

# **DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME!**

## **By Yvonne Perry**

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By the time I get around to cleaning my car, it's usually way past due. The way I decide it's time to do something about the pigpen condition is to look for telltale signs that indicate a true need for such dreaded labor. For example, if I can't open the car door without a used tissue or an over-due library book falling out, or if my dog can have a seven-course dinner on the floorboard while we ride, then it is probably time to take action. My dilemma is whether to wash my car at the local car wash or do the dirty work myself at home.

If I decide to wash the car at home, there are steps to be taken to prepare. First, I must change into some old clothes and shoes because this is a messy project. Then, I must find the bucket, the suds, and a rag that is not permanently crinkled from the last time I used it and didn't rinse out the detergent. Next, I must untangle the hose and drag the muddy snake across the yard while trying not to get it caught in the flowerbeds. After sloshing water all over myself while lugging the heavy bucket of hot sudsy water to the clean-up site, I'm ready to begin. Furthermore, if the weather is really cold outside, I may get partway into my routine then realize the hose is frozen and I cannot proceed until it thaws. This is frustrating and a waste of time!

Vacuuming the inside of the car at home is another point to deal with. I have to move the car into the garage to do this, so I don't electrocute myself by dragging the electric cord through the water puddles I created while washing the exterior of the car. There must have been a ration of electrical outlets when our house was built, for there is only one plug in the garage, and it's behind all the junk on the worktable. As I stretch the vacuum cleaner cord toward the wall plug, the cumbersome machine topples over. Rather than sit it upright again,

I drag the Hoover across the concrete floor to span the mere two feet it lacks reaching the wall plug. In doing so, the machine stumbles over its own accessory tools that insisted upon falling off in its jaunt. Once plugged in, I may find that I do not have enough cord length to reach the far side of the vehicle. Therefore, I have to either move the car closer to the plug, or find the extension cord to gap the distance. When I'm about ready to hit the start switch on the vacuum, either the phone rings, or a neighbor drops by to chat! None of this inconvenience occurs at the car wash.

Once I drive into my driveway in the evening, I'm not inclined to go back out. Therefore, when I do get up the gumption to wash my car, I generally stop by the Swish & Swirl on my way home from work. I don't have to worry getting my clothes soiled like I would if I washed my car at home. While it may be cheaper to wash the car at home, my time is as valuable as my money. It only takes 10 seconds to feed a \$5 bill into the slot, and drive into the bay until the green light turns red. I can sit in the comfort of my car and finish my burger and fries while the machine does all the work. This huge, entertaining robot, loaded with soapy squirt guns, may not do as thorough a job as a hand scrubbing, but the car is going to get dirty as soon as I get on the road again anyway. So why worry?

The vacuum hoses at the car wash are long enough to reach around the car, and they suck much harder than the \$99 Hoover Upright (or should I say Hoover Down-wrong?) we have at home. But, I do have to hurry before the allotted time on the vacuum machine expires, and I have to put in another round of quarters. I'm sure I make a spectacle of myself, and entertain the motorists driving by, as I awkwardly lean and twist to reach across the seats while wearing high heels and a dress. But I do what I have to do.

In conclusion, whether I wash my car at home or take it to the car wash, I must get myself psyched up for the task. It will cost time and money, and it will be to do again next month, either way. The convenience the car wash provides outweighs the disadvantages of washing my vehicle at home. Therefore, in my opinion, the car wash is the better of the two options. Of course, I still prefer to have someone else do it for me for free! Any volunteers?