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UK's 'superficial society' of motorists only ever clean outside of their car

Keeping up appearances is king when it comes to car cleaning as research from [RAC Cars](#)* reveals three-quarters of Brits (73%) would rather go the extra mile to make the outside of their motor gleam than tackling the inside where the filth is allowed to flourish.

Among those that admitted to cleaning their cars in the last seven days, more opted to wash the outside (24%) rather than do away with the dirt inside (14%), with two-fifths (39%) saying they think it's "important to have a clean-looking car *from the outside*" – suggesting we live in a 'superficial society' where it's what's on the outside that counts.

While both men and women put the exterior in pole position compared to the interior, it seems taking care of both the outside and the inside is mostly a man's job. More than half (59%) of men said they were the ones to lather up their vehicle, versus just under a third (31%) of females, and, three quarters of men (74%) said they were responsible for taking care of the interior, compared to just 52% of women.

And, when asked about their car cleaning habits over the last seven days, twice as many men (19%) than women (10%) admitted to giving their cars a good going-over inside and out.

Shockingly though, nine per cent of those surveyed said they hadn't cleaned their cars in more than six months, which combined with the 2% who never clean theirs at all, means there are 3.3m* TLC-neglected motors on Britain's roads.

But putting who does what to one side, both sexes agree nothing beats a DIY

clean, with the [RAC Cars](#) research showing most motorists (48%) prefer to wash the outside of their cars themselves, followed by 29% who opt to have the dirt wiped away by a hand-wash expert. And, it appears the automated carwash may be going down the drain as just seven per cent say it's their top choice for a regular rinse.

Regional bias

Regionally, motorists in London appear to be most concerned about getting their car clean, with 24% of motorists from the capital saying that they've cleaned it within the last week, followed by Yorkshire and the Humber (19%), East Anglia (17%) and the North West (17%).

Motorists in the North East meanwhile appear happy to let their car get grubby, with 11% of those surveyed from that region saying that they haven't cleaned their car in more six months, followed by East Anglia and the East Midlands (both 10%).

Why clean?

The devil is in the detail when it comes to car washing, wiping or waxing as almost half of motorists (47%) say they do it to make their cars feel brand new again. Some do it for love by cleaning their motors before going on a date (2%) and just five per cent feel pressured into washing their vehicles if they're giving a colleague a lift.

Once the bucket, sponge, chamois and – for some the vacuum cleaner – have been put away, it's a major relief for more than a quarter (26%) who are just glad it's over. For some, however, there's a variety of excuses for avoiding the job in the first place including: 'I don't have enough time' – 25%; 'there's no point, it's going to rain later' – 22%; and 'next week's going to be really wet and it will just get muddy again' – 16%.

But whether you're a regular or infrequent car cleaner the RAC Cars research has found there is nothing more infuriating than a neighbour coming up to you and saying: 'you can do mine as well if you like' as more than a third (37%) of British motorists said that was the most hated phrase uttered by passers-by.

RAC Cars spokesman Pete Williams said: “The importance of cleaning the car clearly varies from household to household but our research has found much greater preference for washing the outside as opposed to vacuuming and dusting the inside. We suspect the reason for this is not wanting to be seen driving around in a filthy-looking car which means if there’s only limited time to give the car some TLC, the outside takes precedence.

“Unless you give friends or colleagues lifts, not many people get to see the inside of your car so you can get away with it not being that clean. And, interestingly, despite the prevalence of automatic car washes and independent car cleaning companies, the DIY clean was still preferred by many.

“But cleaning the car yourself can mean you are subjected to the most annoying phrase of all – ‘you can do mine as well if you like’. Perhaps we need to challenge the nation to come up with something a bit more original if they spot their neighbour with the hosepipe and bucket.

“But the best motivation for getting the car cleaning equipment out has to be having a nice new motor to take pride in, whether that’s a brand new model straight out of the showroom or a ‘new to you’ used vehicle from a dealer or private seller. RAC Cars gives buyers the chance to find their perfect four-wheel match together with the buying confidence the RAC name brings.”

Notes to Editors

* RAC Opinion Panel surveyed 1,226 motorists.

** 3.3 million figure based on 30.3 million cars on the road – nine per cent of survey respondents said they had not cleaned their car at all for six months or more and two per cent said they had never done so.

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK’s most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it’s roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic

and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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