

By now you should have a plan and a car. You're going to want to start making sure you have the right tools supplies and materials purchased before you begin. You won't need to buy everything at once, but you will want to plan your purchases carefully. You'll want to buy them in the order you're going to need them. The exception to that rule is if you come across a great deal on something you need down the road. You might want to consider picking it up now to save a few bucks. The extent of your project will also determine when you buy what. If you're doing an extensive restoration that will take years, you won't want to buy the paint right at the start. Paints have shelf lives and most are usually junk after 2 years. Not to mention, if you are doing a color change to something not stock, you may change your mind about the color 2 or 3 times over the course of the project.

The extent of your project will determine how you go about starting it.

If you are doing an entire restoration, you would be planning on something that will take a LONG time. It may be years before you get it finished. You'll need to have your workspace figured out and useable. You will want to start taking things apart, and you'll want to plan the order. Taking apart most of the interior and most of the body panels can be done without affecting the drivability of the car. That allows you to be able to move the car around your shop or outside into the yard if needed. From there you'd probably start taking out the drivetrain and other components. You'll want to take the suspension out last- a rolling chassis is still easier to move around than a shell with no suspension. When you do finally get to the point of removing the suspension, make sure to put the car on jack-stands and make sure the car is in a place where you have ample access and work area around it- the car may be sitting in this spot for months or years and moving it around isn't easy. If you plan to send the body out for media blasting or other work you may be having someone else do, you need to be considering how you'll get the car to and from. If you have a trailer and about 10 friends you're set. You could buy or build a rotisserie which will allow you to turn the shell 360\* and allow the whole thing to be rolled around on wheels. As always, when disassembling, take pictures, label parts and screws, label what wires go to where in the harness. You can get away with leaving the harness in the car, just be careful to protect it from the paint and also if you have the car blasted.

If you are doing a thorough makeover, it would probably be best to have the car off the road. You can do it to a car driven regularly, but it limits you to how much stuff you can take off when. You can take off the rear spoiler pieces and B-pillar trim. The rocker flares and trim panel can come off. Maybe lose the grille header panel and cowl trim. I've driven cars around with no bumpers before- I don't recommend it but it's OK in some states. If your car is coming off the road, then you can take off all sorts of stuff with no worries. The more you can take it apart, the better things will turn out- especially if a color change is involved. Again, label all parts and screws and have pictures of how things looked together.

If it's a cheap quickie, you got it easy- Especially if you don't want to do any body work at all. You can pretty much just wet-sand the whole car with 800 grit, Scotchbrite with Comet Cleanser and water, and get ready to spray. Of course, if you got a few dents and dings, it won't take much to do just some minor filler work and rattle can primer just in the repair area, and then paint. Feel free to remove whatever trim pieces you can- grille, lights, cowl, etc. One of my painter friends did a scuff and shoot on his car, he just wanted to change colors real quick. From the time he pulled into the garage to the time he was pulling it out to set in the sun and cure more- 4 hours. He scuffed, taped and shot it in 3 hours, then let it cure in the booth enough to pull it out. I've also known people to pull their car in the garage Friday after work, fix some dings and prime the areas on Friday night. Seal, base and clear on Saturday, and be reassembling Sunday and driving to work Monday. Again, label, label, label.

#### **LABELING YOUR PARTS AND PIECES:**

---Always take pictures if you can. Digital cameras are great and should almost be considered on the tool list. You can take a picture of the part before you take it off so you can see how things go together. Not only that but you can catalog everything on your PC. You can also print off a

picture and stick it in a bag with the part and/or screws. If it's a part you plan to replace, you can even take the picture with you to the parts store to make sure it's the right part without having to lug some heavy, greasy mess around with you.

---Always label your electrical connections. Masking tape works great for this. Put a piece of tape on either side of the connection you are undoing and either write what the part is on each side, or just give each junction a different number or letter of the alphabet. For instance, say you unhook the primary injector 1st. You could tape that line and write 1, then put a piece of tape on the injector and label it 1. If you're cataloging on the computer you can make part one be the primary injector. You can also take a pic of the connection and name that picture 1 so you always have an organized catalog and know where to find what whenever you need it.

---Screws are probably the hardest to track. There's many ways to try and keep them together, and just throwing them in a coffee can is the wrong way. If you're cataloging on the computer it's fairly easy. Just write the number or name of the part they came off of onto a Ziploc bag and throw them in. I like to keep Ziplocs of many sizes on hand. Where I can, I'll keep the part in the bag with the screws. Another good way to track screws is a piece of cardboard or a cardboard box. Take the screws off the part, jab them thru the cardboard, then write the number or part name next to them.

---Parts- Some parts can be kept in Ziplocs if their size allows. Otherwise, I will put some tape on them and label them, then either put them in a tote or box for storage- cleaning them up first is always a good idea. The big plastic totes work great for keeping things together, organized and easily storable. I like to try and kind of keep things sorted so things stay together how they should. I also like to try and split all the parts I take off into 3 categories: Parts going back on, parts that are broken and must be replaced, and parts that I'd like to replace but don't have to. That way you have an easy way of telling what parts you need to start trying to find. Once you get all the need-to-have parts purchased, you can think about the would-like-to-have stuff.

Disassembly is one of those times where your overall project plan may need some tweaking. You find broken parts or parts that are going to break if they aren't replaced. You may also find more body damage or rust issues than you thought you had. All of these things can add more time and money to the project. It may change the outcome you want dramatically. For instance, my first SQ I bought was an 89 TSI out of Chicago. I bought it in the middle of a blizzard and wasn't able to check it out as good as I wanted. I saw it had some previous work done, but it actually looked fairly straight. Once I got into it, I realized it was a major rust-bucket so my plans went from a nice makeover down to a quick, half-assed make-it-look-pretty-for-the-2-years-it-has-before-the-frame-breaks-in-half. Knowing these things early on will help you and your plan immensely.

Early on is also a good time to dig at stuff as I like to call it. When you were assessing the car you may have found areas you thought had some previous bodywork. Now might be the time to grind on that area and see what's underneath. It may be a big rust hole, or possibly a 1" deep dent they just stuffed with bondo. Maybe your car has rust holes or rusty spots. Start poking around at the rust with a screwdriver or pick hammer to see how bad it is. You may see a 3" diameter rust spot but no hole. After poking around a bit, you may end up with a 1" hole and a 4" diameter rust spot. Again, these are good things to know at the beginning of your project. You have more time to make adjustments to your plan and/or come up with more funds.

So, now you have a plan for your project. The plan has possibly been modified from original form, but you still have a plan. You hopefully still have a car. I know there were times with my

89 that I wanted to push it off a cliff and go get a better car. Your car should be as disassembled as your project calls for.

For the more extreme projects, you may be looking at some serious rust repair or maybe some body modifications you want to do to the metal panels.

For the straighter, cleaner cars or the more simple makeovers, you'll probably be ready to start working with some fillers to massage out all those dents and dings.