

# Test drive checklist



Use this checklist for tips on what to do and look for when you test drive a car. Remember, the surest way to pinpoint any mechanical issues is to get a professional pre-purchase vehicle inspection after you have taken it for a spin.



### Before you start the car

- Do basic checks before you drive the car.
- Check the insurance. Most dealers have insurance to cover test driving. If you're testing a privately owned car, you could be liable for damages if the seller doesn't have insurance.
- Make sure the car has a current warrant of fitness (WoF) and license (rego). If you test a car at a dealership, they may have special number plates that can be used in place of a WoF or license.



### When you get into the car

- Look at the dash for any warning lights that stay on for more than a few seconds.
- Check the:
  - mirrors
  - windshield wipers
  - indicators
  - front and rear lights
  - brake lights
  - radio
  - power windows
  - any other features the car has.
- Push the brake pedal. It should feel firm. It shouldn't feel spongy or press all the way to the floor.
- Pull the handbrake. It should come up a maximum of around six clicks.

**TIP:** Go during the day, preferably in fair weather. If you don't know much about cars, take a friend who does.



### Tests to do on a clear road in a safe place

- Look at the steering wheel. Make sure it points straight ahead while you're driving straight ahead.
- Check if you can feel the wheel vibrating when you drive. This could happen at any speed.
- Try accelerating quickly to see if the car pulls to one side. Be prepared to correct it if it does.
- Press the brake firmly. Check if the steering wheel vibrates or pulls to one side or if the brakes make any screeching noises. Be prepared to correct it if it does pull.
- Park on a hill and put the car in neutral. Pull the handbrake to see if it holds the car in place on its own. Be ready to respond if the car moves.
- Test all the gears and see how they perform while you go up and down hills. The gear changes should feel and sound smooth.

**TIP:** Plan your test drive route before you go. Test the car on the types of roads you will drive on most often. Always put safety first and take your time — it should take at least 30 minutes to do a full test drive.



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