

Things To Look For When Buying A Hybrid

If you want a vehicle that provides energy-efficient transportation, produces few emissions, is quiet, and reduces reliance on petroleum products, a hybrid or electric vehicle is probably the right choice.

A mere 17 years ago hybrid cars were hard to come by, with the Honda Insight and the Toyota Prius being the most widely available models. Today, there are more hybrids and electric vehicles than ever before. In 2018, U.S. News & World Report was able to list 18 of their favorite picks of hybrid and electric cars - and this was just in the "priced below \$30,000" range.

Widespread availability (most major car manufacturers offer one or more hybrid models) and major environmental and economical benefits have made hybrids attractive to a wide range of people. While there are many similarities between hybrid and electric vehicles and gasoline-powered cars and trucks, there are certain differences that prospective hybrid buyers may want to learn before they begin shopping.

The average hybrid costs more up front than the equivalent gas model. However, the long-term fuel savings associated with hybrids can mitigate those upfront costs. If money is a concern, do the math when comparing models to see which hybrid vehicle will provide a shorter payback range in fuel savings over initial investment price.

A hybrid vehicle may be advantageous over an electric vehicle for certain reasons. According to Consumer Reports, even though electric motors are three times as efficient as gasoline engines, gasoline provides much more



Hybrids and electric vehicles present yet another option for drivers to consider when buying new vehicles.

energy in a given model - and does so at less cost than vehicles that need batteries and electric storage solutions. Hybrids offer the best of both worlds, in that they can use electricity when it is most efficient, and have the power of a gas engine when practical.

Check to see if a hybrid is a full hybrid or mild hybrid, which provides limited electric assist to bolster fuel economy. Plug-in hybrids are other options. These vehicles allow drivers to plug in to recharge the vehicle's batteries and maximize its usage of electricity. Once the battery is depleted, or during longer trips, the engine turns on to generate electricity. Research the types of hybrids and decide what aligns best with your driving habits.

The vast majority of hybrids use automatic transmissions and will feature battery and fuel-usage meters so that drivers can keep track of energy usage, helping to develop smarter driving habits in the process. Hybrids work quite well with city driving, but can provide considerable fuel savings during highway driving as well. Discuss available technological features when comparing models so you can see where the fuel savings are coming from.

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