

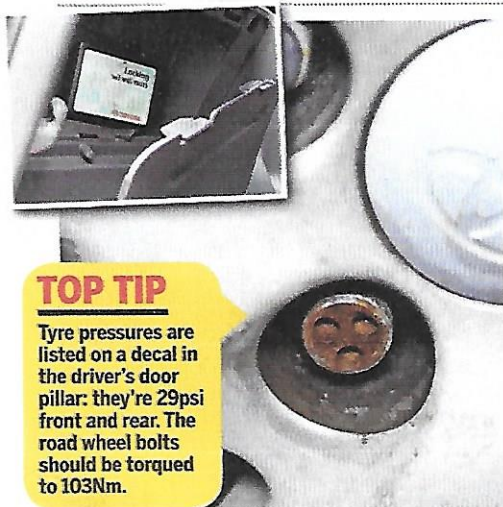
**17 CHECK TRANSMISSION FLUID**

The transmission fluid check plug is on the left-hand side of the gearbox. Oil should start running out when the plug is loosened but, if not, dip in a finger or bit of paper to make sure the level is just below the hole. The oil should be clear and not smell or look burnt.



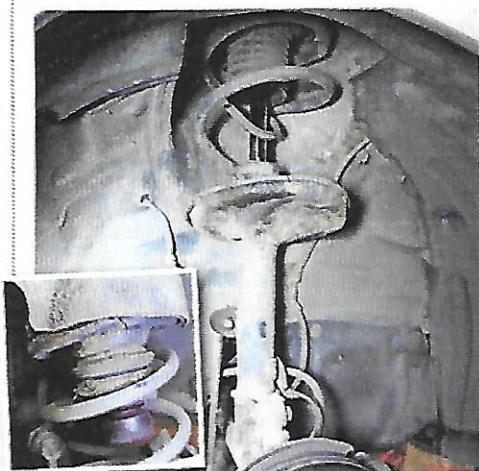
**18 CHECK WHEELS & TYRES**

Check all wheels for cracking, kerbing or foreign objects in the tyres. Make sure they're road legal, with at least 2mm of tread evenly across the rubber, preferably more. Rock the wheels top to bottom to check for suspension play. Then spin them – a low drone suggests a worn bearing.



**TOP TIP**

Tyre pressures are listed on a decal in the driver's door pillar: they're 29psi front and rear. The road wheel bolts should be torqued to 103Nm.



**20 CHECK STEERING**

With the wheels out of the way, inspect the suspension and steering components at the front and rear. Keep an eye out for damaged bushes, leaks from brake lines (usually around unions) and split gaiters that could be letting in dirt. Also look out for broken springs – which our RAV4 had.



**21 REMOVE BRAKE CALIPERS**

Clean the brake assembly thoroughly with a wire brush and spray cleaner. While you can do a quick visual check on the pad thickness, the calipers can be removed by undoing the two bolts on the rear using a 14mm socket or spanner. Pull the caliper away for full access to the pads and disc.

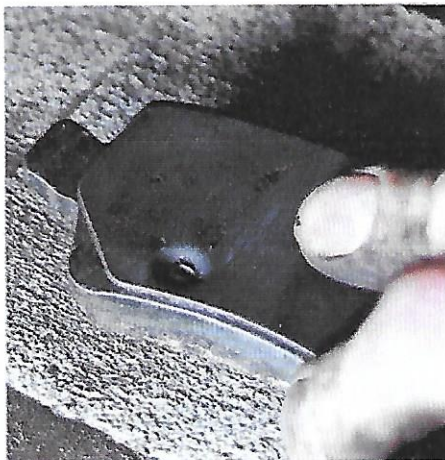
**19 REMOVE WHEELNUTS**

There's a locking wheelnut on each wheel. It's wise to make sure you have the tool for this. We found ours stored in one of the cubbyholes in the rear luggage area (see inset pic). Use a long bar to remove the locking nuts to avoid damaging them.



**22 FURTHER CLEAN BRAKES**

Remove the pads. So long as there is more than 3mm of friction material left and no oil or grease contamination, the pads can be reused. Clean the brake assembly with a wire brush and a flat-blade screwdriver to scrape off any compacted dirt. Turn the disc rim against a screwdriver to remove loose corrosion.



**23 CLEAN & LUBRICATE PADS**

Rub the front of the pads against abrasive paper on a flat surface to clean them before refitting. Dab some brake grease on the backs of the pads and mounting lugs. After reassembling, it's worth lubricating the hub centre using copper grease before putting the wheel back, to aid getting it off in the future.

**UNDER THE VEHICLE – REAR**



**24 DISMANTLE REAR BRAKES**

The rear brakes are also discs and more or less a mirror image of the fronts, so it's pretty much the same process to clean and check them, including greasing the same points. However, also lubricate the handbrake pivot mechanism to each wheel with copper or spray grease.