HOW TO DO A CAR SAFETY CHECK
WHAT YOU’LL NEED
- Gloves
- Tyre pressure gauge
- Screen wash

USEFUL TO HAVE
- Warning triangle
- Hi-vis jacket
- Cleaning rags
- First aid kit

HANDBY TIPS
- It's worth keeping a spare bulb kit in the car in case of any failures.
- It's good practice to keep emergency contact numbers on your phone in case something goes wrong, such as a breakdown service and an insurance contact.
1 CHECK DASHBOARD WARNING LIGHTS

From inside the car, turn on the ignition and check that all the warning lights go off after a few seconds. If any stay on, then consult your car manual to see what the warning relates to.

You may be able to solve some warnings yourself, like refilling the screen wash or changing a light bulb. Alternatively, you may need to consult with a local garage to avoid causing any damage to your car.

2 CHECK WIPERS

Make sure the windscreen wipers are working properly. One wiper at a time, run your finger down the wiper blade to check they are in good condition.

Remember to check the rear wiper if your car has one.

If they need changing, try our ‘How to change windscreen wiper blades’ guide.

3 TOP UP SCREEN WASH

Check the screen wash is filled up, as getting caught out with a smeared windscreen can be dangerous.

Park your car on a flat surface and ensure that your engine is cool, as you’ll be going under the bonnet into the engine bay. A warm or hot engine adds to the risk of getting burnt.

Pop the bonnet and make sure it’s safely propped up using the car’s bonnet rod.

Find the reservoir cap and lift the flap, which is often blue with a spray symbol. If your car has a level indicator, check how full it is.

If it needs refilling, use our ‘How to change windscreen wiper blades’ guide.
Look over the windscreen for chips and cracks. Chips can be easily fixed and are often repaired for free or a small fee through your insurance company.

Check all the lights work. Turn the side lights on and check they are working at the front and rear. Then do the same with dipped headlights and finally the full beam.

It’s also important to check that the indicators are working, both on the left and right-hand side, as well as the hazard warning lights. Check all separately and remember the side repeaters on the car’s wing or wing mirrors.

Finally, check the front fog and rear intensity lights but remember to turn them off before you drive as you can get a fine for having them on in the wrong conditions.

If there’s someone to help you, ask them to check the brake/stop lights and the reverse lights.

Go around each tyre and check it is in good condition. Check the tyre’s tread is legal, minimum legal depth is 1.6mm. Also, check the tyres for splits or bulges in the tyre wall as these can weaken their integrity and strength. If found, they should be changed urgently.

To make sure the pressure of your tyres is correct, check out our ‘How to check tyre pressure’ guide.
There's one more tyre left to check, the spare. Make sure the tyre pressure is correct and it's in a good condition.

If there's no spare wheel, ensure a tyre inflator kit is in place and get to know how it works. Also take a moment to check that the tyre wrench, car jack, locking wheel nut and warning triangle (if you have one) are all present and in working order. Better to check now than on a dark, wet and windy night when you've broken down.

For more suggestions on what other items to keep in the car for changing a tyre, check out our ‘How to change a tyre’ guide.

It's a good idea to keep a well-stocked first aid kit in the car. Check where it is and that it's up to date.

It is recommended having a hi-vis vest in case you have a flat tyre or your car breaks down. If you're driving abroad, it's compulsory in many European countries.
10 | CHECK SEATBELTS

Before they’re put to the test, give the seatbelts a good check over. Check them all, front, rear and third row if you have one.
Check the belts’ condition and that they click into place securely.

11 | CHECK UNDER THE CAR

Finally, take a look under the car for anything hanging down or looking out of place.
By doing this every few weeks, you’ll be keeping your car in the best condition possible and hopefully avoiding any surprises when driving.