

Advanced driver aids aren't just for luxury cars

April 4 2018, by Jonathan Elfalan



In this Sept. 12, 2017, file photo, a man films a Toyota C-HR concept on the first media day of the International Frankfurt Motor Show IAA in Frankfurt, Germany. The highly stylized 2018 Toyota C-HR is an all-new subcompact SUV sporting aggressive body lines and plenty of standard features.(AP Photo/Martin Meissner, File)

Automakers have come a long way from safety features such as seat belts and air bags that are meant to prevent injuries in a crash. Today, manufacturers are adding advanced driver aids that can fend off an

accident in the first place. And there's a good chance that your next new car will have them.

What's an advanced driver aid? It's kind of like an autonomous sidekick that's ready to step in to help you prevent an imminent collision.

Adaptive cruise control, for example, can adjust your cruise speed and following distance with respect to the vehicle ahead of you. It's often paired with automatic emergency braking that applies the brakes when the system senses a collision is about to occur and the driver doesn't react in time.

Lane keeping assist, which automatically makes small steering corrections if it senses you drifting out of your lane, and blind-spot monitoring, which lets you know if a vehicle is hovering in your out-of-view rear quarters, are two other key technologies we've found valuable for improving safety.

These features were once solely in the domain of expensive luxury cars. But the number of vehicles with a basic set of advance [safety features](#) is growing every year. We've highlighted four vehicles here. Each costs under \$25,000 and has the features we've mentioned above, plus other qualities that make them attractive beyond their affordability.

2018 TOYOTA C-HR XLE (\$23,495)



In this Feb. 15, 2018, file photo, the 2018 Honda Accord on display at the Pittsburgh Auto Show. The Accord's Honda Sensing suite of safety features is one of the most comprehensive around, with automatic braking, automatic high beams, lane keeping assist, and an adaptive cruise control that works down to a full stop. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, File)

The highly stylized 2018 Toyota C-HR is an all-new subcompact SUV sporting aggressive body lines and plenty of standard features. It's a good example of how Toyota is among the manufacturers leading the charge on making advanced safety tech standard across the board.

Toyota Safety Sense is a basic suite of aids that many Toyota models receive. On the C-HR, it includes automatic emergency braking and lane departure alert. It also has automatic high beams that can detect if vehicles are present and can toggle between high- and low beams to maximize nighttime visibility and avoid blinding other drivers. In

addition, the C-HR gets lane keeping assist, adaptive cruise control that works to a standstill, and a special pre-collision system that can detect pedestrians and vehicles.

The C-HR Premium trim, which would've exceeded our \$25,000 cap by just \$345, also includes blind-spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic alert.

2018 HONDA ACCORD LX (\$24,460)

As far as midsize sedans go, the comfortable and spacious 2018 Honda Accord is Edmunds' favorite. Even the base LX trim is satisfyingly easy to drive because of its quick acceleration and precise handling.



This undated photo provided by Subaru shows the 2018 Subaru Impreza five-door. This is a comfortable small car, and the hatchback model provides more rear headroom and cargo space than the Impreza sedan. (Subaru of America via

AP)

The Accord's Honda Sensing suite of safety features is one of the most comprehensive around, with automatic braking, automatic high beams, lane keeping assist, and an adaptive cruise control that works down to a full stop, just like the C-HR's system. Additionally, the Accord's front-facing camera recognizes speed limit signs and displays that information discreetly in the instrument panel. We've found this feature surprisingly useful.

SUBARU IMPREZA HATCHBACK 2.0i (\$24,050)

The 2018 Subaru Impreza is the only car on this list with standard all-wheel drive, an advantage if you frequently drive in wet or snowy conditions. This is a comfortable small car, and the hatchback model provides more rear headroom and cargo space than the Impreza sedan.

Subaru calls its safety suite EyeSight, and it relies heavily on a sophisticated set of cameras that provide depth perception, much as human eyes do. Unlike the Toyota and Honda models on this list, EyeSight isn't standard equipment on the Impreza. The suite includes [adaptive cruise control](#), automatic emergency braking, lane keeping assist and steering-responsive foglights that swivel to better light the road through bends. You'll have to get the midlevel Premium trim level and add EyeSight, but even so this Impreza sneaks in under our price cap at \$24,050.

2018 NISSAN SENTRA SR W/ PREMIUM PACKAGE (\$24,945)



This undated photo provided by Nissan shows the 2018 Nissan Sentra. The Nissan Sentra has long been a staple in the small sedan segment. (Nissan North America via AP)

The Nissan Sentra has long been a staple in the small sedan segment. It may not be our overall favorite in the class, but considering the comfort features and advanced driver aids you can get for under \$25,000, it's a bargain that's hard to overlook.

The Sentra SR comes standard with automatic braking and adaptive cruise, though its cruise control operational range is between 20 and 90 mph and it won't stop for you. The Premium package adds blind-spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic alert, along with a slew of other luxuries such as leather upholstery, navigation, heated seats, a Bose audio system and more.

EDMUNDS SAYS: Advanced driver aids have been around for some time and have proven effective at preventing road incidents, but they haven't always been affordable. That's changing now that many manufacturers view advanced safety technology as a necessity rather than a luxury.

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