

## "Poor Man's" Black Pearl Emblems

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### Tools & Supplies

Heat Gun (or blow dryer)  
2"-3" Plastic Putty Knife  
Waxed Dental Floss (alternate)  
Masking Tape  
Flat Cardboard Box  
Adhesive Remover (3M or Goo Gone)  
Old Toothbrush  
Dawn Dishwashing Fluid  
#0000 Steel Wool  
Testors Black Pearl paint (#1813)  
Testors Clear coat (#1814)  
3M Double-sided Emblem tape

### Obligatory Disclaimer

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### Summary

Black Pearl Emblems give your 4Runner a distinctive look without looking gaudy. I wanted a set for my 98, but buying a set from my Toyota dealership was quite expensive---last I recall it was in the \$200 range. Thus, this was my inspiration to figure out a way to have that black pearl emblem look without the expense.

One guy I knew posted a link (which I lost) to a guy who painted his old Toyota Cressida emblems with "Window Tint" paint. The result, while satisfactory, was not good enough for me. I was looking for that subtle "pearlescent" effect. So I went down to one of the largest hobby stores in the South Bay (Los Angeles) and found that Testors sells Black Pearl and Clear Coat paint for a grand total of \$7.63.



\$7.63 vs. +\$200---you do the math.

### Step 1: Removing the Emblems

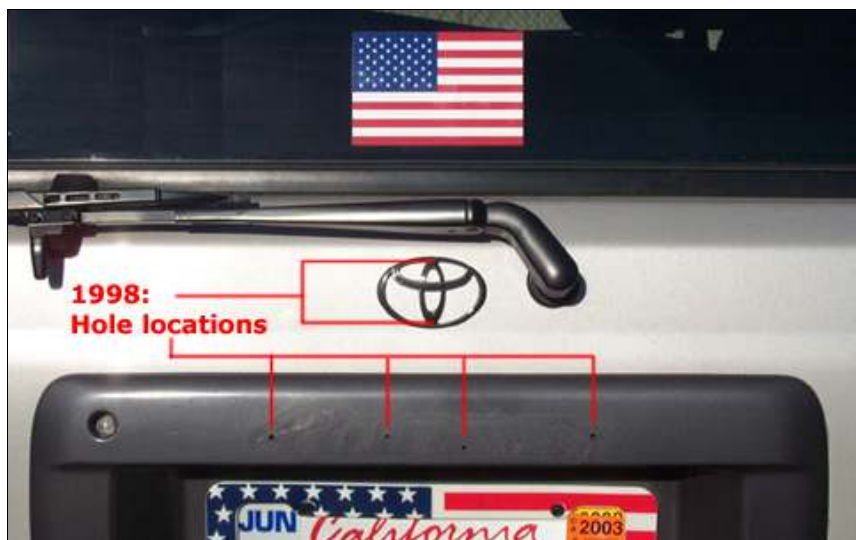
Before you remove your emblems, surround the borders of your emblems with masking tape to mark its original location. This will help you perfectly realign your emblems back to their original position. You will thank me for this great tip later:



Use masking tape to aid you in reattaching your emblems

Now, take your heat gun and work the gun on the emblem from all side. Do not set it too high or too close. You just want to soften up the adhesive. Next, take some adhesive remover and squirt some of the fluid (from the top down) beneath the emblem. Wait a few minutes and then take your plastic putty knife and slide it behind the emblem. Try to maintain a flat angle and even pressure so as to not damage your paint. As you work your blade under the emblem, slowly and carefully lift up the blade behind the emblem until you feel the emblem coming off. If the adhesive is still too tacky, apply some more heat and/or more adhesive remover.

Depending on your model year, some of the emblems have plastic “posts” that come out of the emblem and fit inside holes in the 4Runner. For my 98, the only emblems that had these posts were the Toyota stylized logo (above the license plate fascia) and the “4Runner” emblem on the license plate fascia itself. Follow the same procedure as above to remove these emblems.



'98 4Runners have 6 holes. The heat gun, fluid, and plastic putty knife method will work the best in this case. Using the dental floss method will work but it will be difficult.

If you choose to use waxed dental floss, follow the same procedures as described above but be aware that these posts will prevent you from flossing all the way through.

### Step 2: Removing the Adhesive off the Emblems

After the emblems have been removed, most likely there will be some residue on them. Use a shop rag and put a generous amount of the 3M Adhesive Remover (or Goo Gone) on the remaining adhesive and allow it to sit for at least 3-4 minutes. Reapply and allow it to sit for a few more minutes. Now use your old toothbrush to gently scrape the adhesive off.

### Step 3: Preparing the Emblems

I took some #0000 Steel wool and gently buffed the emblems. While others may disagree, it really helps with the paint adhesion. Next, run the emblems under warm water, wash with soap, and then wipe down with rubbing alcohol.

Take your clean emblems, roll up some masking tape, stick them behind the emblems, and then stick the entire emblem on a cardboard box.

The reason for doing this is to raise the emblems above the surface of the cardboard to make it easy to spray the edges. Thanks to Butnut

(Brian) for this tip.

#### Step 4: Painting and Clear Coating the Emblems

Take your Black Pearl paint and do a test spray on your cardboard. It is very important to get the “feel” of the can, how much comes out, etc. Spray from a distance of 8-10 inches away. Your first coat should be very light. From experience, 2 light coats per emblem are perfect. Drying time (not curing time) is approximately 1 hour per coat.

My first attempt was not great. A lot of dust settled on the emblems so I removed the paint with turpentine and started all over. This time, I used my blow dryer at high temp and low speed to set the paint and prevent any dust from settling on it. Another good tip is to clean the nozzle of paint can between each coat. This prevents the paint from spraying big “clumps” on your emblems.

Finish with 1-2 light coats of clear coat paint. Do NOT put too much clear coat on. I did once thinking it would protect the newly painted emblems, but instead, it penetrated the paint and made it look like some post-modern crap.

Whatever you do, do NOT be tempted to poke, touch, prod, etc your emblems. You will sincerely regret it if you do because you will mar the paint. Put it in a safe, dry, dust-free environment and just forget about them for the next 48-72 hours. This will give the paint enough time to harden.

#### Step 5: Preparing the 4Runner Surface

Soap up your wash mitt with some Dawn and wash off all the excess wax, etc. off the surface where you intend to reapply the emblems.

#### Step 6: Applying the Emblems

Cut to size the 3M emblem tape and apply to the back of the emblems. Now take your emblems and apply them to their original locations. Don't press too hard---just enough to mount them.

#### Lessons Learned:

- Practice once or twice before making your first coat. When you are spraying the paint, make a light pass. Don't slop it on. You will regret it and have to do it over.

- Find a nice, dry, dust-free environment for your emblems to dry.

- The paint took much longer to harden than I thought. It dries in 1 hour but does not cure. I touched the paint with my fingernail once and it created a nice little dent. That is why I am giving you the advice not to touch the paint and let it cure for at least 48-72 hours! One member even suggested 1 month. I'll let you decide.

#### Update

3/6/03: It has been almost 4 months since I originally performed this mod. I did not put all the emblems back on the rear tailgate. In fact, I only have the Toyota stylized oval logo! I really like the “clean” look. The paint on the emblems has held up just fine. No chips, flaking, nothing. Well worth the \$7.

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