



**Purchasing a second-hand vehicle**

There are considerable pros and cons for purchasing a vehicle second hand, more so perhaps if you are buying it privately, rather than from a commercial dealer. While the cost may be the decisive factor, it is possible that you can end up spending much more on a second-hand vehicle because of running costs and repairs. To be sure you aren't getting stung, it is advisable to get the vehicle checked over by a qualified mechanic before parting with your hard-earned cash.

Here's some things to take into account.

## Mileage check

It's generally considered that a car with less mileage will last longer. This depends on how well-maintained the engine has been in its lifetime.

It's possible that a vehicle's engine can do well over 200,000 miles in its lifetime, depending on the level of care and maintenance/servicing it has gone through. Therefore, a hefty price tag for a car that has already done 150,000 miles may not tell the whole story. Always enquire about the service history a vehicle has gone through before purchasing. This may tell you a better story than the mileage itself.

That said, it's probably a safe bet that, if you intend to make mostly short journeys in the vehicle, a higher mileage vehicle may be suitable, providing it has been well maintained. If you need to cover long distances however, then you definitely need to consider a lower mileage vehicle.



## Check the engine, gearbox and clutch

Quite obvious really but so many people get stung by second-hand rip-off vehicles, which can be avoided if the vital components are checked by a professional.

It's essential that you check for any leaks in the engine and if the exhaust produces any dark smoke (blue smoke coming from the exhaust usually suggests burning oil).

Check the oil via the dipstick. The oil should look smooth and glossy and somewhat transparent. If it is like sludge and has grainy dirt in it, it means that the oil should be changed. The same is true if the oil looks too thick, is too dark (opaque), or has a foul smell.

You may want to take it for a test drive, testing the clutch and how smoothly the gears change. Having a qualified mechanic on-hand to test the vehicle for you will let you know how much it will be to fix any problems with these.



## Bodywork

This one is also pretty obvious, but check for any kerbing on the wheels, scratches on the paintwork, or any dents. Ensure you view the vehicle in broad daylight, to ensure that any issues aren't being masked by reduced visibility.

If you purchase from a vehicle dealer, then there is probably some kind of warranty, which you should check. This won't be the case if you purchase from an individual, which is always a case of "bought as seen".

