



Autotrader

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Autotrader® Experts Name Six Things You Must Do on Your Next Test Drive

A long, thorough test drive can be the difference between car ownership bliss or constant headaches.

ATLANTA, March 22, 2016 – Taking a new car out for a spin is an exciting part of the car shopping process. The clean interiors, shiny gadgets and new car smell can be exhilarating. While most buyers agree that the test drive is one of the most important aspects of the shopping process, recent research from Autotrader shows that consumers may not be putting as much time into the test drive as they should. In fact, a survey of 400 recent purchasers showed most people spend less than 30 minutes on a test drive, and they only take one test drive in the vehicle they're planning to purchase.

According to the experts at Autotrader, short test drives barely give shoppers the opportunity to get a good feel for a car, much less determine if it will truly meet their needs. With the goal of helping shoppers get the most out of their next test drive, Autotrader's editorial team has a few [important tips shoppers should keep in mind](#).

"The test drive is your opportunity to make sure the car you're considering truly fits you and your lifestyle," said Brian Moody, executive editor at Autotrader. "Don't be shy about asking for more time behind the wheel, and bring everything you need—from a sidekick to your usual equipment—to make a good decision."

To really put a car through its paces during a test drive, the experts at Autotrader recommend the following:

1. Come prepared with people and stuff.

Your test drive should closely mimic the way you use your car in day-to-day driving, so you need to bring the people and items that typically ride with you. If you have a family, take them along. Try a child safety seat to see how it fits. Throw your golf bag in the trunk. See if your lanky teenager can sit comfortably in the backseat. If you're single and typically drive alone, bring a friend. You'll benefit from the help of a sidekick anyway.

2. Request a longer test drive. When you take a test drive with a dealership salesperson, it's likely that the usual route won't be very long. Nearly any salesperson will allow a longer test drive if a shopper requests it, especially if they're serious about making a sale. Make sure you test the road in your typical driving conditions—through neighborhoods, on the highway, and in rush hour traffic if your daily commute has you in tenuous stop-and-go traffic. And don't forget to drive it home, if possible, and park it in your garage to see if it fits.

3. Drive on rough roads.

One of the most important places to go on a test drive is on rough roads to find out how a car drives on harsh surfaces. It would be no fun to drive home in a new car and discover later that the ride is too jarring for you to handle.

4. Drive on curvy roads.

After you've driven on a rough road and on the highway, your next stop should be a road with some curves. You'll want to do this in order to feel the physics of the car. Is it too top-heavy? Do its motions make you carsick? And, of course, do you feel like the steering and handling is adequate for your needs? A curvy road is the best place to answer each of those questions.

5. Try parking the car in various scenarios.

Many shoppers on a test drive forget a crucial aspect of driving that can be very stressful: parking. That's

why we strongly suggest that you take any vehicle and try to park it in different parking places like a crowded parking lot and even a parallel parking space. If you do, you might discover potential flaws with the car, such as a large turning radius or poor visibility. Of course, you also might find out that the car is easy to park, which can only be a good thing.

6. Test the infotainment system and connect your phone.

The interface for making phone calls, answering texts and accessing the maps on your phone is probably the portion of the car you'll interact with many times per day – second only to the steering wheel and seats. Make sure the pairing is easy and that the graphics are large enough to read at a glance. If at all possible, look for a system that is very easy to use like Chrysler's Uconnect or either Apple CarPlay or Android Auto.

Now that you have the tools you need to ace your next test drive, check out Autotrader's picks for the 10 vehicles that you "Must Test Drive" in 2016 at www.autotrader.com/MustTestDrive.

About Autotrader

Autotrader is the most visited third-party car shopping site, with the most engaged audience of in-market shoppers. As the foremost authority on automotive consumer insights and expert in online and mobile marketing, Autotrader makes the car shopping experience easy and fun for today's empowered consumer looking to find or sell the perfect new, used or Certified Pre-Owned car. Using technology, shopper insights and local market guidance, Autotrader's comprehensive marketing solutions guide dealers to personalized digital marketing strategies that grow brand, drive traffic and connect the online and in-store shopping experience.

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