10 Steps to Buying a Used Car

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Used cars have never been more reliable or more affordable. Following these steps will help you find and buy the used car you want.

The following steps will tell you how to locate, price and negotiate to buy the used car you want. If you still don't know what car to buy, read 10 Steps to Finding the Right Car for You and then come back after you have decided.

Step 1: Starting out -- Why buy used?

If you've decided to buy a used car, you've already made a smart decision. You can get a car that's almost as good as a brand-new one without paying for the depreciation that wallops new car buyers as soon as they drive the car off the lot. Even cars that are only a year old are 20-30 percent cheaper than brand-new cars.

But there are other good reasons to buy a used car:

1. You'll save money on insurance.

2. Bigger bargains are possible for the smart used car shopper.

3. Used cars are more reliable today than ever before.

4. Some used cars are still under the factory warranty.

5. Most new carmakers now sell certified used cars, which include warranties.

6. The history of a used car can easily be traced using the vehicle identification number (VIN).

7. If you buy from a private party, the negotiation process is less stressful.

Step 2: Choosing the right used car

Although you think your mind is made up about what car to buy, take the time to consider other competing cars. Maybe you'll find something you like even better.

At the beginning of the car-buying process, many people already know the car they want. But it's a good idea to stop right now and test your decision with this question: Will this car fit into my monthly budget? We'll explain how to determine what car you can afford in the next step. For now, make sure your choice isn't
obviously exceeding your budget. Ask yourself, does it meet my current needs? For more on this subject, refer to "10 Steps to Finding the Right Car for You."

You may need to expand your horizons when considering what to buy because you won't know what is available in your area until you really start looking. Consider building a target list of three different cars. You might want to think of vehicles in the same class. For example, if you really want a Toyota Camry, you should also be on the lookout for a Honda Accord, Nissan Altima or Chevrolet Malibu. These cars were built for the same market, but they have different features and sometimes lower prices.

Source:
