Used Subaru WRX inspection checklist

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

COVERS **Impreza WRX (GE/GH)** 2007–2014 | **VA** 2014–2021 | **VB** 2022 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.** Check panel gaps, paint colour and trim seals for unevenness or overspray that would point to crash repair. Fast road cars often carry a hidden repaired scrape. Mismatched colour in a door jamb is an easy tell. $
- ☐ **Bonnet scoop.** Look at the bonnet scoop and surrounding paint for stone chips, cracking or fading from heat. A badly faded or cracked scoop suggests a hard life or poor repair. $
- ☐ **Wheels.** Check all four wheels for kerbing, cracks or bends, especially if lowered or fitted with aftermarket rims. A bent rim can cause a vibration that's hard to balance out. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks and looks brown, not black or gritty. Turbocharged engines are hard on oil and need frequent, correct-grade changes. A burnt smell on the dipstick can mean the turbo is overheating the oil. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant reservoir is at the mark and the coolant looks clean, not rusty, oily or milky. Oily or milky coolant can point to internal engine damage. Frequent top-ups between services are a bad sign. !
- ☐ **Turbo boost hoses.** Look over the rubber boost hoses near the turbo for cracking, perishing or loose clamps. A split hose causes a sudden loss of power under acceleration. $
- ☐ **Turbo oil feed leaks.** Look over the engine for wet patches, especially around the turbo oil lines and rocker covers. A fresh leak often shows as a dark wet patch below the turbo. $
- ☐ **Cold start noise.** Ask to start the car from cold and listen for a knocking or rattling that fades as revs rise. A persistent knock from the bottom of the engine can mean serious internal wear. A deep knock under load later on the drive is a worse sign than one at idle. $
- ☐ **Battery condition.** Check the battery terminals for corrosion and ask when the battery was last replaced. A car left sitting with electronics active can drain a battery faster than expected. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Structural rust.** Check the floor pans, sills and subframe mounts for rust, bare metal or fresh underseal hiding damage. Structural rust or a hidden repair can weaken the car in a crash. A patch of fresh black coating in one spot often hides an impact repair. !
- ☐ **Suspension bushes.** Check suspension bushes and dampers for cracking, oily residue or play when you rock the car at each corner. Worn bushes make the car feel vague and clunky over bumps. A dull clunk over speed humps often means a worn bush or link. $
- ☐ **Exhaust system.** Check the exhaust, especially if an aftermarket system is fitted, for rust, loose mounts or blown joints. A rattling heat shield or loose mount is cheap to fix but worth factoring in. $
- ☐ **Tyres.** Check all four tyres for even wear above the wear bars and that all four match in brand and size for the AWD system. Mismatched tyre sizes can strain the all-wheel-drive system over time. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key or press start without the engine running, and check every dash light comes on then goes out once running. An airbag, engine or AWD light staying on needs an explanation. !
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt fully out and let it retract, checking webbing for fraying and the buckle for a solid latch. A belt that doesn't retract smoothly may not hold properly in a crash. !
- ☐ **Clutch pedal feel.** Manual: with the engine off, press the clutch pedal and check it feels firm and returns smoothly, not spongy or sticking. A sticking or heavy pedal can point to a worn clutch cable or hydraulic fault. $
- ☐ **Infotainment screen.** Touch through every menu on the infotainment screen and check it responds without freezing, flickering or rebooting. A screen that freezes or restarts on its own points to a software or hardware fault. $
- ☐ **EyeSight camera.** If fitted, check the EyeSight cameras behind the windscreen are undamaged and the dash shows no EyeSight fault message after startup. A cracked windscreen near the cameras can disable the whole system. A fault light here can mean an expensive recalibration is needed. $

! **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

- [ ] **Clutch engagement.** Manual: pull away from a stop a few times and feel for shuddering or slipping as the clutch engages. Judder at low speed can point to a worn clutch or flywheel. $
- [ ] **CVT behaviour.** CVT: accelerate firmly from a stop and feel for shuddering, flaring or a droning noise as the revs climb. A shudder under load points to a failing CVT. $
- [ ] **Brakes.** Brake firmly from speed on a quiet road and check the car stops straight without pulling, grinding or pedal fade. Any pull to one side can mean an unevenly worn brake or a stuck caliper. !
- [ ] **AWD system behaviour.** On a tight full-lock turn at low speed, listen and feel for binding, judder or grinding from the drivetrain. Judder on tight turns at low speed can mean the all-wheel-drive system is binding. $

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Seller's ID.** Check the seller's photo ID matches the name on the rego papers, and that the VIN on the papers matches the VIN plate on the car.
- [ ] **Service history.** Ask for the logbook or receipts showing regular oil changes and, for a manual, any clutch replacement history. Gaps in turbo-engine servicing often lead to bigger problems later. $

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

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recalls on WRXs built since 2007*

17
common faults reported on WRXs built since 2007*

410
owner complaints on WRXs built since 2015*

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* Shufti analysis, November 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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