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# **TRANSMISSIONS**

*Automatic or manual –  
which transmission is right  
for you?*

***Automatic transmission development  
has come so far it's hard to make a case for  
stick shifts anymore.** Lock-up torque converters,  
five- (and now seven-speeds) and manual shift  
control have virtually eliminated any arguments  
against automatics. However, a few vehicles still  
drive better with manuals such as small-engine  
compacts, serious off-road vehicles and trucks  
that tow more than 15,000 pounds. At one time  
manuals had a fuel economy advantage over  
automatics, but the lock-up torque converter and  
overdrive gear ratios have all but wiped that  
out. Manual-equipped vehicles typically need a  
clutch inspection every 20,000 miles, but their  
transmissions cost less to repair than today's  
automatics. The performance gap between manuals  
and automatics has all but disappeared. Basically,  
the choice comes down to personal preference.*

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**Key Differences**

**What To Expect**

**Quick Tips**



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# why you should choose the right transmission.



Selecting the  
correct type of

transmission to fit your vehicle and driving

style is more important than you might

think. Several factors must be considered:

How will you use the vehicle? Where will

you be driving? What do you expect out

of your vehicle? Honestly answering these

questions will determine which

transmission is right for you, automatic

or stick. Choosing the wrong transmission

can cause reliability problems, or worse,

a disappointing driving experience.

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# choose the right transmission *do-it-right!*

Many vehicles are only available with an automatic transmission. If you determine that you absolutely need a manual, then select the appropriate make, type, and model of vehicle.

**1**

If you use your vehicle for daily transportation and spend a lot of time in heavy traffic, an automatic transmission is the only way to go.

**2**

Serious off-roaders prefer manual transmissions because they provide engine braking on downhill grades. Some luxury SUVs have automatic transmissions that provide an engine braking feature also.

**3**

Sports cars and sports sedans are more fun to drive with today's smooth-shifting manual transmissions. However, the new Tiptronic-style, manually controlled automatics provide the control of a manual, and the convenience of an automatic, with the flip of a lever. Some even have Formula 1-style shift paddles located on the steering wheel.

**4**

If you tow over 15,000 pounds, a manual transmission is usually much more reliable.

**5**

Smaller four-cylinder engines found in compact cars and trucks perform better with manual transmissions. However, if you do much driving in traffic, give up the slight performance gain and go for the automatic.

