Compounds & Polishes
for Fiberglass & Plastic

Fiberglass and plastics are harder materials than standard auto paint. Compounds and polishes for paint will work on resin but may take longer to achieve the desired shine. A shine comes from a smooth surface, so the process goes from a rough to a fine abrasive.

1) Oxidized gel coat – start with the fine polish unless you know it will not work. If that does not cut off the oxidation, use the compound, then the polish. If the compound does not work, start with wet/dry sandpaper, then compound and polish. This process can be tested on a small area to avoid wasting time discovering you have to use something rougher. I suggest you try whatever auto paint polishing materials you already have to start, although you may end up buying something that works faster. A standard process of resin polishing (surfboards) is: finish resin coat brushed smoothly, leaving dust spots and waxy film, 400 grit wet/dry, 600 grit wet/dry sandpaper, followed by Surluster #2 polishing compound (off-white), and Meguiars MG-17 polish, wipe with towel. Both the compound and polishing are done with a machine with a standard 7” wool bonnet. Always keep the polishing pad damp with water to make the compound and polish last longer. If you do not have a polisher or otherwise have to do this by hand, you might use the coarse (orange) compound followed by the fine (off-white) compound and the polish. The Meguiars MG-17 polish is a plastic cleaner and works better on resin and hard plastic surfaces than auto polish. We sell the coarse and fine compounds in small quantities, but the Surluster is only packaged in quarts, gallons, and five gallons. You might try substituting 800 or finer wet/dry sandpaper for the coarse compound.

2) Refinishing – a properly refinished surface should not need polishing. However, if polishing is needed for whatever reason, the process is basically the same as above. Sags and runs should be sanded out followed by compound and polish. The wax (surfacing agent) that is added to gel coat or resin is chemically bonded to the resin and cannot be removed by chemical washing (i.e. solvent). It must be cut off by sanding or compounding.

3) Plexiglas – fine scratches may be removed with Meguiars MG-10 or Meguiars MG-17 followed by MG-10. I am told that rough scratches cannot be properly removed.

4) There are various other products available, such as glazes (they fill scratches, rather than cutting them) and TR’s Gel Gloss which appears to be a combination cleaner (abrasive) and a filler (glaze). I don’t know how long a surface done with these will stay shiny, but would suggest a coat of paste wax on all surfaces periodically.

Revised: July 13, 2000