

How-To: Body: Proper Use of a Clay Bar on a Corvette

Editor's Note:

To me 'Claying' is one of the most important steps in the car care process. The Clay will do a deep cleaning of the paint with its ability to safely remove Overspray, Rail Dust, Light Tree Sap Residue, Bug Splatter Industrial Fallout and General Road Grime.

The Clay Bar, known to professional detailers as a surface preparation bar, removes all those contaminants listed above so that there is nothing on the paint except for wax. It is not a wax and it leaves no residue behind. It is safe on all paint types and does no damage to the paint.

Before beginning make sure you have the following:

(Clay Bar and Lube) A Clay Bar System [see guide below]
(Towel) 100% Cotton Hand Size Towel
(Wrapper) Cellophane Cigarette Wrapper

In a well-lit, cool and dry area:

Step 1: Check for Surface Contaminants.

Technique: With two fingers inside the Wrapper gently glide it across the Surface. This will magnify any amount of Surface Contamination.

Tech Tip: Do not press down hard as you may free up some of the Surface Contaminants and scratch the Surface.

Step 2: Break off a 2 oz. portion of the Clay Bar.

Technique: Break off a 2oz piece of the Clay and roll it into a ball (store the remainder of the Clay in the container).

Tech Tip: If the Clay Bar is ever dropped onto the floor discard IMMEDIATELY.

Step 3: Saturate the Surface with the Lube.

Technique: Mist the Lube onto the Surface.

Step 4: Rub the Clay Bar onto the Surface.

Technique: Firmly press the ball of the Clay Bar onto the Surface to mold it to the contour of the Surface. Rub the Clay Bar on the Surface in a side-to-side motion with the Contour of the Panel.

Tech Tip: If the Surface begins to show any signs of drying wet again with the Lube.

Step 5: Wipe the Surface with the Towel.

Technique: Do not press hard onto the Surface with the Towel as you may induce some light surface scratches.

Tech Tip As you move from panel to panel 'fold' the clay to a new section.

Step 6: Inspect the Surface.

Technique: With the Wrapper inspect the Surface as in Step 1

Tech Tip: If the Surface still has some roughness to it repeat Steps 2 through 5.

Clay Bar Guide

The Blue Clay Bar:

I recently tested 3M's and ClayMagic's clay bar and have the same one that is imported from Japan (even has the same exact patent numbers on them, LOL). However, there is a tremendous price variation between the two with 3M's being around \$5.00 less. I have found the 3M one for around \$18. My Rating: Very Good.

The Yellow Clay Bar:

I recently tested Mother's and Zaino's clay bar and they appear to have the same exact one (although there is no patent number, LOL). Mother's clay bar is available for is available for around \$18 as well but I was given my Zaino clay bar so I am not sure of the price. My Rating: Very Good

The White Clay Bar:

I tested Meguiar's clay bar a years ago and was not at all impressed. Meguiar's clay bar retails for \$10. My Rating: Good

The Grey Clay Bar:

I recently tested Lusso's clay bar and the quality appears to be right in line with the 3M, ClayMagic, Mother's and Zaino. Lusso's clay bar retails for \$14. My Rating: Very Good

The Red Clay Bar:

I have not recently tested AutoMagic's red clay bar. It contains a mild abrasive. I would recommend that this bar only be used in a professional bodyshop atmosphere. I will not give this product a rating.

What brands offer a better bar that I can get in the stores?

Maybe even mail order since the car is away for the season there isn't much of a rush to get it I suppose.

Mother's is one that is readily available at WalMart for \$13.87

I'll also try what 82-Guy said and uses some wash/water mixture and see if it helps before trashing the stuff.

What you'll notice is that the clay bar won't last as long. However, in your case, you aren't doing the volume of a detail shop so you'll probably do fine with it.

Does Meguiars have a 100% satisfied warranty?

I may want to call them on this.

They may not actually offer it, but I am sure that if you do call them on it they will gladly refund or give you product credit.

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