Learn to Weld Auto Body Panels: The Basics and Useful Tips

Ever wanted to work on your own car instead of paying someone else to do the work for you? Auto body welding is a seemingly vast, unending industry with incredibly steep learning curves for beginners.

Still, if you’re willing to put in the necessary time and effort, you’ll learn to weld auto body panels. In doing so, you can proudly boast about repairing the car you drive. This guide was developed as an introduction to teach auto body welding techniques as well as to teach you how to choose your welder. To sum it up, we hope to adequately cover the basics of learning to weld your own vehicle.

Choose a Welder Type Suitable For Your Auto Body Welding Project

Naturally, the first step in the process of learning how to weld automobiles is to choose the welder that best suits your needs. There are 3 main welding system options that you can choose from. We’re going to tell you a little bit about each of them.

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**Stick Welders**

This is the cheapest option and the most basic one as well. Even though this welder is just a stick that usually sputters, leading to a cruder type of welding, it also tends to get the job done. You can even use it underwater, but only if you’re more experienced. All in all, it’s easy to use and cheap, but you shouldn’t expect too much precision, especially when working with thin metal.

**MIG Welders**

Instead of a welding stick, the MIG welders use a welding torch. If you want to learn how to weld using a MIG welder, you should know that you have entry level setups that you can use if you don’t have any experience welding. This option is more expensive
than the previous one. But, not unreasonably so. Moreover, it’s perfect for sheet metal work.

**TIG Welders**

Finally, the last and most expensive option: the TIG welder. These welders are suitable for people who already have advanced welding skills and less suitable for beginners who want to learn to weld. This type of welder provides you with high-end results. You can use it on aluminum as well. And, you can control its heat setups very precisely.

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- **Use a MIG welder** to weld auto body parts, especially if the steel is really heavy. Apart from the main equipment, you also need to make sure you have enough gas and welding wire to complete your entire project.
- **Don't forget to keep a hand grinder** and some clamps next to you. Stopping in the middle of a project is never a good idea.
- **Adjust the new panel.** Make sure its size is suitable by placing it on top of the old one so that you can see where you have to cut. Then, trim it accordingly.
- **Get rid of the old panel.** Make sure not to leave any rust behind. Any leftover blemishes will eventually affect the new panel as well. With a hand grinder, you have to cut half an inch below the upper line where the new panel will go. You’ll need some metal left to weld the replacement panel.
- **Set the welding current.** The recommended setting is typically from 40 up to 60 amps. Any higher than that might lead to holes in the panel. Any lower amps will lead to a smaller weld depth.
- **Attach the new panel.** This is where the clamps come in. Use them to attach the new panel to the piece of metal left after cutting out the old panel. Tack welds are also a good replacement for clamps, as they’ll hold the panel in place while you attach it with your welder.
- **Start welding.** Now, on to the most exciting part. Actual welding your panel. It’s not extremely difficult to learn to weld auto body panels. Typically, you have to use the stitch welding method. This method implies several welds that form a continuous line. Once you’re done, remember to also check for gaps and use plug welding to fill them.
- **Apply the final touches.** These include grinding down the panel, and applying primer and paint. Bear in mind that your objective here is to make the finished project look like you never did any of this in the first place.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Learning to produce clean welds and to clean up your projects takes a lot of dedication and commitment. However, the end results will be worth it.

We hope this short yet comprehensive guide was useful to you if you’re serious about welding and wish to learn to weld auto body panels. Even if it takes some practice to get used to the equipment and the welding techniques, the end result is definitely worth the effort.
DON’T FORGET! Your Perfect Weld Needs a Professional Paint Job