

Important tips for buying a pre-owned vehicle

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Buying a used vehicle can be an affordable option to most, but many consumers question if they will be taken for a ride or if this route makes sense. People are increasingly questioning the economic wisdom of buying a brand-new car. Consumers are feeling the financial pinch, depreciation is a reality, and the price of new vehicles is increasing above inflation



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While buying your next vehicle second-hand makes economic sense, buyers need to make smart choices. To choose the right vehicle and get the car of your dreams, it is important to keep certain factors in mind.

Needs and wants

It is critical to know what you want and need in a vehicle before taking the next step. How will you be using the vehicle? If you never venture further than the shopping mall, a fully-equipped 4x4 is probably vehicle overkill. What features or qualities do you need from your vehicle?

- **Space:** If it's just two of you, a small two-door car makes size and space sense, but if you're ferrying school kids with book bags and sports equipment, a larger vehicle with more boot space is going to be the better option.
- **Kilometres on the odometer:** If you won't be driving the vehicle often or far distances, buying a high kilometre vehicle is not necessarily a bad idea. However, if you need to drive the vehicle often and know you will be clocking up many hundreds of kilometres on the odometer, it is wiser to rather look for a vehicle with lower mileage.

Do your homework - assuming is not your friend

Some people are full of promises but if something isn't on paper, it doesn't mean anything.

Never assume a vehicle has features such as Bluetooth or good safety ratings, rather get your facts straight beforehand and ensure that all options or extras are there.

- **Car servicing centre:** Before buying a vehicle, be sure that there is a car servicing centre of your specific vehicle in your area to prevent you having to drive far for vehicle services.
- **Do the maths:** Don't set yourself up for unexpected expenditure. Make sure you understand the full picture when it comes to additional costs over and above the purchase price.

Do some preliminary research about additional costs such as insurance, the cost and availability of warranties as well as the cost and accessibility of the specific vehicle's parts. It is also important to consider the vehicle's fuel usage and costs.

- **Rather be safe than sorry:** Some vehicles are not safe to drive at all and can cost your life. Research the vehicle's Euro NCAP safety rating to help you decide whether the vehicle's safety is up to standard.

The vehicle industry is awash with acronyms but you must familiarise yourself with terms such as ABS (anti-lock braking system), ESP (electronic stability programme), EBD (electronic brakeforce distribution) and ensure the vehicle has a functioning airbag.

Stay clear from pushy salesmen

Avoid being pushed into buying a vehicle by a persuasive salesman. Rather lose a potentially great deal than being forced into a deal that you will ultimately regret.

Have the vehicle checked out

Don't rely on the advice of the salesman only – never forget his primary goal is to make a sale.

- **Independent assessment:** Get an independent assessment on the vehicle: this can either be a Dekra roadworthy assessment or it can be undertaken by someone whom you trust and who is knowledgeable about vehicles, such as your trusted mechanic.

Read the Ts & Cs carefully

Take your time reading the terms and conditions and ensure you understand everything before signing anything. If you are concerned with a phrase mentioned in the terms and conditions, raise your concern and request for it to be excluded or adapted until you feel comfortable. Remember, it's your hard-earned money.

Take a proper test drive

Going for a test drive can help you determine the condition of the car and whether it's a good fit for you. But going around the block is not enough. When test driving the vehicle, rather drive a little farther and get a good feel for the vehicle on suburban roads and on the highway. If you are looking to buy a family car, take the family along for the test drive and make sure there is enough space for kids, dogs and all the paraphernalia that comes

with travelling with a family.

Following these tips may help you choose a used car that meets your needs and fits your budget. Consumers are lucky to have choice on their side when it comes to used car options but keep in mind that any vehicle purchase is a significant financial outlay and needs to be taken extremely seriously. You can easily get the car of your dreams by keeping certain key factors of buying a vehicle second-hand in mind – just make sure you have covered all your bases and have had all your questions answered.

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