



# Hand Painting a Car

Paint your car — or parts of your car — yourself.

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## INTRODUCTION

Use this guide to help you re-paint parts of your car, or your entire car. This guide covers arguably the hardest method — rolling on the paint with a roller. You can also use cans of spray paint ("rattle canning" the car), but the best results will come from an air-powered sprayer — but also at the highest cost.

Generally speaking, a car's paint job consists of a base layer (the colorful part), and a clear coat layer on top of the base. If you were to spray paint the with an air-powered sprayer, that would be the method to pursue. However, since this guide shows how to roll on the paint, we'll be using a glossy Rustoleum Enamel paint that will serve as both base and clear coat. You'll have to roll on several thin coats of paint, but it will still technically be a "single coat" paint job.

Always work in a well ventilated area and remember to use proper safety gear when prepping the car for paint and when painting, especially respiratory safety gear. This is bound to be a long and involved project, so work slowly and carefully to have the best possible paint job possible. Also take a couple of pictures of the car before starting the job, so you can remember how terrible everything looked like prior to your new paint job :)



### TOOLS:

- [Drop Cloth](#) (1)
- [Masking Tape](#) (1)
- [Mixing Cups](#) (1)
- [Paint Roller](#) (1)
- [Paint Tray or Bucket](#) (1)
- [Sand Paper](#) (1)  
40 to 1500 grit



### PARTS:

- [Rustoleum Protective Enamel Paint](#) (8)
- [Mineral Spirits](#) (8)

## Step 1 — Hand Painting a Car



- Use the proper safety gear when sanding. Full length clothing, a painter's mask and eye protection should be worn to prevent irritation or injury.
- Remove all the headlights and tail lights so that the paint matches on the edges of the body. Cover any holes that you don't want to become dusty and painted.

## Step 2



- Use a power sander with a low-grit sand paper to strip the old paint off the surface of your vehicle. Use a sanding block or just the sand paper to reach small or hard-to-get places.
- Make the first pass with at least 100 grit, possibly even as low as 40 grit sandpaper. Coarser grits will remove the paint efficiently, but leave a very rough finish.
- Make a second pass with finer sandpaper (200 grit), to reduce the scratches and smooth out the body.
- Repeat the procedure with 400, 800, and 1500 grit sandpaper to make the car's surface super-smooth. Spend a good amount of time with each grit, as it will be much harder to remove the deep scratches down the line.
- Wipe off the sanding dust occasionally to help speed the sanding process.

## Step 3



- Once you have stripped the paint off all the parts that you wish to paint, rinse them with water and wipe them down with a clean lint-free cloth so the paint will stick.
- Cover all parts of the car that you don't want to be painted using masking tape and/or double sided tape with drop cloth. This includes lights, windows, mirrors, grills, tires, the ground/any close-by surfaces, etc.

## Step 4



- Make a mixture of 50% Rustoleum paint, and 50% mineral spirits. The paint will be very, very thin.
  - ⚠ If you over-apply the paint, it will run down the sides! Over-applying the paint will negate all the hard work you put into prepping the car for painting. If it happens, use a rag doused with pure mineral spirits to wipe off the runs.
- Apply several thin coats of paint onto the car. Wait approximately 30 minutes between each coat to allow the paint to partially dry.
  - ⓘ You will probably have to apply at least five thin coats of paint before the body (especially the Bondo areas) are no longer visible. Don't rush, and don't over-apply the paint.

## Step 5



- After the paint has fully dried, inspect it for cracks, runny spots, or any imperfections.
- Smooth out any imperfections by wet sanding with water and 1500 grit sand paper.

To reassemble your device, follow these instructions in reverse order.