

Swirl-Free Buffing

I am often asked questions about swirls. Most people want to know how to get rid of them and some want to know how they are formed.

The presence of swirls can reveal a poor buffing job. Swirls are either made up of very fine scratches or can simply be dried buffing product. Either case can be avoided by following a couple of basic rules.

- 1) Know your products! Know their capabilities or limitations and how to get good results from the products you use. Most swirls are caused by dried buffing product. By limiting your buffing area to a two foot by two foot space, you help keep your product from drying out and causing swirls.
- 2) Know your paint! Every automotive manufacturer has different paint formulas. Some are very hard and difficult to move, others are very soft and easy to move which can cause "burning" with your buffer. Harder paints can take higher speeds and more aggressive compounds and pads. Softer paints require slower speeds, less aggressive compounds and pads.
- 3) Always perform a clay service before buffing! This process removes impurities that can become embedded in your buffing pad and cause swirl-like scratches.
- 4) Avoid buffing in extreme hot or cold environments. Hot environments will make it difficult to keep your compound wet; cold environments can make compounds slow to dry and difficult to remove.



So now we know what can cause swirls, how to prevent them, how do we remove them? If the swirl is made up of dry product and are recent, then they may be removed by reactivating the compound used with either more product, or a light spritz of water. The added compound should help to "move" the dried silicone as you buff. A quick and immediate wipe with a clean and dry microfiber towel should reveal a swirl-free finish.

If the swirls are older, simply wash and clay the car, then buff with a random orbital buffer such as the Cyclo or Flex buffer (both offered by Simoniz) using a fine buffing compound or swirl remover. Stick to a 2' X 2' area and remove immediately with a clean dry microfiber towel.

Simoniz offers a range of buffing compounds to suit most every need. Simoniz even offers a silicone-free body shop safe line for those operating near or co-located with an automotive body shop. Both lines are segmented into four end products. Let's take a look...

Big Red is a heavy cut compound that will soften heavy scratches and lessen paint oxidation; it even has a pleasant cherry scent. This product will haze paint and further buffing will be required with a less aggressive compound such as Simoniz Polish Compound to start to return luster to the paint. The Body Shop Safe Equivalent for Big Red is SS3 (Shop Safe 3) and is aggressive enough to cut through overspray and other tough jobs.

Polish Compound is Simoniz's medium cut compound that will soften moderate scratches and start to restore luster to the paint. Polish Compound has a mild coconut scent and is aggressive enough to haze paint. Further buffing will be required with a less aggressive compound such as Simoniz Correction Crème. The Body Shop Safe Equivalent for Polish Compound is SS2 (Shop Safe 2).

Correction Crème by Simoniz can fill the role of a one step polish, a cleaner wax, or a light cut compound. Correction Crème will restore shine, soften mild scratches and eliminate ultra-fine spider web like scratches. Although Correction Crème does contain wax, it is recommended that your favorite wax be applied after using Correction Crème for the ultimate in paint protection. The Body Shop Safe Equivalent for Correction Crème is SS1 (Shop Safe 1).

Swirl Remover by Simoniz is an ultra fine compound designed to remove swirls and holograms from paint. In addition, swirl remover will add an extra deep shine to your buffing job and is a premier prep for your favorite wax.

Free Finish is a silicone free final step polish designed for the body shop. Free Finish contains no silicone and therefore is body shop safe.

Simoniz offers a variety of wool and foam pads. Shown below is how to match them with Simoniz compounds for outstanding swirl-free results. Please note that PPI=Pores Per Inch.

White Wool – Aggressive - Big Red

Yellow Wool – Polish - Polish Compound

Blue Wool – Finish - Correction Crème/Wax

Yellow Foam – 50 PPI – Aggressive – Big Red

Green Foam – 60 PPI - Moderate Aggressive – Big Red/Polish Compound

Blue Foam - 70 PPI – Moderate Aggressive – Polish Compound/Correction Crème

Black Foam – 80 PPI – Light Aggressive – Correction Crème/Wax

White Foam – 90 PPI – Finish - Wax

Keep in mind principles at the beginning of this article to buff and create a swirl-free finish. You may find experimentation and practice on a junk body panel to be the best way to learn, test capabilities and decide what is right for you.