



Car Buying Checklist

- Know Your Budget**

To avoid over spending and being stuck with a budget busting monthly payment, see your lender before you start shopping car lots to find out how much you would qualify for. This could also help when negotiating with a car salesman.

- Create your “Must Have” List**

Before you start looking at vehicles, create a list of must have items in your next vehicle. Whether it be better fuel mileage, 4 doors, a reverse camera, etc., you can let your salesman know exactly what you need so you don't waste time looking at vehicles that don't meet your criteria.

- Research**

Before taking a trip to the dealer, start looking at cars and create a list of the car models you're targeting. Once you have a specific vehicle or requirements in mind, do a little research of your own either on that vehicle, or on vehicles fitting your requirements. Research the various price ranges, safety ratings, common issues, recalls, etc. Be informed before you shop so you know when you're getting a fair price on a vehicle and what vehicles you should probably stay away from.

- Shop Around**

Start “window shopping” and narrowing your list down to your top picks. You can look at cars online, visit physical dealerships, or talk to your friends and family to see if anyone's selling. Call dealerships to see if you can start bargaining over the phone before you visit in person; you may find that some dealers are a lot more flexible in pricing than other. Once you've narrowed down your list you can weigh the pros and cons of each dealership/car and begin comparing vehicles/dealerships with your “Must Have” list.

- Do an Assessment**

Be sure to get as much information as possible about the car you're considering. Before taking it for a spin you should also carefully inspect the vehicle of any signs or repair, damage or other things that could potentially lead to more headaches ahead. After giving it a thorough look, test the car out including both driving and all its components. Things to keep in mind are the alignment, brakes, air conditioning, lights, etc.

- Negotiation**

Salesmen tend to counteroffer with higher prices so always start with a realistic, low offer and be sure to stay within your budget. Remember, if the final price they ask for is unrealistic, or unfair based on your prior research, you can always walk away from the deal. While most dealerships will also offer you financing options with auto loans, you're likely to find better rates elsewhere. It never hurts to compare your options, don't forget to check with your personal bank or credit union!