

Are Cars with CVT's (Continuously Variable transmissions) A Good Idea?

If you are looking at cars with a CVT, do you understand how they work? Do you wonder if you will like the performance in the vehicle after you drive it, daily?

Let's go over what a CVT really is: an automatic transmission that uses two pulleys connected by a steel band. In the [Continuously Variable transmission](#), the pulleys diameter continually adjusts (as needed) and transfers power to the car's tires, based on the speed and gear of the vehicle. The power shifts from input to output, and the band adjusts accordingly.

Many of the foreign-made small cars now employ a CVT. Auto makers like Subaru, Toyota, and Nissan are now using [Continuously Variable transmission](#). Even some American-made cars are using it: Chevrolet Spark and Ford Escape Hybrid. An engine with CVT is a very different [transmission](#) type than the older cars of the 90s. But the **Continuously Variable transmission (CVT)** works well for fuel efficiency.

According to a US News- Car report from 2016, transmissions that use CVTs are becoming more widely used and more popular. To quote this article: *“One out of every four new cars sold in the U.S. comes with a CVT, according to an analysis by Kelley Blue Book”*

Continuously variable transmissions are built with fewer parts, so they cost less to make. When you compare a CVT to a typical transmission, they come out on top for fuel efficiency and easier manufacturing. Because a CVT is seen in smaller cars, they typically cost less, too.

Often times, people don't want to switch to a CVT because they are afraid of the lack of performance and wonder about long-time usage. People that have driven and enjoyed a manual transmission (or a muscle car) may not like a CVT automobile. It does not perform like a typical transmission. But if you are looking for savings in a vehicle and the gas, a CVT vehicle is the way to go.

Due to the way a CVT vehicle will shift, these cars are very smooth and quiet. You may not even feel the gears change at all. Some people will not be able to tell if their CVT car has less power, if they do not judge the car based on sound or feeling of the gears. They certainly sound different, but they are much smoother and quieter too.

What is the downside to a CVT automobile?

The older model cars with CVT's may not be as reliable as the newer ones (in the last 5 years). Some people will miss revving the engine and shifting the gears. They may miss the pedal vibration under their foot, and the sound it makes, as with a “muscle car”.

When it comes to repairs, CVT's are very expensive to replace. Unlike a traditional transmissions, they are not currently able to be "rebuilt". This leaves you and the [transmission shop](#) with limited options. Typically, a [transmission repair shop](#) can replace them with a used unit (which is not preferred, since they are known to have a high failure rate) or a re-manufactured dealer unit.

Auto manufacturers are now in the beginning phases of offering CVT parts to rebuild them with. We look forward to having more options with CVT's, other than replacement, coming soon in the next few years.

Our advice is: always do your research before you buy a car with a manual transmission or a CVT. Read the reviews about the year, make and model and get one with low miles and good reviews. For advice on a **Continuously Variable transmission, in the Metro Atlanta area, call [Speedy Marietta](#) for assistance.**