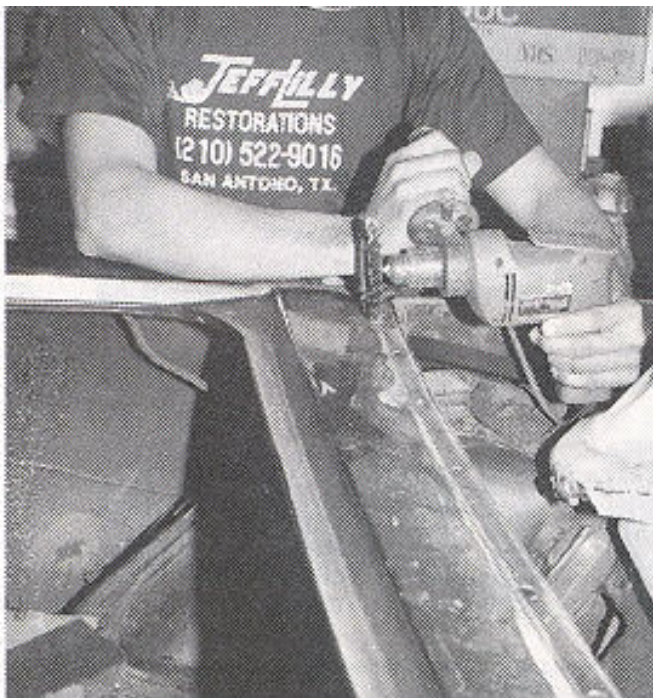


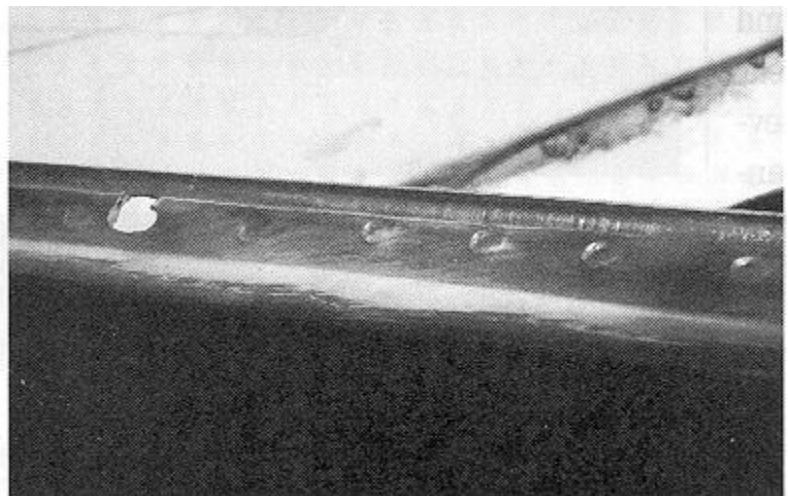
# Paint Strip / Metal Prep

The difference between a really top quality paint job, and one that may only last for a couple of years is in the preparation. One of the most important steps in prepping your vehicle for a fresh coat of color is stripping off all those coats of paint which were sprayed onto the car over the past two or three decades. No exaggeration, we've seen old vehicles with as many as seven different colors of paint, sprayed one right over another. All those old layers of paint get pretty thick, and have to come off if you want decent results when you have your favorite vehicle refinished. Fortunately, paint stripping and metal conditioning are processes that nearly any enthusiast can do at home. No fancy or expensive tools are necessary, and you certainly don't need special training and you can save a bunch of money by doing it yourself. 18 PHOTOS



1. With the moldings and trim out of the way, we begin by removing the caulking along the seams. It's particularly difficult to remove the caulking with paint stripper, so use a variable speed reversible drill with a Weiller "knotted brush" for the task. Use the knotted brush in areas like the trunk opening, where the weather-strip makes contact. The Drip rails on a hard top roof are also caulked at the factory and will need to be stripped.

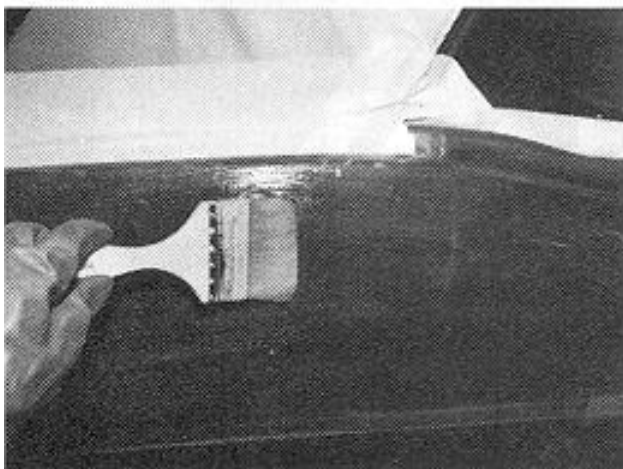
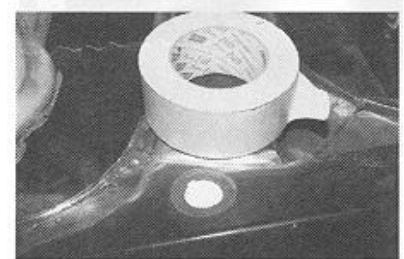
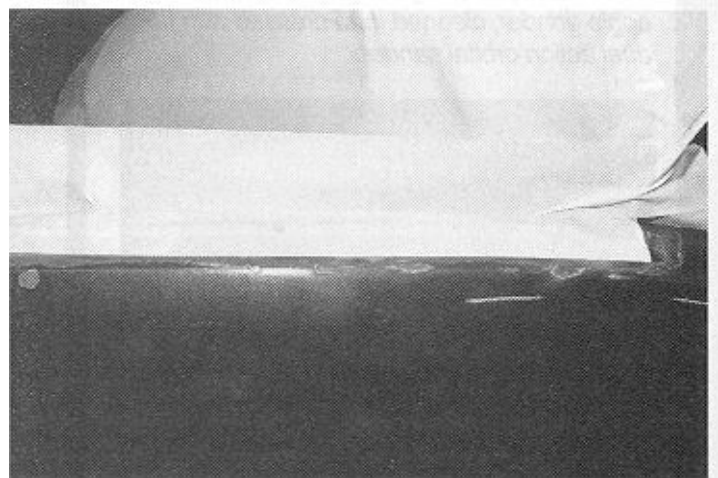
2. This shows a finished section along the top well, with all the caulk gone and only clean metal showing. Use a reversible drill and work for 60-seconds in "forward" then reverse for 60 seconds. This keeps the brush clean and it also cuts more aggressively.



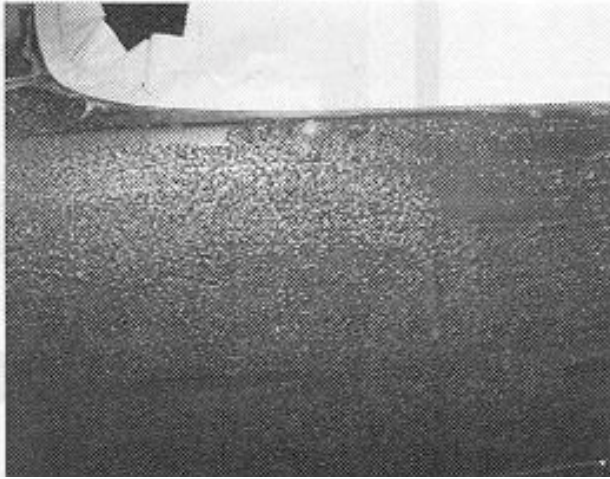


3. Shown here are the materials used . They include Klean Strip Liquid Aircraft Paint Stripper, aerosol Klean Strip (for intricate areas), a broad paint brush, razor blade scraping knife, a face shield, Norton respirator, rubber gloves, Dandy Liner tire covers, and an ample supply of newspapers spread over the work area.

4. Next, two-inch wide masking tape is applied over all the seams. This prevents the stripper from seeping into areas it shouldn't. Antenna and molding holes should be taped from the back side of the panel. So the tape will adhere, we use a scuffing pad to scrape and clean the surfaces underneath. Aluminum tape is the ultimate but somewhat more expensive. You can find it at your local hardware store in the Duct Work A/C dept.

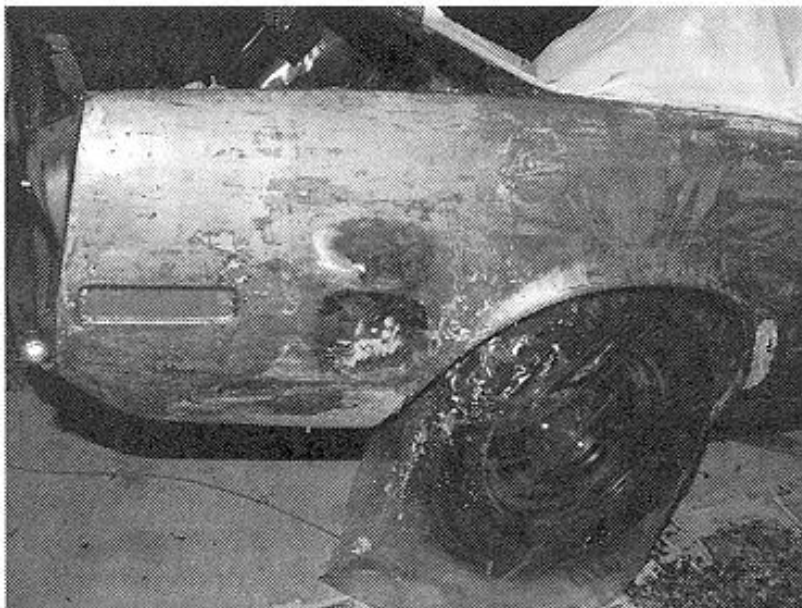


5. After spreading the newspaper on the floor under the panels to be stripped, put on the rubber gloves and respirator, and begin working on one panel at a time. The stripper may dry too quickly if more than one panel is done at the same time. Glide on an even and thick coat of stripper with the wide, flat brush. It's easier to apply if the stripper is first poured into a bowl, then brushed on. The stripper will dry rapidly if the temperature is high; it's best to do this in the morning or evening, at temperatures between 40 and 70 degrees. If the stripper still seems to dry too quickly, apply another coat of it then cover the stripper with Saran Wrap or comparable kitchen plastic wrap. This extends the drying time.



6. The stripper has been working for 10-minutes on this panel, and is now ready to be scraped off. The old paint seen here is enamel. Enamel curls while a lacquer will look soupy, and sag on the panel.

7. Now we use the razor scraper and scrape off the old paint in one-foot strips across the panel, letting it drop onto the newspaper on the floor. Have plenty of spare single-edge blades on hand, as the blade will scrape unevenly after hitting metal burrs like are found at molding holes, etc.

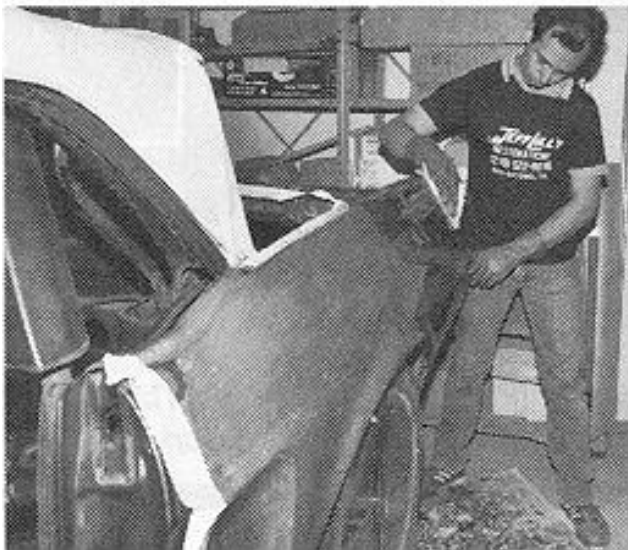
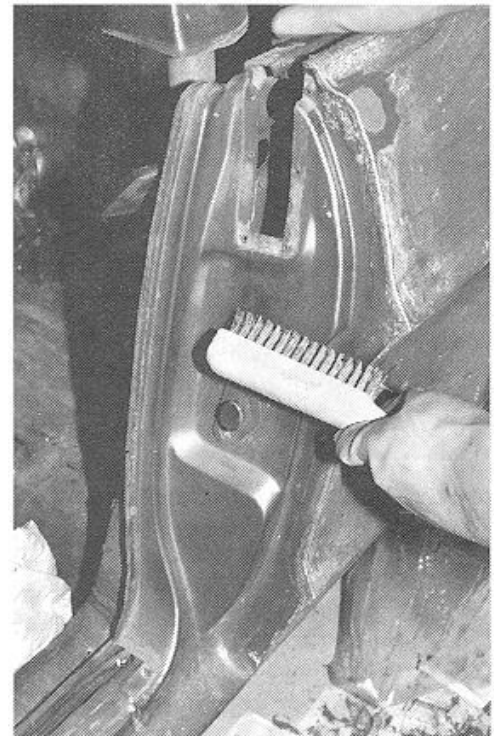


8. This is the right quarter panel of the GT 350 after we finished stripping it. If the car has been painted several times, you'll probably need to do multiple applications of stripper to get all the old paint off. Ambient air temperature can also affect the rate of removal. If you get any of the stripper on your skin, immediately wash it off thoroughly with water, as the stripper is a caustic acid and it will burn your skin. A 5 gallon bucket of water nearby is handy as the water will neutralize the acid immediately!

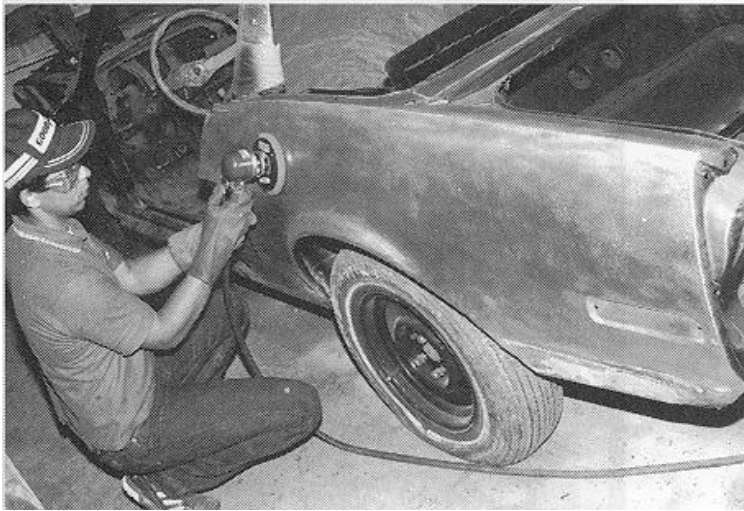


9. This quarter panel has been repaired with a plastic filler at some time. The paint remover won't "eat" the plastic putty as quickly as the paint, so the stripper will need to be reapplied (maybe several times) and left on for a longer period. It's quicker but dustier) to grind out the old filler. The choice is yours.

10. In tight or highly contoured areas such as this door jamb, use a wire brush to loosen and scrape the paint. Always use the face shield when using a wire brush, as the brush will cause tiny flecks to fly around, and you DO NOT want to get any of this stuff in your eyes ! Rinse with water soon if any gets on your skin.

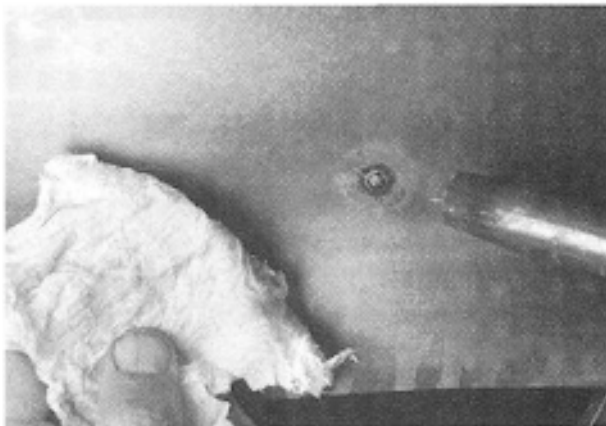
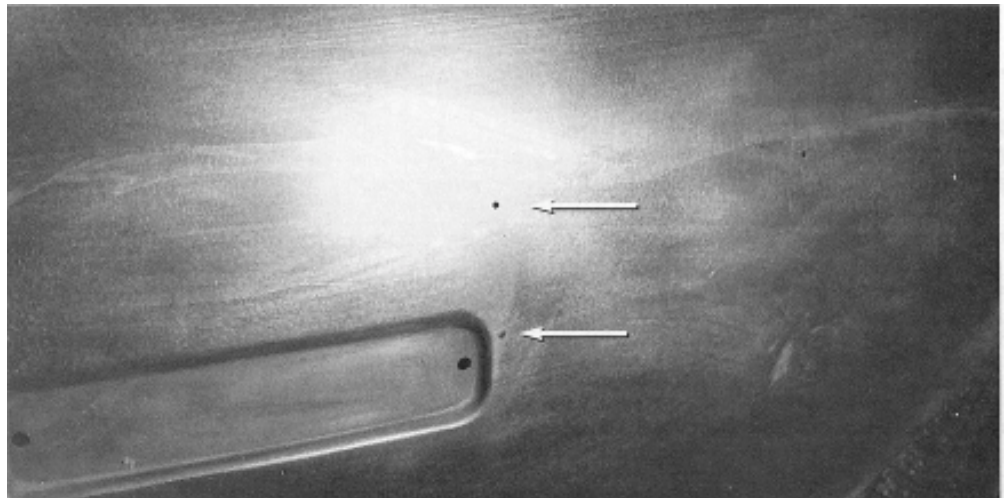


11. After the stripping and scraping process is completed, use clean towels and lacquer thinner to wipe down the panels. Repeatedly change towels, and keep doing the lacquer thinner wiping until there is no residue left on the panel. This is extremely critical, as the new primers and paint will not adhere to a contaminated surface. For aggressive action use 3M- #7447 scuffpads and lacquer thinner before paper towels.



12. Now use an orbital sander with 80-grit paper, and sand the entire panel. An orbital sander is most effective for this as it leaves a good etching pattern, and removes just a thin enough layer of steel to leave good, clean virgin metal for our metal conditioning stage.

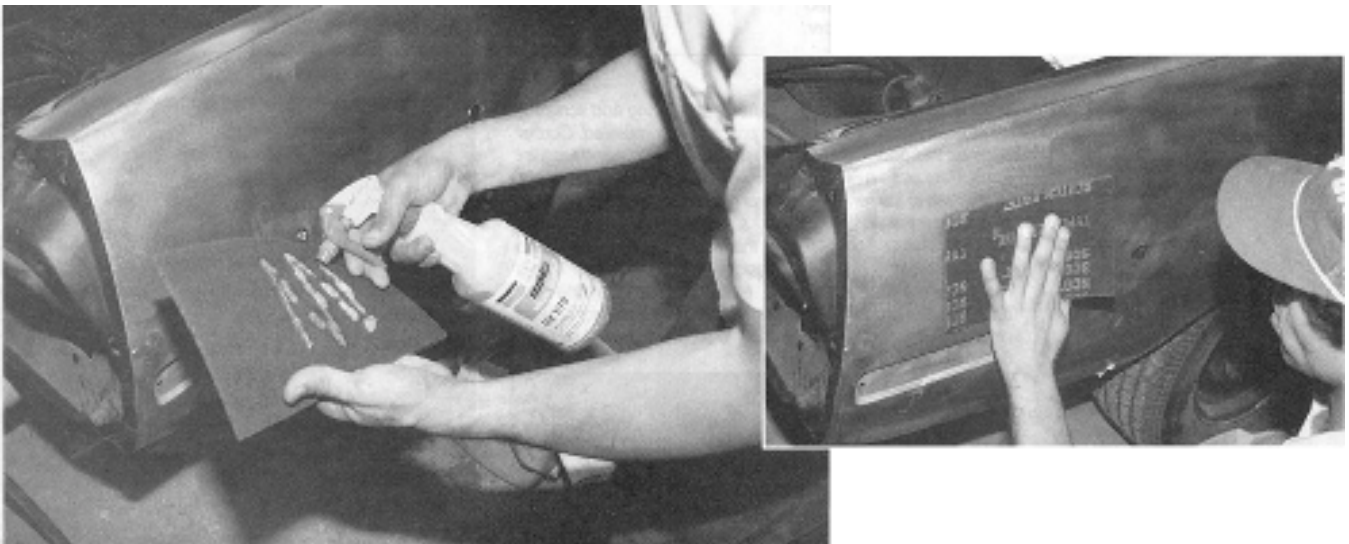
13. This is the time to weld up any non-factory holes. Note the two holes (arrows) where someone had added a molding to this Shelby.



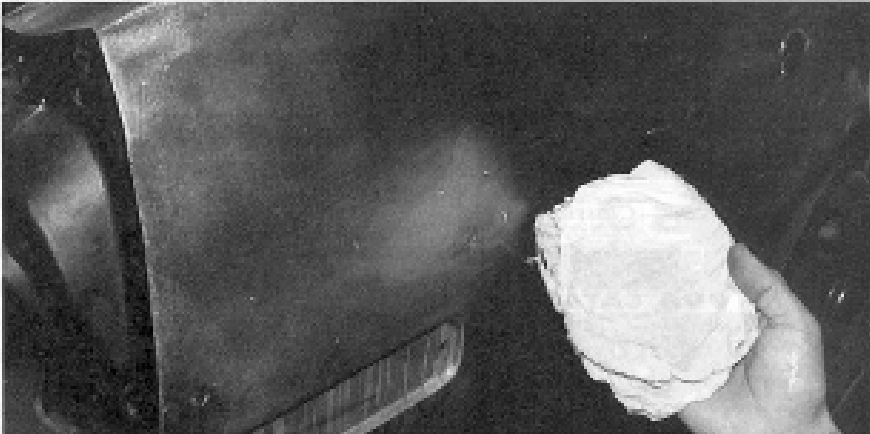
14. These holes are repaired using a Century 2150 MG welder, which has a spot/stitch mode. Starting from the edge of the hole, work around in a circular pattern, cooling the metal immediately with a damp cloth to keep it from warping.



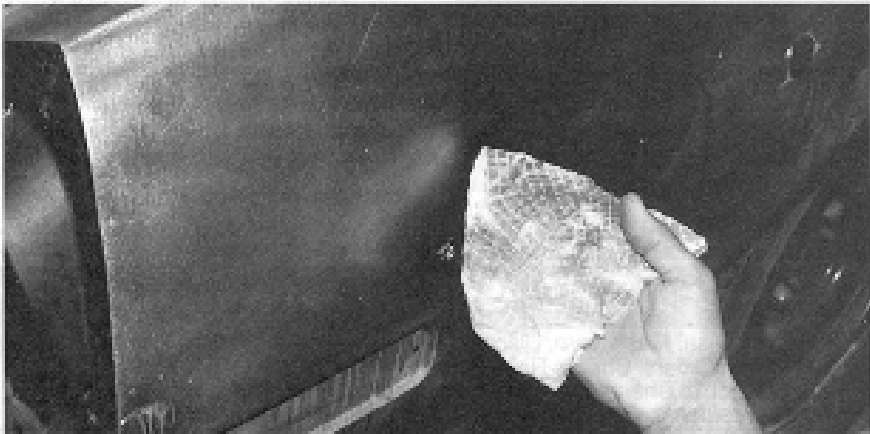
15. The welds are ground down with an angle grinder, cleaned, and dressed with the dual action or orbital sander.



16. Now it's metal conditioning time. Start and complete the following steps on a small (one square foot) area at a time, before going on to the next section. Use Ditzler DX 570 Phosphoric Acid Metal Conditioner, diluted with two parts water to one part conditioner, and a fresh scuff pad. Squirt the solution directly onto the scuff pad, and scuff the section for at least two minutes. This is another process that should be done in the morning or evening, when the air is cool, so the solution doesn't dry too quickly and haze over. The area being worked should remain wet, but not dripping.



17. Saturate and wring out several clean paper towels, then begin wiping the residue off the one square foot section. Turn the towel over to a clean portion after each wipe, never rewiping with a dirty towel. Continue wiping with clean towels until no more black metal residue shows on the towel. Speed is very important at this stage - from the end of the acid/conditioner scuffing to the final dry wipe, no more than 30-seconds should elapse - this assures a clean panel with no remnants of the acid residue left.



18. Then take a clean, dry towel and lightly wipe the area while blowing it off with compressed air, until the section is dry. After double-checking to be sure there is no residue left, go on to the next section, overlapping the cleaned area by 1/2 inch after all the sections are done. Give the entire car a final pass with the scuff pad. The last step is to wipe down the metal with lacquer thinner to remove any metal residues. Then the car is primed with Ditzler DP 90 Epoxy Primer, and allowed to set for a few days before block sanding and the final paint prep work.



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