

Test Drives Are Brief And Few In Number, According To A Survey From AutoTrader.com

Experts at AutoTrader.com offer five tips to help shoppers get more out of their test drives.

ATLANTA, Aug. 1, 2013 [PRNewswire](#) -- For nearly all car shoppers, test drives are an important part of the decision process, but a recent survey from [AutoTrader.com](#)® indicates that they are not taking much time to form an opinion of the vehicle they're testing.

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According to the survey, 44 percent of shoppers believe that they only need to test drive a vehicle one time before making a decision, and nearly half (49 percent) believe that they only need 30 minutes or less to thoroughly test a vehicle. While nearly two-thirds of shoppers at least take another person with them, males are significantly more likely to test drive alone: 44 percent of males do not take anyone along for the ride, versus 14 percent of females.

"What strikes me is that people are doing only cursory evaluations of a vehicle that they will end up driving for some amount of years," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights at AutoTrader.com. "It's easy to form an early impression, but taking a longer and more real-world test drive can be important for forming deeper opinions about things like driver and passenger comfort, ease of access to controls and overall trunk dimensions."

To help shoppers get more out of their test drives, the experts at AutoTrader.com offer the following tips:

1. **Don't rush:** 15-20 minutes behind the wheel of a new car is not long enough to make a \$30,000 or \$40,000 decision; 45 minutes to an hour is more appropriate for a test drive.
2. **Bring your gear:** If the reality of your life involves car seats, strollers and packing multiple people into a vehicle, then the test drive should reflect that. You want to get an accurate sense of how this vehicle fits into your everyday schedule; you might even want to bring your kids to make sure they can handle the doors and seat belts alone.
3. **Make sure the car fits you:** How easy is it to get in and out of the vehicle? How about reaching the important controls, like radio and temperature controls? Are you able to adjust the seat to a comfortable position and still see the road clearly? Even if the car looks great, if it's uncomfortable or inconvenient for you, you'll likely regret the purchase.
4. **Bring a friend:** While you're focused on the road, a friend can be making notes of things you might not catch, like noises, vibrations or tight seating for passengers.
5. **Strategically plan your route:** Don't just drive on the salesperson's suggested route; make sure you drive the car in areas you frequent, testing a mix of rough roads, city, highway and residential driving.

Brian Moody, site editor at AutoTrader.com, added: "You don't want to buy a car and find out on your first long road trip that the seats are not so comfy after more than 20 minutes. If you're seriously considering a certain car, you should take a long test drive and bring along everything—and everyone—you typically have with you on a day-to-day basis to make sure it all fits. You don't want to spend \$30,000 on an assumption."

AutoTrader.com conducted the survey among 501 shoppers from May 17 - June 2, 2013. For more insights and research about car shopper attitudes and behavior, go to press.autotrader.com.

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