Used MG MG3 inspection checklist

What to check on a used MG3, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.

COVERS **Hatch** 2013–2024 **Hybrid+** 2024 on

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☐ **Tick it** if it's fine. **Cross it** if it isn't, and note what you found so you can price it into your offer.

! **Safety critical:** affects how safely it drives or protects you in a crash. Best to have a mechanic check it before you buy.

$ **Negotiate:** costs money to fix, from wear to major repairs. Get a quote and take it off the price.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panel gaps.** Sight down each panel for uneven gaps or mismatched paint colour, and check the seals and trim for overspray. Any of these point to a past crash repair. Paint that looks slightly different in bright sunlight usually means a respray. $
- ☐ **Rust.** Check the wheel arches, sills, door bottoms and the base of the tailgate for bubbling paint or rust spots. These areas are often thinly protected from new. Rust on the tailgate edge often starts from the inside out. $
- ☐ **Lights.** Turn on every light including indicators and reversing lights, and check each one works and the lenses are clear, not hazy or yellowed. Hazy lenses cut how far the headlights throw light at night. $
- ☐ **Windscreen.** Check the windscreen for chips or cracks, especially in the driver's line of sight, as these can fail a roadworthy check. A small chip can spread into a crack quickly once the weather turns cold. !
- ☐ **Wheels.** Check the alloy wheels for kerb scrapes, cracks or buckling, and see that all four match in style and size. A mismatched wheel can mean a repair after hitting a kerb or pothole. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks and looks brown, not black. Old black oil suggests missed services. A burnt smell on the dipstick can mean the engine is overdue for a service. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant level sits at the mark and looks clean and bright, with no oily sheen on top. Only check this when the engine is cold. A milky or oily film in the coolant can mean an internal engine leak. $
- ☐ **Drive belt.** Look over the drive belt at the front of the engine for cracking, fraying or glazing on the surface. A cracked belt that snaps can leave you stranded and may damage other parts. $
- ☐ **Cold start.** Ask to start the car from cold. It should fire up easily and idle smoothly, with no rattle, knock or smoke from the exhaust. A rattle on start-up that fades after a few seconds can mean a worn timing chain. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyre tread.** Check tread depth is above the wear bars and even across each tyre. Wear on one edge only usually means the wheels are out of alignment. Feathered edges on the tread can mean worn suspension bushes too. $
- ☐ **Underbody rust.** Use your phone to look under the car at the floor pan and suspension mounts for rust, bent metal or a patch of fresh black coating. A patch of fresh underseal in one spot usually hides a repair. !
- ☐ **Suspension.** Push down firmly on each corner of the car and let go; it should rise once and settle. Continued bouncing or a knock points to worn shocks or bushes. A clunk over bumps usually means worn suspension bushes. $
- ☐ **Brakes.** Look through the wheel spokes for deep grooves or a raised lip on the edge of the discs, and listen for a squeal when the car first moves. A metallic grinding sound means the pads are already worn through. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key or press start to "on" and watch the dash; every light should come on then go out once running. A light that stays on needs explaining. A flickering light rather than a steady one can mean a wiring fault. !
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, checking it latches properly with no fraying on the webbing. A belt that sticks halfway out may have a damaged retractor. !
- ☐ **Air conditioning.** Run the air conditioning on its coldest setting for a few minutes and check it blows cold air quickly and stays cold. Weak or warm air often means the compressor or a hose is failing. $
- ☐ **Central locking.** Lock and unlock the car with the key fob and check every door, including the boot, responds together. A door that needs a second press often has a worn lock actuator. $

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Manual gearbox.** Manual: check the clutch bites smoothly with no slip on a hard acceleration, and that gears engage without crunching. A shudder when pulling away gently can mean a worn clutch. $

! **Stay safe.** Never go under a car held up only by a jack, and never open the radiator or coolant cap on a hot engine. Keep hands, hair and loose clothing clear of fans and belts when the engine is running, and do checks under the bonnet with it switched off where you can. On the test drive, hold a current licence, confirm the car is registered and insured, obey road rules, and only brake hard when the road behind is clear. Meet in a safe, public-facing place, take someone with you, and don't carry large amounts of cash to a viewing.

5 Test drive continued

- [ ] **Automatic gearbox.** Auto: check the car pulls away smoothly with no jerk, flare or delay, and shifts between gears without a harsh thump. A pause before the car takes off, or revs flaring before it engages, points to a tired automatic. $
- [ ] **Brakes.** Brake firmly from a reasonable speed on a quiet road; the car should stop straight with a firm pedal and no pulsing or grinding. Pulling to one side under braking can mean a sticking caliper. !
- [ ] **Steering.** Drive at a steady speed on a straight road and check the car tracks straight without you correcting the wheel, and listen for a hum that grows with speed. A speed-related hum that changes when you lean the car side to side usually means a worn wheel bearing. $

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Seller's ID.** Check the seller's ID matches the name on the rego papers, and that the VIN matches on the papers and the VIN plate on the car.
- [ ] **Service history.** Check the logbook is stamped on schedule and ask for receipts, not just a stamped book. Gaps are common on cheaper small cars. Missing stamps around 60,000 or 90,000km often mean a skipped major service. $
- [ ] **Remaining warranty.** Check how much of the factory warranty is left and whether it transfers to a new owner. A transferable balance adds real value to the sale. $

What this guide can't tell you about the MG3 you're looking at

2+

recalls on MG3s built since 2011*

15

common faults reported on MG3s built since 2011*

Money owing, stolen or a write-off?

A tidy car can hide all three.

What's each fault worth?

Shufti's negotiation coach turns it into leverage.

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- Test drive routes with turn-by-turn navigation
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* Shufti analysis, October 2026, of official recall notices, complaints lodged by vehicle owners with vehicle safety regulators, and independent reviews and owner forums. Faults are counted when two or more independent sources report them.

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