



Headlight Restoration: Wet Sanding

ARE THE HEADLIGHTS ON YOUR BMW SCRATCHED, PITTED, MILKY OR FADED? IF SO, THEN A COMBINATION OF MEGUIAR'S NEW HEADLIGHT RESTORATION KIT AND WET SANDING WILL TRANSFORM THEM TO 'AS NEW'...

WORDS AND PICTURES Adam Tait

BMW's have always been renowned for their long distance cruising abilities and this has resulted in a used market flooded with high mileages. This is why most examples with over 100,000 miles on the clock have front end's caked in stone chips – this vulnerable vicinity of your BMW gets the full onslaught of whatever the atmosphere decides to throw at it. Bugs, stones, road salt... just about everything.

Stone chips to the bodywork are unsightly and encourage corrosion if left untreated but aesthetic displeasures aside, a headlight that's been peppered on a daily basis will have poor light projection. Non-Xenon BMW headlights tend to be inferior and poor lens surface

quality will reduce their capabilities even further.

As some readers will know, the E39 we used for the feature has covered just shy of 145,000 miles and its headlights were in a terrible state. Detailing gurus, Ultimate Finish, commented that we couldn't have picked a worse pair of headlights, but the final result was unbelievable proving that even those in a dreadful condition can be revived.

We had Meguiar's new Headlight Restoration Kit to hand, which has just been released to the UK market following success in the USA. The Plastic-RX polish and polishing mop included within the kit works on lightly scratched surfaces but various grades of wet and dry paper are required for anything that's pitted or heavily scratched.

THANKS



The Ultimate Finish for its help in compiling this feature. To book your car in for a detail or to purchase detailing products seen in this guide, just visit the website or give the team a call.

ULTIMATE FINISH
1 Brands Hatch Park, Brands Hatch,
Fawkham, Kent, DA3 8PU.
Tel: 0845 838 1200
www.theultimatefinish.co.uk

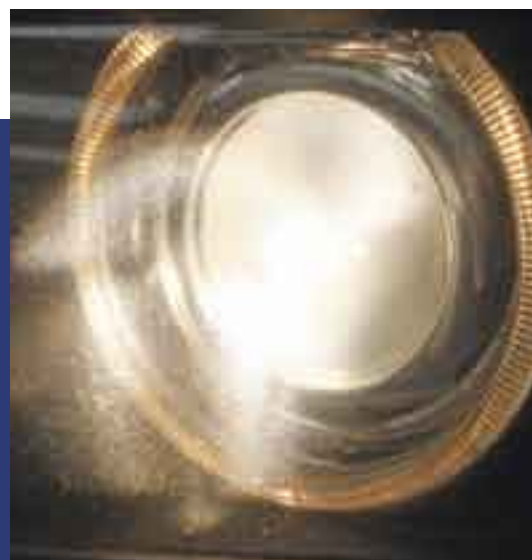
01

Meguiar's new Headlight Restoration Kit is available through Ultimate Finish and comes complete with a microfibre cloth, polishing mop (driven by a drill) and Plastic-RX polish.



02

Headlights switched on, the true extent of the E39's lens damage can be seen. Wet and dry paper is the only course of action.



03

Rob Tomlin of UF uses 3M tape to mask off the E39's lower headlight trim. Opening the bonnet provides sufficient access – but it may be necessary to remove the headlights completely.



04

For heavily pitted lenses, spray water onto the headlight and start with 1000-grit wet and dry paper in a back and forth motion. Anything harsher than 800-grit tends to heavily score the lens and is best avoided.



05

Don't panic if the lens looks like this after the first application – it's just part of the wet sanding process!



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Rob then moves onto 1500-grit wet and dry paper. This removes the scores from the 1000-grit but continues to iron out imperfections.



07

Wipe the lens dry with a microfibre cloth and you should be left with this. Feel for any imperfections and repeat the process if necessary.



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2000-grit was then applied using this air-fed sander, but applying it manually can still achieve the same results, it's just more labour intensive.



09

A two-stage Meguiar's Mirror Glaze 105 & 205 compound process was necessary. A rotary polisher with a wool mop is ideal because it thrives at low speeds, which will prevent burning the lens. This air-fed oscillating 3M polisher was also ideal due to its compact dimensions.



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Now for the finishing touch. Apply a small amount of the supplied Plastic-RX onto the polishing mop. A large amount will result in 'sling' – peppering anything in the vicinity with specks of polish.



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The polishing mop is then attached to a drill. Be mindful not to apply too much pressure or remain in one place for long because heat build up on the lens can distort it.



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Buffed with a microfibre cloth, the end result was fantastic. If the headlights on your BMW are marring the frontend, then we would strongly recommend Meguiar's new Headlight Restoration Kit and the wet sanding process.

