

ASK THE MECHANIC / BY PAUL KAGANZI (0772316145)

send sms: mycar (space) your comments and questions to 6933, or email them to mycar@ug.nationmedia.com



Why does my car have difficulties in acceleration?

Hi Paul, I currently live in Juba, South Sudan. My car is losing acceleration. When I try to accelerate between 0-20 kilometre per hour, the car first hesitates and thereafter accelerates itself. However, on the highway it acts normal. What could be the problem? I have tried to change oil and brake pads. But the problem persists. Dominic

The potential failure points are a (dirty) sticking damaged throttle

valve or damaged throttle position and pedal position sensors. These can

be tested with a meter or a computer diagnostic tool. Self-acceleration as

you seem to suggest can be caused by a faulty accelerator pedal unit which may be damaged by corrosion or moisture. Occasionally wrong floor mats can obstruct the accelerator pedal and cause self-acceleration when you brake. Other factors that can hinder acceleration can be a faulty fuel system. A bad fuel pump, dirty fuel injectors or restricted fuel filter can cause poor acceleration. It doesn't harm to look at the work plugs and air filter too which will also reduce engine performance if not maintained.

Hello Dominic, you need a mechanic to inspect the condition of the electronic throttle potentiometer, throttle position sensor and pedal position sensor.

When you accelerate a car, like your Toyota Premio, the throttle potentiometer opens a valve for intake of clean air into the engine.

This air intake is metered and regulated to balance with the fuel delivered with the help of the engine computer (ECM).

The throttle position sensor and pedal position sensors help the ECM to monitor acceleration and respond accordingly by regulating fuel delivery.



Which type of X-Trail can I buy?

Hi Paul, I am interested in purchasing a used Nissan X-Trail. I have seen different codes including GT, ST, X and S. Would you tell me about their fuel consumption, price and which of the above is more powerful than the other. Emmanuel Osako

Hello Emmanuel, I presume you are looking at the first generation Nissan X-Trail T30 which was built between 2000 and 2007 with midlife specification upgrades and face lifts.

Prices in the bonded warehouses range between Shs30 and Shs35m. The different codes GT, ST, S and Ti or X stand for trim levels which also vary in different Nissan markets worldwide.

Trim levels are the accessory and car equipment packages that you get when you order a new car.

For the T30 X-Trail 'S' is the standard entry level which comes with three point seat belts, driver and passenger airbags, front and rear electric windows.

ST is a medium level spec, which offers 'S' features plus electric seats, leather and an audio with CD changer.

The 'Ti' or 'X' trim levels offer 'ST' features and additional: alarm, alloy wheels, climate control, electric seats and leather. It is possible to find an entry level X-Trail with some features from other trims depending on the taste of the first owner.

GT comes with the 2.0 litre turbo engine. Fuel economy of the Nissan X-Trail generally varies with the engine size.

The 2.0 litre petrol non-turbo QR20DE which delivers an engine output of 147 horsepower will cover 14.2 kilometres per litre on the highway.



The more punchy 2.0 litre petrol GT with turbo ST20VET delivers a better efficiency result of 280 horse power and 14.7 kilometre per litre on the highway.

The 2.5 litre petrol QR25DE delivers 175 horse power and the lowest fuel economy result of 12.5 kilometres per litre on the highway.

It should be noted that the above fuel economy statistics can be altered if you use efficient fuel which lasts longer such as Shell Fuel Save unleaded, carry out recommended engine tuning or maintenance and practice good driving habits (such as avoiding harsh acceleration and sudden braking).

Where can I buy a car in installments?

Hi Paul, I am a low income earner but I want to own a car. Can you advise on a genuine car bond where I can deposit money and get a car that I can pay in installments? I am looking at a Runx, Allex or a Spacio. E. Rukundo

Hello Rukundo, there are several car bonded warehouses or used car dealers that sell the cars you would like to buy. You could approach any of them to negotiate terms after identifying a car of your choice.

There are some safe guards you can put in place to secure your car purchase from any used car dealer. Select a car dealer who meets certain standards. The dealership should be

reputable and registered with a showroom at a permanent address.

The staff at the car dealership should provide good customer care and professionalism when showing you cars with options which meet your buying needs.

Choose a car which fits your budget and will be affordable to maintain or run (fuel wise). A technical person can help you establish its mechanical condition.

In case you choose to deposit funds for a car which is on the auction abroad you need a money back guarantee. You could involve a reputable bank to finance the purchase and provide staggered terms of payment.

Should you decide to deal directly with the car dealer, involve a lawyer to draw up a sales agreement with the payment terms.

Putting in place some form of security money you deposit with the car dealer will be prudent if you are not taking custody of the car right away. Seek legal advice to secure transaction.

