

ONE SMALL SWEAT FOR MANKIND



BY RAY MAGLIOZZI

Dear Car Talk:

In our hot, summer climate, my back gets uncomfortably hot and moist when driving distances. I'd like our next car to have cooled seats, but I have heard that some of these don't work very well and aren't worth the money. What do you think? Would I do better to buy an after-market ventilated cushion? Thanks! — Paul

Have you considered switching to 100% Pima cotton undergarments, Paul? We've actually come a long way in seat comfort. If you're old enough, you may remember the vinyl seats of '50s, '60s and '70s. In the summer, if you were wearing shorts, and your car was parked in the sun, you'd sear the backs of your thighs like a tuna steak when you sat down. Then came cloth and velour, which were improvements.

Finally, heated and cooled seat bottoms, curing us of the terrible scourge of butt sweat. From there, the ventilation moved to seat backs, to try to keep backs dry. We've found that many of the ventilated seats work pretty well

— some better than others. You certainly want one that ventilates the seat back as well as the seat cushion.

You can always try an after-market cushion first with your current car. If it does the trick, then you've not only made yourself more comfortable now, but you don't have to worry about what car you buy next. Just take the cushion with you. If the after-market cushion doesn't cut it, then you need to embark on some summer test-drives. Make a list of the cars you're considering. Then, on a nice, sweltering 95-degree day, go do some testing.

Get a friend to help you. Wear a

blue dress shirt. And when you get back to the dealership after your 20-minute loop, have him use a Sharpie and mark how far out from your spine the sweat stains spread. After a few test-drives, the marks on that shirt will tell you which car to buy next. You'll lose a shirt, but gain invaluable knowledge for mankind, Paul.

* * *

Got a question about cars? Write to Ray in care of King Features, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803, or email by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

© 2019 by Ray Magliozzi and Doug Berman Distributed by King Features Syndicate, Inc.