

Motoring

It's flawless

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■ **GENTLY DOES IT:** Pat Kent carefully coaxes out a bodywork dent using the Paintless Dent Removal technique.

1162/d

Few car owners are aware of the Paintless Dent Removal technique. Richard Hill meets Pat Kent who specialises in invisibly removing small dents.

PAINTLESS Dent Removal (PDR) first appeared about 20 years ago as an innovative way to repair dents and dings on car assembly lines.

These repairs were carried out by 'spooners' summoned after the appearance of the specialist tools they used.

Over the last 10 years, it has become a more effective, less expensive method for removing small dents from cars which are now made with a thinner grade of sheet metal.

Pat Kent has been operating as a PDR specialist for the past seven years. His clients have included Michael Parkinson, Ricky Parfitt and Michael Aspel.

PDR has rapidly become the best alternative to conventional body shop repair methods. Instead of having to break the factory finish for a small dent, specialists such as Pat are able to remove the dent without painting or body fillers.

Most repairs are completed in less than 30 min-

utes at home or work and repairs cost less than what a traditional body shop charges per hour.

The result is a beautiful showroom finish that maintains a vehicle's true value.

The technique is relatively straightforward but requires a considerable level of skill and craftsmanship.

By gently massaging dents from the back side of the panels, the technician returns the vehicle's metal to the original condition and strength, all without damaging the original factory finish.

The procedure will not void factory paint warranties or devalue the vehicle like most conventional methods.

The procedure is especially suited to the most vulnerable panels of the car but is not suitable for panel edges where there may be a double skin, seam, fold or weld.

Pat explains some of the other limitations: "We can repair dings up to about the size of a 50 pence piece.

"Any larger are difficult because the metal becomes distorted and stretched.

"They become difficult to massage back into position."

Once, Pat had to carry out an urgent repair to a Mercedes bonnet using a stainless steel fountain pen.

One customer even scrutinised his work with a magnifying glass - but couldn't find the site of the original dent. It can be that good.



Pat's top tips:

- Don't park too close to other cars in car parks. The biggest cause of dents is car doors opening.
- Likewise, be considerate to other cars parked nearby and fit a rubber door guard.

■ Keep your distance. Lots of dents are caused by flying debris.

■ Get dents fixed quickly, before the paint gets brittle.

● See Paintless Dent Removal advertisement - page 80