

How to Buy a Used Car

Buying a used car is a bit of gamble--there is no guarantee that the car is accident-free, has real mileage, and was properly maintained. There may be some hidden problems like a worn out automatic transmission, or engine problems that may not have been obvious when you test-drove the car. You must ask yourself: "Will I save money when buying a used car? How do I eliminate the risk of potential problems, and is this actually possible to do?" Here are four quick steps to help you determine if buying a used car is in your best interest.

Step 1. Be Prepared.

Step 2. Check a car's history records.

Step 3. Have the car inspected.

Step 4. Be careful doing the paperwork.

Step 1. Be prepared.

Do as much research you can. Read reviews, consumer asks colleagues and friends, compare options, and gather gas consumption data on the make and model you're interested in. Examine reliability ratings. Try to determine maintenance costs and upkeep, etc. Your goal should be to narrow your search to one or two models. Know what you want to buy.

Step 2. Check a car's history records.

Checking the car's history will probably eliminate half of the vehicles from your potential list. Vehicles that have been flooded or restored after serious accidents, those with tolled back odometers, heavily abused vehicles (e.g. rentals), those with outstanding liens, etc., can be eliminated after simply checking the history record of the vehicle. If you're purchasing your car from a reputable dealer, they will have no problem providing you with a CARFAZ report.

Step 3. Have the car inspected.

Check out the car yourself very carefully. Ask a person who knows about cars to help you. As a final step, bring the car to a mechanic you trust for an inspection.

Step 4. Be careful doing the paperwork.

Be extremely careful when doing the paperwork. For questions about vehicle registration, change of ownership, legal aspects, etc. contact your local vehicle registration authorities.