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**Tips For Buying A Used Car**

**By John Rodgers**

For the average individual who knows little about cars or mechanics, buying a used car can be a worrying experience. Buying a car is often one of the biggest purchases we make in our lives and the nagging doubt of whether or not you are about to buy a lemon always makes buying a used car difficult. So how do you go about choosing a car that is unlikely to be a lemon?

If you have found a "bargain" or a car you like the look of go check it out. At this stage it is always useful to take someone who knows something about cars with you if you can. If you haven't got anyone whose opinion you can trust then you are going to have to use your own instincts.

Check for obvious accident damage. Accident damaged cars can be spotted by little tell tail signs. Look for signs of overspray to panels, bumpers and fittings, look for areas of paintwork that are inconsistent with the general condition of the car (these may indicate filled dents, filled rotten patches) and check that all the tyres are wearing evenly (uneven wear may indicate the car isn't running straight and true as a result of a crash or poorly executed accident repair).

If you are happy there are no obvious clues to suggest accident damage check the general condition of the car for wear. Is the amount of wear consistent with the mileage of the car? Worn foot mats, shiny steering wheels and worn/damaged driver seats are not what you would expect to find on a low mileage car.

Does the car have missing interior fittings or scratched paint work? Would you expect a car you owned from new for a number of years to have accrued a similar amount of damage? Make a mental note of the amount of wear for bargaining purposes should you decide to buy the car.

Check the vehicle for rot in the doorways and wheel arches. A little rot can become a serious costly problem after as little as one year. A lot of rot, especially to structural areas of the car where panels and sections of the car come together could indicate the car is not safe to drive.

Once you have established the car looks to be cosmetically genuine and that the condition is as you would expect for the cars age start to look at the mechanics of the car. Check the oil on the dipstick.

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Are there bubbles in the oil? If there are bubbles this is a sure sign of water in the oil and likely to result in expensive repair. Check the water filler. Is there a white residue on the cap or visible in the filler area. This is an expensive sign of oil in the water. Check the oil filter (easy to spot, generally looks like a brightly painted tin can sticking out of the side of the engine) does it look to be recently fitted or like it has been on for some time. This is a standard part that is replaced at service and can indicate how the owner has been treating the car.

Start the motor up. Does the engine rattle or have a pronounced ticking noise or does it sound healthy? Is the exhaust loud or well silenced you don't need to be paying for a new exhaust system. Once the engine has warmed go look at the exhaust. Are there large quantities of smoke, black or white being omitted? Both can indicate expensive faults. At this stage check to make sure headlamps, indicator and brake lights work.

If all seems fine the next step is a test drive. Check the steering. Is it light or vague, neither is a good

sign. Does the wheel have a large amount of play in it? Steering is important for clear safety reasons. The steering should be responsive and direct. Neither too heavy nor light.

Check the brakes. Do they inspire confidence? They should pull the car firmly to a stop in a straight line without fading or feeling as if they are about to run out. Find a car park or space where you can turn the car on full lock in both directions. Do the front wheels grind or shriek? This could indicate expensive wheel bearing problems.

If you do not come across these problems then it is fair to say you have a solid used car that is unlikely to be a lemon. Now if you can recall all the little details you spotted you can use these points to bargain a good price and buy the used car with the confidence that you have avoided a lemon.

John Rodgers writes for Used Car San Antonio at

<http://www.usedcar-sanantonio.com>

## **What to Remember When Purchasing Your Car**

**By Andrew D'luko**

Buying a new car is the second most expensive thing most consumers buy. Next to houses of course. That is why it is important to know all the tips on making car buying easy and less stressful. Think about the car model and features you will want. Also think about how much you are willing to spend and **STICK TO IT**. Car salesmen are almost always paid on commission which means all they want is your purchase. Also, don't be hasty or feel rushed into making a decision. If you are not sure about something, come back later.

Check books and magazines at the library or surf the internet for useful information on prices and features for the car you want before showing up at the dealer. That way you feel you know just as

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much about the kind of car you want as the salesman does. Shop around - Never go with an impulse buy. Go to a few different dealers and talk to a car-buying service and a broker-buying service to make comparisons.

Plan on negotiating the price. Dealers may be willing to bargain on their profit margin. This is the difference between the MSRP (Manufacturers Suggested Retail Price) and the invoice price. This also affects your monthly payments. Negotiating the price can save you big money.

You may even want to consider ordering the car that you want. This may cause delays, but if the car with the features you want is not on the lot, this may be your best option. Remember this is a big purchase and one that will probably need to last you for a while. Inversely however you may get a better deal from the dealership if you buy a car from their inventory. Just because they want to get rid of them.

If you are trading in your old car for a new one. Negotiate the price of the new one before letting them know about the old one. Once they know you want to trade-in, they know you have that much more money to spend and they will use that against you. Check the internet or the library for information on the value of your old car. Just to give you a ballpark idea. Remember that if you can, you should try to sell your car yourself. You will get much more money for it that way.

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How To Know When Not To Buy A Used Car!  
When Buying Used Car Is Not A Good Idea  
Automobile Buying And Financing Can Be Fun  
Things To Consider When Buying A Car

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