appearance of a finish. Many of Meguiar's waxes will not only provide better protection than the competition, but will also:

- Increase optical clarity and distinction of image (D.O.I.)
- Enhance and increase the reflective characteristics of medium to dark color finishes
- Add shine and slickness
- Create wet-looking gloss
- Fill-in and hide swirls and scratches
- Provide the most UV protection available
- Offer water sheeting action, or water beading action (depending on the wax)

*Choosing the right wax for your finish and your unique circumstances is something our Surface Care Experts would love to help you determine. Just call our Customer Care Hotline and talk to a knowledgeable technician to help you make the right choice.*

Step 5	Product	Procedure
Maintaining	Quick Detailers Spray Waxes	Maintaining finishes in excellent condition between regular washing, cleaning, polishing and protecting



*Maintenance products, like our [Quik Detailer](#), and our [Quik Wax](#), allow you quickly clean your car and restore that just waxed look in just a matter of minutes... practically anywhere.*

*Meguiar's [Quik Detailer](#) removes fresh contaminants before they have a chance to bond or etch into the surface.*

*Meguiar's [Quik Wax](#) quickly and easily boosts your already existing wax protection while turning your finish dramatically darker and increasing shine and gloss.*



*Meguiar's actually invented the concept of a mist and wipe product back in the early-80's with the introduction of their mist & wipe product called "Trigger Wash"*



*New Meguiar's NXT Generation<sup>®</sup> Tech Wax.*

*As leaders and experts in the surface care industry, we have a history of creating new products, such as mist & wipe products like our Quik Detailer and M-34 Final Inspection to help our customers maintain and beautify their vehicles.*

*In keeping with that history, we have just introduced a brand new spray wax that produces similar results as Meguiar's Quik Wax. It's actually a part of Meguiar's NXT Generation<sup>®</sup> line of products based upon Meguiar's ESP Technology (Engineered Synthetic Polymers) and is a companion product to Meguiar's new*

*NXT Tech Wax it's called NXT Spray Wax.*



*Meguiar's 5-Step Paint Care Cycle clearly demonstrates there are 5 basic steps to professional and intelligent car care.*

*Using the correct Meguiar's products and the right technique, you can remove scratches and swirls that have accumulated from years of neglect to successfully restore a flawless, show car finish as demonstrated here on a 1991 BMW E34 M5. The left side is untouched, while the right side has been professionally restored using all Meguiar's products.*



*The 5-Step Paint Care Cycle also enables you to understand exactly what a product is not just by the name on the label, but by the results the product accomplishes according to the 5 different groups of procedures outlined in the 5-Step Paint Care Cycle.*

*If a product is labeled a polish, but in fact is used to protect, then you know it's a wax or a paint protectant and not an actual polish in the true sense of the definition of the word. The inability of a company to correctly label their products should be a clear warning*

*that calls into skepticism any of their claims, not to mention the quality of their products as well as their credibility.*

*Here at Meguiar's we manufacture some very complex products, of which polishes and waxes are only a small portion of our complete line.*