

CREATE EASY DIRT EFFECTS

Add painted-on dirt and dust for a super-scale look

BY THE RC CAR ACTION TEAM PAINTING TECHNIQUE BY KEVIN JOWETT PHOTOS BY KEVIN JOWETT & PETER VIEIRA



It's easy to get an RC car or truck dirty—just drive it! But if you want a realistically dirtied-up look that's in scale with your machine (and won't wash off), you'll need to do more than just skip cleaning your car. With the easy techniques that follow, you can simulate dirt realistically for an over-the-top authentic look on your next scale build. Whether you're finishing off a 4X4, military machine, desert runner, or rock racer, a little well-applied dirt is always a nice finishing touch.

This Datsun 510 is ready for its faux-dirt treatment, with all its decals in place.

1 APPLY DECALS FIRST

Any of the "dirt" you apply to the car should also coat the grille and hood, so it will look weird if you apply clean decals for the grille, headlights, logos, and stripes over the "dirty" panels. Make sure all the decals are on the car before moving on to step two.



2 MASK THE WIPER SWEEPS

You can skip this step if the full-size vehicle doesn't have windshield wipers (or a windshield, for that matter). But if it does, you'll love the effect. Mask the windshield off, then use a pencil to mark the sweep of the wipers. If the wipers are molded into the body instead of movable separate pieces, just freehand an appropriate-looking arc. After marking the sweeps, trim away the masking to reveal the areas of the windshield that will be "dirty." If you're worried about scoring the windshield by cutting the masks directly on the plastic, just peel off the masking, stick it to a piece of glass, then trim the sweeps and apply them to the windshield as you would a precut mask.



3 GET DIRTY—WITH HELP FROM A FAN

For a realistic application of "dirt," place a fan in front of your car, set it to high, and spray paint into the airflow in short, light bursts. Practice pays off here; use an old body, toy car, or something similar as a stand-in as you experiment with the distance between the fan, paint can, and body. Get a feel for how the paint sprays from the can. When you're ready to commit to your hero car, remember that a little weathering goes a long way. When you find yourself saying "just a little more," that's usually when you wind up overdoing it.



Scope out the plastic model section of your hobby store for a variety of tans and earth tones that can stand in for dirt. This is Tamiya's AS-15 Tan, an acrylic paint.



After the paint dries, remove the masking to reveal the clean windshield. Looks trick!

4 DO THE TIRES, TOO
You can use the same technique to spatter the wheels and tires with dirt. Remove them from the car to spray them. If you mask the tread areas, it will look like the tires saw pavement after off-roading, which can be a neat effect.

GO DO IT (AND EASY DOES IT)

Have fun trying out these techniques, and remember that dirt and weathering effects work best when they're subtle. We'd love to see how you do, so be sure to post some pics! Hit us up at Facebook.com/rccaraction, or email your shots to readersrides@airage.com. Need help getting great photos? Look up "How to Be a Smartphone Super Shooter" in our October 2014 issue, or just search "Easy Tips" at rccaraction.com to read the article online.



Precision Dirt Effects

The spray-can technique is perfect for creating an overall dirt-spattered effect, but it's not precise. To put dirt just where you want it, Tamiya's Weathering Master kits are ideal. The eye-shadow-like material is simply daubed into place and spread to create realistic, soft-edged dirt effects. Tamiya also offers colors to simulate rust, oil, soot, bare metal, and other scale surfaces. ☺



Tamiya's Weathering Master kits make it easy to precisely apply dirt, rust, soot, and other effects.



Use the sponge end of the included tool to apply up the color, then spread it around. The excess can be easily wiped off.



The Weathering Master kit also works well with the windshield-wiper technique. It creates a dusty effect, rather than a "spatter" look.

