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What Are Diminishing Abrasives and How Do They Affect You?

For anyone that has polished a car in the last decade or two, "diminishing abrasives" should sound familiar. The idea behind them is to provide the same effect as a standard abrasive but without the same high risk of damage that comes with so many of those harsh products.

Think of sand paper for a moment as an example. When you use sand paper, it comes in multiple different grit sizes and qualities. However, when you use the paper, it remains the same the entire time you use it. This is a constant or standard abrasive. You use it to remove blemishes and smooth out the surface.

A diminishing abrasive on the other hand will start out with an aggressive cut to remove the damage. As you apply it, the abrasive will break down into smaller particles to begin smoothing out the surface instead of causing additional damage from over-application.

How Diminishing Abrasives Work

The activation of the diminishing abrasive is done with friction, not heat, meaning you will need to rub it into the surface for it to start breaking down. As you continue to buff, the abrasive will reduce to a milled dust. Most of these abrasives are buffered in a lubricated emulsion that is water based for easy cleaning and removal and the result is often a paste. This allows the polish to reduce heat to keep the car from losing any gloss (heat results from the friction required to activate the abrasive).

To affect the amount that the abrasive reduces in size, the materials used in the polish can be changed. Most of the time, silica or aluminum oxide are used. Adjusting which materials are used and how much of them are used will dictate how deeply you can remove scratches and how the shine will appear when finished.

Use of a diminishing abrasive is complete when the surface begins to haze during polishing. This means that the polish has broken down as far as it can and has dried enough to be removed. It is vital to recognize when this has occurred so that you can keep from causing new and additional marring to the surface of the car.

Effective Use

The main concern with diminishing abrasives then is not over application but the selection of the right type of abrasive. If you choose a product that starts out too abrasive, you will surely remove the marring and swirling, but you will also start to pull the clear coat which does not need to be removed. Careful

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testing should be done on the paint in a location that is not prominent to decide which diminishing abrasive can be used without pulling clear coat from your car. The least aggressive starting point that will work for your car is always best.

Additionally, it is important to watch the heat of any machines you use to buff and polish the paint. All paint surfaces will react to heat at some point. If you use a machine too long and introduce too much heat to the surface, it can cause damage in numerous forms to the paint.

Diminishing abrasives are but one of many methods used to polish the paint on a car. If you choose to use it for your car, ensure that you effectively select and apply it to the car according to your paint surface, the damage present, and the product you've chosen, so as to avoid further damage.

<http://www.autogeekonline.net/forum/auto-detailing-university/11925-my-take-diminishing-abrasives.html>

http://detailingwiki.com/index.php5?title=Diminishing_Abrasives