

For the new hobbyist, buying an automotive model kit can be a daunting task simply due to the sheer amount of choice that's available. Collectors have to choose a vehicle and the scale at which they want to work. Then, they have to factor in price, complexity, customization, tools and supplies, and so forth. If the desired model is no longer manufactured, then the hobbyist has to deal with a series of additional concerns, including appreciation. Choosing an automotive model kit is not simple, but even the new hobbyist can avoid the most common pitfalls by following these tips:

1. Research Automotive Model Kit Types

The first step is awareness of the various types of automotive [model kits](#) that are available. The traditional model kit, often called Snap-Tite or Type 1, is made of plastic and simply snaps together. Snap-Tite kits are very newbie-friendly and usually only require mild filing and light gluing to complete. More recently, automotive model kits by [LEGO](#) have become a popular alternative for beginners due to their simplicity and accessibility. Other options for beginners include K'Nex and Wedgits. Experienced hobbyists will eventually graduate to Type 2 and Type 3 kits as well as die cast models and radio-controlled vehicles.

2. Choose a Vehicle Type

The next step is to choose the type or class of vehicle. The most popular model kit classes are classic, sports car, NASCAR, hot rod, truck, and service vehicle. Classic car models tend to focus on American muscle, but there are models available for the classics from all over the world. Type 1 classics tend to be the most accessible kind of kits for the beginner. Hot rods are roadsters, typically open wheel, that have very distinctive aesthetics and engine mount configurations. Hot rods make great looking models, but they can be quite challenging in the building and customization stages. The most popular type of automotive model kit is the [sports car model](#) – a class that focuses on street legal sports cars from all years and from all around the world. In the U.S., [NASCAR models](#) rival the sports car and classic car classes in overall popularity. The service vehicle class, which is intricate and

challenging, includes vehicles like fire trucks, ambulances, snowplows, and so forth.

3. Select an Interesting Subject

When choosing a particular model, collectors should opt for a subject that engages them. A Porsche 911 is very popular and a staple in most automotive model collections, but it can also be very boring due to that commonness. Rather than choosing a model based on what is already known, the collector should shop around until a model chooses them. Finding a model car that is aesthetically interesting, challenging to build but still suitable to the beginner, can be difficult, but such models are available.

4. Decide on Scale

The next step is to choose the scale of the model. The most common model size is 1:25, which is approximately 6 to 7 inches long. In Europe, 1:18 is also very popular, and manufacturers often use 1:24 rather than 1:25. The 1:18 kits are approximately 9 inches long. There are also 1:60 scale kits, which are approximately 3 inches long and are particularly well suited to the small hands of a young child. Small kits are also popular among collectors and builders who enjoy the miniaturization aspect, but tiny kits can require a great deal of patience and fine hand control.

5. Evaluate the Complexity

After choosing the model and scale, consider the complexity of the kit. The first gauge of complexity is the number of pieces in the kit. A Type 1 kit usually has less than 50 pieces. A Type 2 kit can have up to 200 pieces. A Type 3 kit can have more than 200 pieces and include many fine parts. Type 1 kits are preferable for beginners, children, and adult builders who just want a relaxed experience. Most children can complete a Type 1 kit with little supervision and only occasional help. Type 2 and Type 3 kits require additional skills, tools, and supplies. Be aware that choosing a complexity that the builder isn't ready for will turn the project into a grind.

6. Consider Customization Options and Necessities

An often hidden aspect of complexity is the optional, and necessary,

customization and personalization of the model. Automotive model kits are often labeled 2-in-1, 3-in-1, and so on; what that means is that the build process has a branch that allows for multiple finishes. For instance, many classic car kits come in a 3-in-1 configuration, which means that the collector can build it as a stock car, custom car, or race car. Many hobbyists opt to build these kits in all variants and display them alongside each other. First-time builders, however, should consider a basic "1-in-1" kit.

7. Consider the Needed Tools and Supplies

Another important consideration is tools and supplies. The beginner will require basic [craft supplies](#), such as a hobby knife, tweezers, scissors, a nail file, modeling glue, and cement. Type 2 and Type 3 kits, however, will require a range of hobby knives and files as well as a rotary tool and other power tools. Die cast models require metalworking tools, and radio-controlled models require batteries, motors, an electronic motor controller, and so forth.

8. Opt for a New Automotive Model Kit

Manufacturers produce kits in runs, which are typically time-limited. Once a run ends, the kit then becomes vintage and begins to appreciate in value. [Vintage model cars](#) sell at many times their original sticker price. For the builder, the most common reason to buy vintage is to get a particular classic car, which tend to go in and out of production. Although this will limit the hobbyist's options, the beginner should focus on new kits in order to work with modern materials and avoid the vintage premium.

(Excerpted from article on eBay)