Driving Steep Downhill Strategies (and Back Uphill)

Material gathered from a FB Thread: https://bit.ly/3LZXPaB

- Shifting under heavy load puts a lot of strain and wear on the transmission. Shift the transmission to a low gear before starting down the grade. Do not try to downshift after your speed has already built up. Forcing an automatic transmission into a lower gear at high speed could damage the transmission and also lead to loss of the engine braking effect.

- Manually downshift if necessary. First step is the overdrive button to limit you to 3rd gear and lower. If the engine is struggling enough to put it in 2nd gear, then do it. Whatever you do going up, you should do going down. So go downhill with the same gear you went up.

- Try to get some extra speed before getting to the hill. Then shift out of overdrive and try to keep the accelerator pedal in one place and just accept the loss of speed. Flashers on for safety. If it is a super long hill, sometimes I end up slowing way down below 40mph.

- Braking techniques
    - Apply the brakes just hard enough to feel a definite slowdown.
    - When your speed has been reduced to approximately five mph below your "safe" speed, release the brakes. (This brake application should last for about three seconds.)
    - When your speed has increased to your "safe" speed, repeat steps 1 and 2. For example, if your "safe" speed is 40 mph, you would not apply the brakes until your speed reaches 40 mph. You now apply the brakes hard enough to gradually reduce your speed to 35 mph and then release the brakes. Repeat this as often as necessary until you have reached the end of the downgrade. (From https://bit.ly/3x4AC2U)

Tim Joswiak
We have our 89D190P here in Colorado, we drive it everywhere. It is the 3/4 ton B250 with the older 318 LA Engine (with less power than most RTs), It has the smallish A100 transmission and a standard radiator. Nothing special needed, but must be in well kept condition. We do not have transmission or engine overheating problems.

Try it like this: To go up the hills, listen to the engine and pick which gear the engine runs in the mid-range sound. We listen to the engine and don't worry about the speedometer so much. We hang out in the right hand lane with the truckers as it seems fit.

If things are in too high of a gear, then the engine bogs down and the engine speed goes too low and it growls. That means everything is working too hard, the engine and the transmission are heating up. So shift down, and then the engine is in the middle range. It sounds more comfortable, your foot's only about halfway into the gas pedal or three

quarters on to the gas pedal. It's about keeping the driveline doing happy work, in those middle engine speeds.

If the engine bogs down more we shift down again. Run the engine in middle of the engine speed range and all will be well. If the gear is too low, the engine's speed is going to fast, the whole thing is now roaring, and everything is working too hard again, the engine and the transmission are heating up... So then we shift up a gear. Everything goes back easy. Shift the gears so that your foot on the accelerator doesn't need to move much, stays about half or two thirds down, and the engine is purring, not growling low or roaring high. Try it like that. Enjoy the view!