

## Do It Yourself

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### Carpet/Vinyl FAQ

From "[Ask DIY](#)"

episode ADI-515 -- [More Projects](#) »

Cleaning and maintaining your vehicle's interior can be a challenge -- especially when you're dealing with such things as carpet stains, cigarette burns or torn vinyl. DIY's automotive expert Trisha Hessinger answers some frequently asked questions about cosmetic damage that can occur in your vehicle's interior.

**Q:** How can I repair a small burn mark in my car's carpet?

**A:** This repair requires just a little work, but a lot of patience. Here's what to do:

- Use scissors or a sharp edge such as an X-acto knife to scrape away the charred area of the carpet (**figure A**). Remove the burned area little-by-little, in layers, to avoid removing too much. Keep removing the darkened fibers until the clean fibers underneath become visible.
- For the next step, you'll need to "harvest" some fibers from elsewhere in the carpeting to make the repair. You can get fibers from some place in the vehicle that won't show, such as underneath a seat or in the trunk. Use the same technique used before to remove the burned fibers. Carefully and gradually scrape up undamaged carpet fibers from the concealed area using a sharp blade, and carefully lift them up and lay them aside.
- Once you have collected enough fibers to make the repair, apply a small amount of waterproof all-purpose or fabric adhesive to the damaged area (**figure B**).
- Use tweezers to carefully place the good fibers into the damaged area (**figure C**). Start from the outside of the damaged area and work inward, applying just a few fibers at a time to repair the



Figure A



Figure B



Figure C



Figure D

damaged spot. If you take your time, the burned area won't even be detectable once the repair is finished.

**Q:** Is there an easy way to repair a tear in a vinyl seat?

**A:** Repairing a small tear in vinyl (**figure D**) is not that difficult. Here's how.

- Use a toothpick to apply a small amount of waterproof adhesive beneath the flap of the torn piece (**figure E**). Be careful not to apply so much adhesive that it will squeeze out.
- Press the torn flap down. To hold the flap in place as the glue dries, use cut strips of masking tape.
- Rather than placing the tape directly over the tear, place two pieces carefully on either side of the tear, just along the torn edges, and parallel to the tear (**figure F**). For a triangular tear like the one in our demonstration, the repair is done in a two-step process, repeating the same steps for the second torn edge.
- Depending on the nature of the damage, another option is to use a vinyl-repair kit (**figure G**) that allow you to color-match vinyl-repair compound to your vehicle's interior. Vinyl-repair kits are inexpensive, and are available at most auto centers.
- For extensive seat damage, the simplest solution may be to purchase a complete seat cover (**figure H**). These are made to fit over specific seat styles. They simply pull over the seat, and are secured by an elastic band at the bottom edge.

**Q:** Do you have suggestions for cleaning common stains in my car?

**A:** The key with most stains is to act quickly, before the stain has a chance to set. Here are some suggestions for cleaning three of the most common types stains: coffee, chocolate and ink.

- For **coffee**, avoid using soap and water -- which may actually set the stain. Use cold water only



Figure E



Figure F



Figure G



Figure H



Figure I

on a rag, and rub the stain vigorously until the discoloration begins to disappear.

- For **chocolate**, also avoid using soap. Use lukewarm water and a clean cloth. Start at one edge of the stain and work across gradually. Turn the cloth often as you lift the stain off.
- For **ink**, use rubbing alcohol on a clean cloth. Rub the soaked cloth vigorously across the stain (**figure I**). You should begin seeing results quickly.

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### ***Auto Repair for Dummies***

Model: 0764550896

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(1999)

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