

Used Toyota Corolla inspection checklist

What to check on a used Corolla, petrol or hybrid, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.



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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. Don't buy until a qualified mechanic has checked it.

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

0 Before you go

- ☐ **Get the VIN and rego** before you travel. A seller who won't share them is a red flag on its own.
- ☐ **Ask how it was used:** private, ex-rental, fleet or rideshare? Corollas are fleet favourites: often well serviced, but high kilometres and hard-worn interiors.
- ☐ **Petrol or hybrid?** Hybrids have extra checks below, marked **Hybrid**.
- ☐ **Ask for the engine to be cold**, go in daylight, and bring a torch, paper towel and a friend.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panels and paint.** Uneven gaps, mismatched colour or overspray on seals and trim mean crash repair. Fleet cars often carry minor repaired scrapes. **\$**
- ☐ **Hail and dents.** Look along the roof, bonnet and boot at a low angle to the light for small dimples. **\$**
- ☐ **Bumpers and wheels.** Parking scrapes, cracked bumper tabs and kerbed alloys. A badly kerbed wheel can be bent, causing vibration. **\$**
- ☐ **Rust** on older cars: sills, wheel arches, door bottoms and the boot lip. **\$**
- ☐ **Lights and glass.** All lights work; windscreen free of chips in the driver's view. Hazy, yellowed headlight lenses on older Corollas cut light output. **\$**
- ☐ **Doors, boot and fuel flap** open, shut and lock cleanly from the remote. **\$**
- ☐ **VIN plate** (in a door frame or under the bonnet) is there, untouched, and matches the papers.

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil** between the dipstick marks, brown not black. Some older Corolla engines are reported to use oil between services; a low level is a clue. **\$**

- ☐ **Coolant** at the mark and a clean pink colour. Pink crusty residue or drips at the front of the engine can mean a leaking water pump. **\$**
- ☐ **Hybrid: second coolant tank.** Hybrids have a separate coolant tank for the hybrid system. Check it's at the mark too. **\$**
- ☐ **Brake fluid** (small tank at the back of the engine bay) is clear to light amber, not dark. **\$**
- ☐ **Belts, hoses and battery.** No cracked belts or swollen hoses; clean battery terminals and a date sticker. **\$**
- ☐ **Leaks.** Wet oil on the engine is a leak. A freshly degreased engine on an older car can be hiding one. **\$**
- ☐ **Cold start.** Petrol: starts easily and idles smoothly, no rattle or smoke. Hybrid: press start and "READY" should show; the engine may start and stop by itself, which is normal. **\$**

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyre tread** deeper than the small bars in the grooves, worn evenly. Wear on one edge only means the wheels are out of line. **\$**
- ☐ **Tyre age.** The 4-digit code on the side is the week and year made (2319 = week 23, 2019). Over ~6 years: budget for new ones. **\$**
- ☐ **Rust and crash repairs.** Rust on the floor or around the suspension; bent metal, fresh welds or new black coating in one spot. **!**
- ☐ **Drips** under the car, and oil stains where it's normally parked. **\$**
- ☐ **Suspension.** Push down on each corner: it should bounce back once and settle. Oily shock absorbers leak. **\$**
- ☐ **Brakes.** Look through the wheels: deep grooves or a raised edge on the discs mean they're due. **\$**
- ☐ **Exhaust.** Heavy rust, holes or loose heat shields that rattle. **\$**

! 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.

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Key to "on": every dash light comes on, then goes out once running. An airbag, brake, engine or hybrid warning that stays on needs explaining.

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- ☐ **Hybrid: battery cooling vent** near the rear seat is clear of dust, pet hair and clutter. Blocked vents are a commonly reported cause of hybrid battery trouble.

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- ☐ **Wear matches the kilometres.** Steering wheel, pedals and driver's seat. Rideshare cars also wear the rear seats, door handles and belts.

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- ☐ **Seatbelts** pull out fully, retract and latch, with no fraying.

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- ☐ **Air con** blows cold within a minute or two, without a musty smell; heater gets hot.

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- ☐ **Electrics.** Screen, Bluetooth/CarPlay, reversing camera, parking sensors, windows and mirrors. Count the keys.

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- ☐ **Boot.** Spare wheel or repair kit and jack present. Lift the floor for water from leaking tail-light seals.

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5 Test drive

- ☐ **Automatic.** Pulls away smoothly with no jerk, shudder or hesitation, and no whine that grows with speed. Older autos: no slipping or delay into gear.

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- ☐ **Manual.** In 4th at 50 km/h, floor it: if revs rise faster than speed, the clutch is slipping.

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- ☐ **Hybrid.** Moves off on electric power at low speed, and the engine joins in smoothly with no surges, cut-outs or warnings.

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- ☐ **Brakes.** Firm pedal; stops straight with no pulling, pulsing or grinding. Hybrid brakes feel different but should still be progressive.

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- ☐ **Steering and suspension.** Drives straight; no knocks or clunks over bumps.

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- ☐ **Noises at speed.** A hum that grows with speed is often a worn wheel bearing.

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- ☐ **Afterwards,** check for new drips, a steady temperature gauge and no hot smells.

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6 Documentation

- ☐ **Seller's ID** matches the rego papers, and the VIN matches on the papers and VIN plate.

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- ☐ **Service history.** Logbook stamped on time, with receipts. Ask when the gearbox fluid was last changed, if ever.

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- ☐ **Hybrid battery health checks.** Ask for any reports. Toyota's extended battery warranty depends on them.

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- ☐ **Fleet or rideshare records.** Ex-fleet cars are often well maintained; ask for the log.

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- ☐ **Warranty.** A newer Corolla may still be under Toyota's new-car warranty. Check the start date and that servicing kept it valid.

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- ☐ **Rego and roadworthy.** Rego checked online; roadworthy supplied if your state requires one on sale.

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Smart detection of issues from your photos and audio Snap a photo or record a noise and Shufti flags what might be wrong.	✓	×	×
Test drive route planning and navigation A route designed to surface issues a car park lap won't, with turn-by-turn directions.	✓	×	×
Instant report generation A shareable summary of every finding, ready the moment you finish.	✓	×	×
Negotiation copilot and repair cost estimates Estimates what each finding will cost to fix and what to say to the seller.	✓	×	×
Plain-English explanations, not jargon	✓	✓	✓
No booking or waiting required	✓	×	✓

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