

10 Car Buying Tips for a successful purchasing experience

1) Timing is everything

August to October is normally the time when dealerships receive new inventory and need to make room on the lot. Late summer or early fall is a great time to snag a lower price on a brand-new car—if you are okay with last year's model. You can also time your visit toward the end of each month, in order to take advantage of sales staff pressured to meet a quota.

2) Used Vehicles may provide the best value

A brand-new car depreciates quickly but buying a few years old means the rate of depreciation has slowed. You also save money on the purchase price, which helps you to lower your monthly payment.

The [Texas DMV website](#) has information on the prices of both new and used cars. Don't forget to look up rebates and other incentives that may be available on a new car purchase. There are multiple online resources such as the "Blue Books" used by dealers to determine price ranges for used cars. Many people sell their used cars themselves.

Buying from the owner often means paying a lower price than you can get from a dealer. And buying from the owner means you can ask the car's complete repair history. Dealers' used vehicles may cost more, but may offer services such as financing or warranties, and may also be able to provide vehicle history through [CarFax®](#).

3) Get Pre-Approved First!

Apply online or stop by the credit union and get pre-approved for the loan first. This way you know how much you can spend, what your monthly payment will be, and what your interest rate will be. This gives you purchasing power. Plus, our interest rates are usually much lower than a dealership's. Remember, various factors are used to determine your interest rate. Keep your credit in good standing. Let the dealership know that you have your financing in order, and you have already been pre-approved through your credit union.

4) Get educated

You have to do your research ahead of time. Start by researching the type of car or truck you are interested in online through a reputable source such as JD Power or Edmunds to establish a good understanding of values. Then shop around—look at websites such as AutoTrader.com for prices and models you are interested in. You can set the parameters as broad or specific as you want.

5) Determine the value of your trade-in

You need to be educated on more than the car you are buying. If you have a car to trade in, do some research to ensure you are getting a fair price. Know and understand the payoff of your current vehicle if you have one.

6) Sell your old car yourself

This is easier if you don't have a loan on your current car but do-able either way. You will nearly always get more selling private party than you will on trade-in.

7) Negotiate the vehicle price first

It can be confusing to negotiate the price of the car, your trade in, incentives and add-ons at the same time. A good strategy can be to take one thing at a time. Negotiate the price of the car, get it in writing, then move on to add-ons. Finally, talk about the price they will pay for your trade in. Know that the credit union does offer the lowest pricing on value-added products such as GAP and Warranty coverages.

DO NOT negotiate the monthly payment. Dealers will offer to extend your loan term to get you your magic payment number, but that only means you will pay more in the end.

8) Realize everything is negotiable

Often add-on fees are preprinted on auto contracts (transaction fees, destination charges, hazard coverage, VIN etching and more).

Everything can be negotiated. You can negotiate to have these fees removed or lowered, or to have them take this fee out of another part of the deal by lowering the purchase price or giving more for your trade-in.

9) Shop online!

It is possible to negotiate pricing and financing via your phone or computer. You can even ask for the car to be delivered to you and to sign the paperwork then. Carvana, CarMax, AutoNation all offer delivery options! It's easier than ever to make a purchase. Just remember, there may be additional add-on costs involved.

Plus, you can work the deal when and where it is convenient for you.

10) Let the competition begin

The dealers are competing for you. Contact several dealers over the internet and make it clear you will go with the best price.

You must be specific about the car you are looking for, so they know you are getting equivalent comparisons.

11) Don't get trapped by the add-ons in the F&I office

This is actually where dealers make a lot of their money. Many times, once you have agreed on the purchase price, you think you are done. But then you get to the finance office and get waylaid by warranties, oil changes, road hazard coverages and service contracts. Know what you need ahead of time and stick to the plan—another positive of getting a loan pre-approved before you start shopping.

Pro tip! GAP and Warranty products are available at a lower cost from Brazos Star Credit Union. Check with us before you add these products to your purchase order.

For any additional questions on car buying, or to start the pre-approval process, give us a call or text us at [979-846-7456](tel:979-846-7456), or apply online at

www.brazosstarcu.com . **The Brighter Place to Bank!**

