

Checklist for used motorcycles

Manufacturer:

VIN (Vehicle Identification Number):

Model:

Check item	What to look for	Good	Bad
Inspecting the bike:			
General appearance	Well looked after? Paintwork damage? Damage that might indicate an accident? Signs of wear that don't match up with the mileage on the clock?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engine (best after a test-ride)	Any leakage from valve covers, oil sump, cylinder head/block or engine side-covers? Leaks in the water or oil cooling system? Brittle hoses? Brittle intake rubbers? Rust particles in the petrol filter? That means rust in the tank!	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Exhaust	If aftermarket exhaust: Is it entered in the vehicle document or EC type-approved? Hit the silencer with your fist: If it rattles, there are loose metal baffles inside. Any visible rust? Any visible signs of an accident?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Controls	Check whether the trip counter can be reset. Do headlight, tail light, brake light, turn signals and horn function? Any signs of an accident in the handlebar area?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Keys	Are they all present? Does the steering lock work? Test all the locks.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Hydraulic lines	Ageing (over 4 years old)? Brittle? Soft?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cables	Do they operate smoothly? Is any adjustment left?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairing	Any cracks or accident damage (possibly hidden under stickers)? Is it the original fairing (also check the windshield)? If not: Are the parts entered in the vehicle document or type-approved?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Tank	Shine a flashlight inside: Any signs of rust?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steering stop	Undamaged? Otherwise there's a strong suspicion of an accident.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steering head bearing	Put the motorcycle on its centre stand so that the front wheel is off the ground, then turn the handlebar from lock to lock: It must move smoothly and easily without catching. Take the bike off the stand, position the front wheel against a wall, and press the handlebar towards the wall briefly several times: It must not make a clicking or cracking sound.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Fork tubes	Slide your fingers up and down the fork tubes: Dry? Otherwise the seals are defective! Any rust spots on the fork tube (cause wear to the seals)? Does the fork retract fully and extend again gradually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front wheel	Is there play in the wheel bearing? Grip the tyre with both hands and rock from side to side: there should be no play! Does the wheel run straight, or does it wobble? If it's a spoke wheel: Are the spokes correctly tensioned? (Tap the spokes with a screwdriver handle: they should all sound the same.) Are there any missing spokes? Rust? If it's a ComStar wheel (Honda composite wheel): There must not be any loose rivets.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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Front tyre	Tread depth at least 1.6 mm. Is the rubber brittle? Correct type of tyre according to vehicle registration certificate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front brake	Any scoring on the brake discs (check with your finger nail)? Is brake disk worn beyond the service limit (measure with micrometer)? Is brake pad already at the wear limit marking (or thinner than 4 mm)?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Brake fluid	Does it need changing? (brown discoloration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Centre stand	With the bike on its centre stand, one wheel must be clear of the ground, otherwise the stand or stop is bent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sidestand	Must fold up by itself, or short-circuit switch must prevent riding off with the stand down. Double springs must be present.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chain, sprockets	Can you pull the chain some way backwards off the rear sprocket? If so: the chain is worn! Is it already tightened to the limit? Check the slack with rear wheel rotated to various positions. If the slack changes: chain is worn. May cause damage to the transmission output bearing! Do the sprocket teeth have a shark-fin appearance? If so, you will probably need to change both front and rear sprockets and the chain.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Driveshaft	Any oil leaks in the drivetrain? Does the rear wheel turn without grinding noises or sticking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swing arm	With the motorbike on its centre stand, shake it from side to side. You must not feel any play.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shocks	Any leaks? Function (must not "bounce" during rebound)? Any rust on the damper rod?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monoshock	With the motorbike on its centre stand, jerk the swing arm up and down. If you can feel play, the lower shock bearings are worn. Shock must not "bounce" during rebound! If the linkage is rusty on the outside and has no grease, it probably means the bearings themselves are dry. Any leaks? (Use a flashlight)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Rear wheel	Is there play in the wheel bearing? Grip the tyre with both hands and rock from side to side: there should be no play! If it's a spoke wheel: Are the spokes correctly tensioned? (Tap the spokes with a screwdriver handle: They should all sound the same.) Are there any missing spokes? If it's a ComStar wheel (Honda composite wheel): There must not be any loose rivets.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Rear brake	Any scoring on the brake discs (check with your finger nail)? Is brake disk worn beyond the service limit (measure with micrometer)? Brake pads worn? If drum brake: Is the wear indicator already at the limit? If so: pads are worn out.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Rear tyre	Tread depth at least 1.6 mm. Is the rubber brittle? Is the fitted tyre registered in the vehicle document?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Wheel alignment	Put the motorbike on its centre stand and straighten the handlebar. Stand a few metres from the front of the bike and crouch down. From this position look to see whether the wheels are in line. If not, the rear wheel has been fitted incorrectly or the frame is bent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under the seat	State of battery (terminals, liquid level, battery box)? Vent hose attached? Any acid damage round about? What state are the cable connectors in?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Check item	What to look for	Good	Bad
Road test:			
Starting	Test how easily the motorbike starts when the engine is cold. Check engine running and performance. Is throttle response smooth, with no stuttering or power dips? Does the engine pull well? Is top speed reached (only test this in suitable road conditions)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clutch	Does it slip when you accelerate in top gear? If so, it needs adjusting, or the linings and/or springs are worn. Does the motorbike move in first gear even with the clutch pulled fully in? If so: linings are sticking or wrongly adjusted, or steel discs are warped.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Throttle	For this, you need a friend to follow you. Blue smoke from the exhaust when you open the throttle means the piston rings are worn. Conversely, blue smoke when you close the throttle means worn valve shaft seals. If there's a bang when you close the throttle, the exhaust may have a leak.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brakes	Brake several times in quick succession. The pressure point must not change/shift.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chassis	Does the motorbike pull to one side (if it's safe, let go of the handlebar cautiously at around 60 km/h)? Does the bike weave at higher speeds (steering head bearing, swing arm bearings, worn tyres, but possibly also a bent frame)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instruments	Do the speedo and tachometer display realistic speeds? Very jerky needles are a sign of faulty instruments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noises	Does the chain make grinding noises? If so, chain is unevenly stretched. With a driveshaft, harsh mechanical noises when you open or close the throttle are a warning of costly repairs. Does the transmission "sing" in fifth gear, as often happens with single-cylinder bikes? If so, the front and rear sprockets are worn. Does the engine rattle at low speeds? Timing chain or its tensioner may be worn. Does the clutch basket rattle (noise disappears when the clutch is pulled)? Any other noises which may indicate problems (and possibly a costly repair)? Is the exhaust too loud?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Documents:			
Vehicle registration certificate (log book)	Does the VIN in the document agree with the vehicle identification plate on the bike? How many previous owners? (Is this still the first certificate)?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
TÜV safety test	When is the next TÜV or equivalent statutory safety test due? Registration of accessories: have all accessories been entered in the certificate, if required by law, or are the necessary type approval certificates present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the bike is off the road	Has the motorcycle been officially off the road for longer than a year (SORN in the UK)? If so: a full safety test may be due.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service history log	Has the bike got a full service history stamped by the garage/workshop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repairs	If the seller states that major repairs have been done: Are there bills/invoices to confirm this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: www.louis.de, Detlev Louis Motorrad-Vertriebsgesellschaft mbH, Rungedamm 35, 21035 Hamburg