



What You Need To Do

Before Looking For Your Next Car

✓ **KNOW WHAT YOU WANT**

Make a list of essentials and a list of “nice-to-have” features. Knowing what you want in a car is the first step in your car buying journey. Knowing what you need gives you a baseline for your search.

✓ **KNOW WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD**

You need to be able to afford not only the cost of the car, but the cost beyond the sticker price. This includes car insurance, registration, taxes and fees, as well as gas and regular maintenance. A good guideline is to spend no more than 20% of your net monthly income.

✓ **USED OR NEW?**

A new car offers the latest technology, including safety features. It’s also under warranty. However, new cars quickly depreciate in value. Used cars depreciate more slowly and are less expensive to start, but there is the potential for costly maintenance and repairs.

✓ **BUY VS. LEASE?**

Owning your vehicle is the goal for most people. It not only ensures you have a car, it allows you to resell it. Leasing allows you to drive a car under factory warranty and have the newest technology every few years, and comes with a lower monthly payment. There are mileage restrictions with leases and fees if you end the agreement early, and you don’t have a car to show for it at the end of the leasing period.

✓ **FIND YOUR CURRENT CAR’S TRADE-IN VALUE**

Check the [Kelley Blue Book](#). Type in your car’s year, make, mileage and get an estimate of your car’s worth in your region. Use this amount in your negotiations with dealerships and private parties.

✓ **FIND POTENTIAL NEW AND USED CARS**

Make a list of makes and models in your price range that will fit your needs and wants. Read expert reviews, recalls, and road tests. Look for used cars within your budget on sites like [J.D. Power](#), [Carvana](#) or [CarMax](#), or look at new cars at a dealership.

✓ **BEST TIME TO BUY A CAR**

You may need a car now. But if you have the luxury of time, wait for special pricing, rebates or promotions. A good time to buy a car is generally between October and December, when dealerships need to make space for new models. Avoid weekends when dealerships are most busy.

✓ **KNOW YOUR FINANCING OPTIONS**

You have two choices for financing it: direct lending and dealership financing. Independent lenders like your bank may offer a lower interest rate. Dealers however could offer incentives like zero percent financing.

✓ **CHECK YOUR CREDIT SCORE**

Your credit score could determine the interest rate on your loan. Check your score so there are no surprises. You can get a free credit report from each of three nationwide credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.

✓ **RESEARCH DEALERSHIPS**

Read dealership reviews to get a sense of how happy customers are. Ask family and friends for recommendations. Identify a few dealerships in your region, not just one. That way you can compare prices and experiences.

✓ **ORGANIZE YOUR PAPERWORK**

When you’re ready to buy a car, you’ll need your driver’s license, payment method, and proof of insurance. If you’re financing through a dealership, you’ll also need proof of income and employment.

✓ **CALL YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY**

When you buy your new car, your dealership often calls your insurance company during the purchase process. Get a cost quote. That way, there will be no surprises when you’re ready to buy.

1.866.704.8614

[MyCalCas.com/Resources](#)