

## 2 Common Methods For Finishing Scratches Out of Your Plastics

The machining of plastics can sometimes create unappealing marks and scratches that need to be removed through a finishing process. While there are many methods of finishing plastic components, two of the most common methods include:

1. **Abrasive Papers** – There are several variations of abrasive papers that can be used to polish plastics, including emery cloth or wet and dry paper that have different sized silica carbide grits embedded in them. The abrasive papers are rated by the number of grits per square unit, thus the higher the number the smaller the grit size.

The best way to use wet and dry paper is to place the sheet onto a piece of plywood with plenty of water. This will not only allow for a controllable method of smoothing straight edges, the water will function as a lubricant and provide a better finish than just using the paper dry. When smoothing areas that are not straight, it is suggested that the wet and dry paper be wrapped around a small piece of wood or cork sanding block. While this method is a bit more difficult than other methods in achieving an accurate and consistently smooth surface, it is one of the most readily available methods to anyone without sophisticated tools.

2. **Buffing Wheel** – The buffing wheel or buffing machine is used to put a final polish on plastics as well as metals. It is important to note that if you decide to use a buffing wheel to put a final polish on plastic, do not use one that has been used to polish metal. The fragments pulled from the metal when it was polished will imbed themselves in the mop and will adversely affect the quality of the polish on the plastic component.

Be sure to load the polish from the polish stick onto a mop as it rotates on its spindle. Once the mop has been properly loaded, special attention should be given during the polishing process. Apart from the potential risk of damaging the plastic, buffing machines can be hazardous to use. Always wear eye protection when using a buffer wheel as they can easily throw bits of polish, catch the material and violently pull it from your hands, as well as catch loose clothing, long hair or jewelry.

For more helpful tips, contact your EM Plastic representative.