

How to Inspect a Used Car Checklist

CHRIS FIX

scan to go-to video



The Car Basics:

Year	
Make	
Model (any options?)	
Asking Price/Phone#	
Trade in Value	

The Body:

Scratches	
Dents	
Windshield (chips or cracks?)	
Headlights (foggy?)	
Inspection Sticker Current?	
Rusty Brake rotors?	

The Wheels:

Tire Tread	
All 4 tires/wheels the same?	
Wheel damage?	

The Interior:

Rips on seats	
Car Options (Navi, sunroof, etc)	
Headliner (saggy?)	
Automatic/Manual	
Steering wheel (worn?)	

Under the Car:

Leaks (near engine and rear diff)	
Rust (exhaust, frame, body, etc)	
Suspension (tie rods, ball joints, shocks, axle, etc)	
Frame Damage (from collision)	

How to Inspect a Used Car Checklist: The Test Drive



scan to go-to video



Questions to ask the owner (make sure story is realistic and answers questions consistently)

- 1.) How long have you owned the car?
- 2.) Why are you selling it?
- 3.) Does everything work/any problems?
- 4.) Any service records, what have you done since owning the car?
- 5.) What did you use the car for?
- 6.) How many miles did you put on it when you owned it?
- 7.) What car are you looking to get now? Why?

Things to Bring:

- OBDII Scanner
- Magnet
- Flashlight
- Paper towel
- Pen

From your Research:

Value of the Car (trade in value):			
Vin Check (https://vinrel.safercar.gov/vin/) & (https://www.nicb.org/theft_and_fraud_awareness/vincheck)			

Engine (start cold, let warm up, go for ride)

Scan Engine with OBDII Scanner (P1000= codes cleared recently)			
Before Startup			
Hood pops open easily?		Hood support/struts work?	
Frame (straight, no kinks)		Clean vs Dirty (was the engine detailed)	
Inspect for leaks (oil, coolant, tranny)		Any damage/new parts	
Oil level and oil (no metal, not frothy)		Oil Cap (no froth under cap)	
Check Coolant (make sure it's not hot when you check)		Hoses, belts, battery post, wires, etc	
Cold Startup			
Any strange noises/smoke? (ticking, grinding, etc)		Does it take too long to start?	
Does the motor move a lot (bad motor mounts)		Check under oil cap (strong pulses/smoke)	
Idle (does the idle drop and smooth out)		Check exhaust for smoke upon startup	
Warm Startup			
Any strange noises/smoke? (ticking, grinding, etc)		Does it take too long to start?	
Check under oil cap (strong pulses/smoke/froth)		Idle (does the idle drop and smooth out)	
Bubbling in radiator reservoir? (blown headgasket)		Check exhaust for smoke upon startup	

Interior

Seats: Front and rear			
Damage, rips, tares, stains, smell		Solid/no movement	
Adjust properly (forward, back, tilt)			
Carpet: Front, rear, and trunk			
Check Under Carpets (rust, water)		Floor mats?	
Stains, holes, cuts, smell, dampness			
Trunk:			
Spare (holds air, not rusty)		Jack with lug wrench	
Spare tire carrier round (no indents)		Lug nut key (locking lug-nuts)	
Water marks, damp carpet?			
Vehicle Options:			
Power Windows (roll up/down, scratches)		Window tint (bubbles, legal)	
Power Mirrors (heat and movement)		Power Locks (all doors lock/unlock)	
Radio (am/fm/clock set right, speakers work)		AC/Heat (all settings, all vents)	
Navigation (make sure it locates)		Sunroof (opens/closes, no leaks)	
Rear View Mirror (auto-dim)		Parking Sensors (beep in reverse)	
Lights (glove box, map, dashboard, etc)		Emergency Brake Holds car in Neutral	
Heated Seats		Wipers and washer fluid work	
Check for Owner's Manual		All Gauges Work	
Headliner:			
Sagging?		Water Damage, Burns, damage	
Wear and Tear:			
Gas/Brake Pedal		Steering Wheel	
Shift Knob		Seats/Carpet	

Exterior

Lights			
High/Low Beams		Front Running Lights	
Front Fog Lights		Front Turn Signals	
Brake Running Lights		Pressed Brake Lights (3 rd brake light)	
Rear Turn Signals		Rear Fog Lights	

Bodywork			
Panel Gaps		Paint Seams on edge of panels	
Bondo (magnet and tapping methods)			
Tires			
Turn lock to lock		Inspect tread-wear	
Inspect camber/toe angle			

Test Drive (go for a regular drive city and highway)

Acceleration Test: smooth, no knocks or hesitation,			
Regular Acceleration		Hard Acceleration	
Turning Test			
Stationary- turn lock to lock (noise/feel)		Moving- turn 360 (noise/feel both ways)	
Turn back and forth in motion to sway car (controlled, squeaks, knocks)		Hard turn while moving (controlled, squeaks, knocks)	
Brake Test -smooth, no pulls, no noises, no vibrations			
Regular Braking		Hard Braking (try to activate abs)	
ABS Light on dash?		Noise/pulling?	
Highway: stop and go, bumps, turns, slower			
RPM (top gear/overdrive)		Smooth/controlled/comfortable/solid	
Noises (thuds, squeaks, whines)		Downshift at cruising speed	
Cruise Control			
City: stop and go, bumps, turns, slower			
Noises (thuds, squeaks, whines)		Vibrations	
Does the car feel good to drive?		Shifting (smooth, crisp, no slipping)	
Scan Engine after Test Drive			