

GEFORCE GARAGE ANTEC 900 SERIES

HOW TO PREP AND PAINT YOUR CASE

FEATURING
DEWAYNE CAREL OF [MODDERS-INC.COM](http://modders-inc.com)

The problem with painting a PC case is not only that it looks easy, but that it actually is pretty easy. Consequently, from time to time somebody will attack a chassis with a can of black spraypaint and wonder why the result looks like something only recently retrieved from a hellish warehouse fire.

That's because painting is a lot like cooking: It's not a difficult task and the essential skills aren't beyond the grasp of most folks, but things still have to be done a certain way, in a particular order, and there are certain steps that require a little additional patience and good technique. But those are the same steps that will ultimately pay off the most when the lid comes off.

We've brought in Dewayne Carel of modders-inc.com (with our favorite slogan: "Void your warranty!") to show you how to lay down the smoothest, finest, most butterylicious paint job on your chassis—and what you can do to avoid the most common errors. This base coat (or coats) will be the foundation for some additional work we're going to be doing on the case later in the series, but if you prefer to leave yours a sleek obsidian monolith like the gaming rig the monkeys were playing with in 2001, we have no problems with that.



Yeah, sure, we're only painting here so the usual hazards of flying metal shards aren't a problem. But if you and your family have eyes and lungs, safety is still an issue. So please gear up with face masks and eye protection and always work in a well-ventilated area—preferably outdoors. Don't forget to throw canvas or tape paper over anything you don't want to catch some stray spray.

www.geforce.com/garage

LEVEL:
TECHNICIAN
TIME:
A COUPLE DAYS
(INCLUDING DRYING TIME)

COST: \$\$\$

MATERIALS:

SPRAY PAINT*
CLEAR COAT*
PRIMER**
ADHESION PROMOTER**
WAX/POLISHING COMPOUND**
PAPER FOR MASKING

*SPRAY PAINT AND CLEAR COAT SHOULD BE THE SAME BRAND!

**CHECK OUT THE VIDEO FOR SPECIFICS ON TYPES AND SAMPLES.

TOOLS:

SAFETY GOGGLES
FACE MASKS
X-ACTO KNIFE OR RAZOR
CLEAN MICROFIBER CLOTHS AND SPONGES
TACK CLOTH
SPRAY BOTTLE WITH WATER
1500-GRIT SANDPAPER FOR WET POLISHING
SANDPAPER OF VARYING GRIT (HIGHER NUMBERS = SMOOTHER GRIT)
PAINTER'S TAPE *
*DO NOT USE DUCT TAPE OR EVEN MASKING TAPE, WHICH CAN DAMAGE PAINT JOBS OR LEAVE TACKY GOO BEHIND



STEP 1:

Scrape the old paint off.

Don the face mask and eye protection, and use the coarse-grit sandpaper to abrade the existing paint off the case (including the sides). The paint doesn't need to be eliminated, just sanded down uniformly throughout and cleaned to provide a nice grippy surface for the new paint.



STEP 2:

Cover the areas you don't want painted.

As Dewayne cautions in the video, "paint will find its way into any space" that's not covered with tape. So be thorough with your paper and painter's tape, and run your fingers along the tape after it's applied to make sure it's flat. Check out the video for a nice tip on covering the area beneath the edges of a case panel.



STEP 3:

Wash the panel.

You want to paint on a clean, dry surface, so give your parts a gentle once-over with a rag or sponge lightly moistened with soap and water. Make sure it's thoroughly dry before moving on.



STEP 4:

Prepare the surface.

First, go over all the surfaces you intend to paint with a microfiber cloth—yes, again—to pick up any lingering dust. Then repeat the process with the tack cloth. This is one of those steps we talked about earlier: the ones that separate the pros from the drunken hobbyists



STEP 5:

Apply the first coat of primer.

Before you spray, line up the nozzle of the spraycan with the little black dot on the ring underneath it, and give the can a hearty shake and a couple test shots to make sure the nozzle doesn't splutter. Dewayne's using a self-etching primer in this video, but the technique is the same no matter what kind you use: you want to apply a light layer with even strokes. Again, check out the video for protips on wielding a spraycan effectively, and give the primer at least a couple hours to dry (longer in high humidity).



STEP 6:

Give the case a wet sanding.

Once the primer is absolutely dry, spray the surface with tap water (yeah, we know) and, using the flat side of 1500-grit sandpaper also moistened with water, lightly polish the primer layer. You're not trying to remove it, you're just buffing away surface imperfections. Repeat the process twice more, with the final buff in a single direction as shown in the video.



STEP 7:

Prepare the spraypaint.

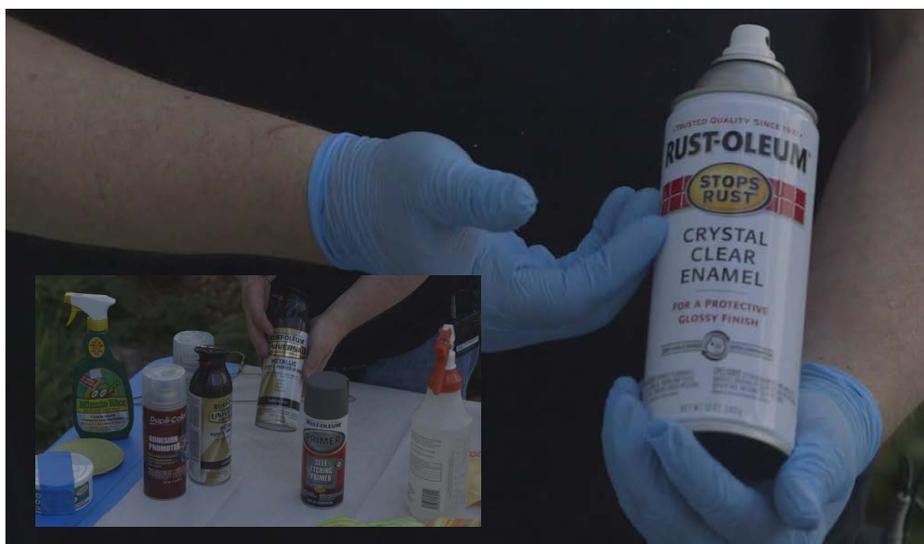
This is so crucial but so easily overlooked that it deserves its own step and photograph; we'd make it a notification on your smartphone if we could. Shake the can thoroughly before painting, especially if you're using metallic paints (which contain particles that you want distributed uniformly). Again, line up the nozzle with the black dot, and give the can a few test sprays to make sure the paint is flowing smoothly.



STEP 8:

Paint the case.

The main event! Use the same techniques you applied in step 5 to give your surfaces a light, even coat. Once that's done, let it dry a bit (but not completely—8 to 10 minutes should be fine) before applying your second coat. After the second coat, let the case dry completely. And by completely, we mean at least a day, and more depending on temperature and humidity (refer to the directions on the can for guidelines). Then use the microfiber and tack cloth combination to further smooth and polish the painted surface.



STEP 9:

Apply your clear coat.

If you intend to do any further paint work (such as airbrushing), do so before applying the clear coat (steps 9 and 10). Also, note that your clear coat must be the same brand as your paint! If you use a different brand, it might be fine, or it might react with your paint and ruin your day. Apply two clear coats the same way you did with your paint, with an 8-10 minute interval before drying.



STEP 10:

Buff to a high shine.

Again, if you intend to do further detail work on your chassis (such as airbrushing), you should do so before steps 9 and 10. Otherwise, after allowing the clear coat to dry thoroughly (refer to the directions on the can), you'll want to buff your case with very fine grit sandpaper until it downright glows. [Check out this link](#) for some advice from Dewayne on this crucial finishing touch.

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