

Tips For Successfully Buying A Good 2 To 3 Year Old Car

Courtesy of John Cummuta and his Transforming Debt in to Wealth™ system

- The foundational rule is to leave your emotions at home.
 - Never buy a car on impulse.
 - The CD player, or how good your girlfriend looks in it are not reasons to buy a car.
 - When you find an acceptable car...take it to your mechanic.
 - Pay him or her to give it a complete check out. About \$50. It'll be some of the best money you'll spend in the transaction.
 - If the seller resists your mechanic checking it – run.
 - Dress down when car shopping.
 - ◆ You'll feel more comfortable crawling around the car.
 - ◆ The price won't creep upward.
 - A step-by-step used car checkout.
 - Inspect the exterior.
 - Look for signs of major damage or rust.
 - Do the colors of all the fenders and doors match EXACTLY?
 - Are there signs of hail damage?
 - Are there signs of repainting, like over-spraying inside door jams, inside the gas filler cap area, around the front and rear glass, on exterior moldings, and inside wheel wells.
 - Some people paint for cosmetic reasons.
 - But more frequently to hide repaired damage.
 - Look down the sides to check alignment.
 - Watch for sagging, uneven door alignment, or waves in the flat surfaces.
 - Stand at each corner and push the bumper up and down until the car is bouncing.
 - When you stop pushing, it shouldn't bounce more than a couple times. Otherwise negotiate for price of new shocks or struts.
 - Next check the tires for uneven wear, tread damage. Don't forget the spare.
 - Check a vinyl roof for fading color, bubbling, or coming loose.
 - Check for glass damage.
 - Inside you want to look over the interior for splitting or tearing.
 - Power seats should function properly.
 - An excessively worn brake pedal could mean the driver was hard on the car.
 - Do all the gauges operate?
 - Look under the dash for hanging or taped wiring.

- Make sure everything electrical works.
- Now let's pop the hood.
- Look under the car for fluids leaking on the ground.
- Fresh oil on the engine is not normal, but dirt is.
- Check the coolant for a fresh green color.
- Check for soft or worn hoses and belts.
- Check the oil. It should not be black or real dark brown. It should obviously be within the safe range.
- Check battery electrolyte (cover the plates), brake fluid (no more than a half inch from full), and transmission fluid. Transmission fluid that smells like burnt coffee can indicate trouble.
- Remove the air filter and check for oil, which would indicate a cylinder problem. Dirt is normal.
- Before you start the engine, turn off the radio and everything else.
- When it starts check the mirrors for smoke.
- Have the seller or a friend rev the engine, while you get behind the car and watch for smoke. A little is OK, but blue smoke indicates burning oil, which is always bad.
- Listen for clinking, tapping, or any other abnormal noises. They're rarely harmless.
- Before test-driving, turn the wheel from one extreme to the other. No squeaking or resistance.
- Then – with foot on brake – move gearshift through all the gears. No knocking, grinding, or clunking sounds. The louder, the more expensive.
- Keep radio and people quiet while driving.
- Try a hard stop from 30 mph. Does it stop in a straight line? Does the pedal feel mushy? Any noises?
- Next try accelerating. Does it jerk or hesitate?
- Does the transmission properly drop down a gear when accelerating to passing speed?
- Make sure you drive over all the types of surfaces you'll encounter when you own it.
- After you've had the car to highway speed for 10 minutes, check the gauges for overheating or other problems.
- While on the highway, drop down about 10 mph under the speed limit, then punch it – watch for blue smoke in rear view mirror.
- Then at speed limit, take foot off accelerator, and watch again for blue smoke.
- There should be no shimmying or shaking in the steering wheel.
- When back on slow streets, take hands off wheel, check for straight tracking.
- The best situation is to have your mechanic with you during these tests.

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