

VIRGINIA RIDER

Serving the Riders of Virginia & West Virginia

MAGAZINE

TM



FREE

GET READY TO RIDE
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Wytheville ...
there's only one!



WYTHEVILLE: The Center Of The Claw



In Southwest Virginia, the Claw of the Dragon isn't just one stretch of pavement; it's an entire riding experience. Centered around Wytheville, this legendary network of roads winds through the Blue Ridge Highlands, linking together technical mountain climbs, sweeping valley views, and authentic Appalachian small towns. Designed with riders in mind, the Claw offers hundreds of miles of connected routes that let you choose your pace, aggressive curves one hour, scenic cruising the next.

Every route eventually brings you back to a town that welcomes you like you've been riding here for years.

This riding season, make Wytheville your basecamp and let the Claw test your skill. Answer the call of the mountains. Grip the bars, lean into the curves, and discover why the Claw of the Dragon remains one of the Commonwealth's most unforgettable rides.

Cool mountain air keeps engines happy. Early-season traffic is light. Bare treelines open up long-range ridge views you won't see once summer fills in the canopy. It's the kind of riding that feels personal, just you, the road, and the rhythm of Southwest Virginia unfolding curve by curve.

What sets the Claw apart isn't just the asphalt; it's the access. Wytheville sits at the crossroads of Interstates 77 and 81, making it an easy launch point for riders coming from every direction. Trailer in, unload, and within minutes you're climbing into elevation changes, carving through forested bends, and tracing routes that feel both remote and remarkably well-connected.

After a full day in the saddle, Wytheville delivers the kind of hospitality riders appreciate. Local flavor restaurants offer everything from hearty Appalachian comfort food to elevated Southern fare. Comfortable lodging options, many with easy motorcycle parking, make multi-day stays simple. A walkable historic downtown invites you to stretch your legs, explore regional history, or simply swap stories with fellow riders who've also come to test their skill against the mountains.

The beauty of the Claw is that no two rides have to be the same. Loop north one day. Head deeper south the next. Chase tighter technical sections or relax into sweeping scenic stretches.





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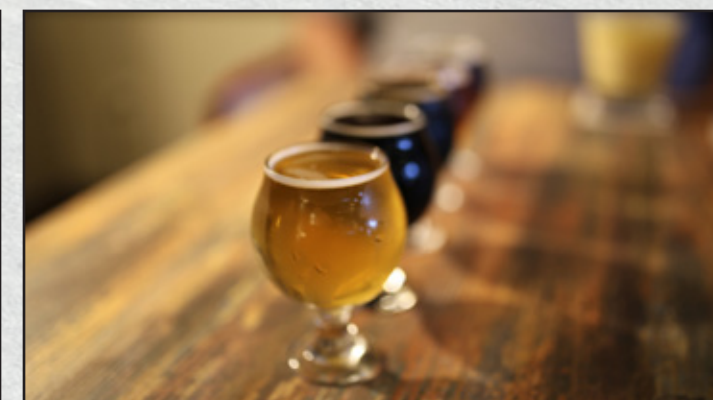


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VIRGINIA IS FOR
MOTORCYCLE LOVERS

BREWRIES & WINERIES · DINING · LODGING
ENTERTAINMENT · ATTRACTIONS
SCENIC BEAUTY · OUTDOOR RECREATION



from the editor's desk

Greetings friends! Ahhh, we are finally starting to feel & see the first signs of spring with the flowers reaching up out of their winter sleep and the daytime temperatures climbing up into the 70s and some low 80s too in some spots. March is oftentimes a funny month when it comes to the weather. You may have snow one week and thunderstorms the next. You really never know what you're going to get if you head out on the bike, which is why we encourage you to always check your weather forecast often during the day while you're out on the road. Stay aware & be prepared with raingear, riding goods, a good charge on your cell phone, and a plan in case the atmosphere goes south on you. During this time of the year, it happens more often than you would think. Thunderstorms can appear to "come out of nowhere," often referred to as "pop-up," "popcorn," or single-cell thunderstorms. These heat-driven storms develop rapidly in under 30 minutes on hot, humid afternoons, making them difficult to predict. So if you're out cruising the open road, be ready for anything. We've got an incredible article coming your way next month about storm riding that you won't want to miss.

One of the cool things that happens after you get your bike out after it's been sitting in the garage, or wherever you stored it all winter, is that very first ride of the year. It feels like the first time... Do you remember the feeling of your first ride by yourself? For most of us, it's ingrained in our memories for life. There's really no other feeling like getting on your bike to go for a ride. That feeling of anticipation of the unknown, yet the excitement that continuously flows through your body as you travel forward. It's a feeling like no other! It's the same feeling that you get every time you grab your gear and get ready to head out, knowing that within minutes you'll be returning to the freedoms that only a special group of us, the people who ride, are privy to and know how to respect and fully enjoy this special privilege.

This is the perfect time for you to start planning your rides. Whether it's a day trip, weekend getaway, or full-blown ride-staycation, we have so many great places to ride and amazing destinations for you to make plans for. We are thrilled to bring you the best motorcycle roads in the Virginias, such as the Appalachian Backroads, home of the Back of the Dragon & other famous routes in the Heart of Appalachia, featured in our centerfold. And joining us this month on our cover and inside feature is beautiful Wytheville, VA., home to the Claw of the Dragon, a legendary network of roads that winds through the Blue Ridge Highlands. We have plenty more to come, so please stay with us for one of the most exciting & adventure-filled riding seasons that Virginia riders have seen in many years!

Be safe in your journeys, friends, and get ready to enjoy all the good times just ahead. See you next month!

Stay awesome,

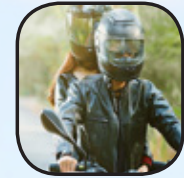
Kelly



IN THIS ISSUE



GREAT PLACES TO RIDE Max Meadows is a small, quiet, community in Wythe County, Virginia. It offers a rural, scenic atmosphere with easy access to outdoor activities. The area is known for its peaceful, close-knit environment, and it happens to be the home to one of Virginia's riders' favorite Destinations and Great Places To Stay.



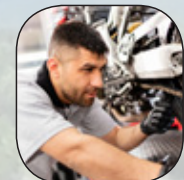
HOLD ON If you're planning on taking a ride on a motorcycle as a passenger, you may be wondering how you'll need to hold on, especially if this is your first time. As a passenger, there are a few things to consider when it comes to your safety, and a lot of that depends on how you keep yourself anchored on the bike.



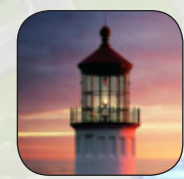
THE BIKE SAVER At the time of his writing this month's article, John was trapped in his own garage due to the massive ice storm that rolled through. So, with the prospect of more snow coming, he hunkered down to continue work on his latest project. another 1972 CB500.



MOTORCYCLE MAMA Alabama's Sailcat only released one album and only had one hit, both titled Motorcycle Mama. The song, of course, is better-remembered than the album, as it was one of many hazy oddities that played on AM pop radio during the early '70s.



GETTING YOUR MOTORCYCLE READY FOR SPRING A little maintenance today will help ensure that your bike is ready to go. The snow is melting, the temperature is starting to rise, and you are itching to get back on two wheels. Before you jump on your bike, take some time now to get your machine ready for all those rides you have planned.



THE LIGHTHOUSE We know that spring can be unpredictable to say the least. We love those first warm spring days. But what happens when the cold and rain and even snow try to smother out our spring? If we have deep roots of faith, we can make it through the valleys of hardship, discouragement or trouble. We can abide in the love of the Lord.



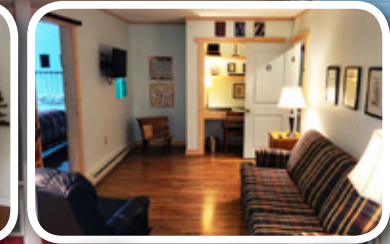
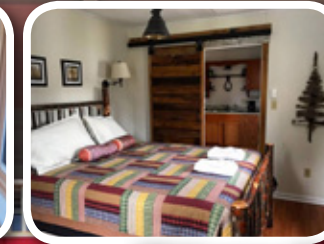
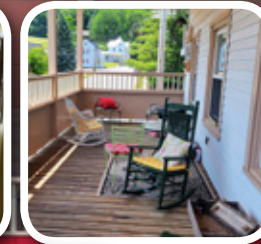
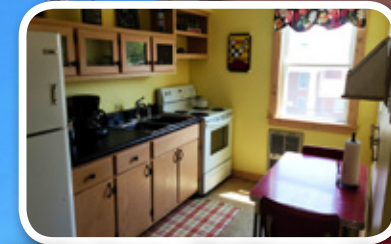
ARE YOUR MOTORCYCLE TIRES READY FOR RIDING? If you haven't ridden your bike in a while, your mind soon races with thoughts about the state of your motorcycle. Is it ready to ride? So, you start a list. And of all the things on your pre-ride safety checklist, your motorcycle tires deserve careful consideration.

Get Ready To Ride March 2026

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THE LIGHTHOUSE

Be a light for all to see - Matthew 5:16

Spring

Spring is a great time to remind us just how powerful and amazing our God is. Trees, flowers, and grass that were bare or dormant during the cold winter months grow to become new and beautiful during the spring. What a great time for us to remember that we can grow in God just like the spring plants do!

"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn." ~Hal Borland

A pastor's timeless message from April 2023:

We've had some interesting weather this winter and spring. February was unseasonably warm and springlike. No snow. Days that made a person think it was time to plant gardens. And then March came calling. The first day of March was gorgeous, one of those gifts while the calendar claims it is still winter. But then it was as if winter remembered that it hadn't gotten its fair share of days, and many days in March crept back toward winter. Cold. Windy, chilly days.

No fun at all when we were all so ready for spring and had already tasted days of warmer weather in February. The birds were singing their spring songs. Flowers were pushing up out of the ground. Trees were blooming. Then frosts came and turned the blooms on the trees brown and warned the flowers they better slow down. But the birds kept on singing. Maybe not quite as enthusiastically on those very cold mornings, but the songs were still there.

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. ...Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJ)

Sometimes we go through seasons in our lives, something like the way this spring season has been, and in other areas of the nation. Up and down. Warm and cold. Struggles and triumphs. Joy and sorrow.

"When you accept the fact that sometimes seasons are dry and times are hard and that God is in control of both, you will discover a sense of divine refuge, because the hope then is in God and not in yourself." – Charles R. Swindoll

"The deep roots never doubt spring will come." ~Marty Rubin

Most of us have an easy time rejoicing when we are on the mountaintops of good fortune, just as a beautiful, sunny spring day can keep the smiles on our faces. But what happens when the cold and rain and even snow try to smother out our spring? Hardships of life can throw clouds over us at times, but if we have deep roots of faith, we can make it through those valleys of discouragement or trouble. We can abide in the love of the Lord.

"The seasons change, and you change, but the Lord abides evermore the same, and the streams of His love are as deep, as broad and as full as ever." — Charles H. Spurgeon

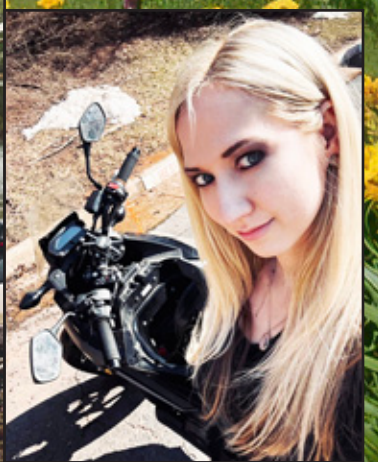
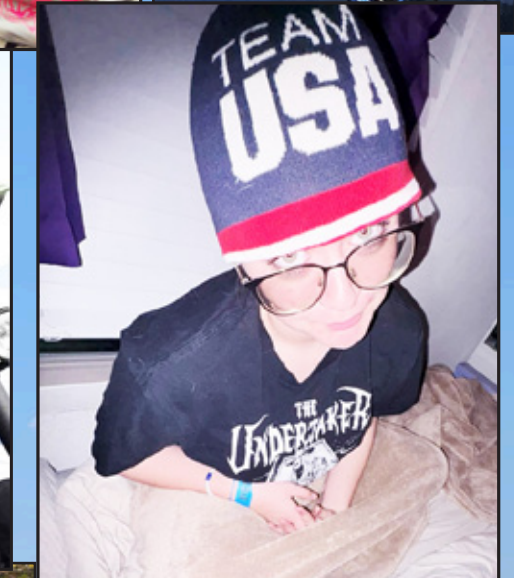


A DREAM RIDE CAN BECOME A NIGHTMARE
DON'T DRINK AND RIDE





LET'S DO SOME SHOTZ!!!
Email your pics to virginiaridermagazine@yahoo.com



GREAT PLACES TO RIDE MAX MEADOWS



Max Meadows, VA is a small town located in the Appalachian Mountains of Southwest Virginia. It is a peaceful and beautiful place to live, with great views of the countryside and stunning mountain ranges. The people in Max Meadows are friendly and welcoming, and there are lots of opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and camping. The area has a rich history that can be explored through local museums, historic sites, and old-fashioned country stores. There is also an abundance of natural beauty with rolling hills, lush forests, and rivers running through it. Above all else, Max Meadows provides a safe environment for residents that makes it an ideal place to call home.

Speaking of home, Max Meadows is home to a favorite destination for riders and groups and is one of Virginia Rider Magazine's Great Places To Stay...



Fox Mountain Inn - Where Comfort Meets the Road.

It's cozy, quiet, and pet-friendly too, with plenty to see and do in the area. It's close to the Blue Ridge Parkway and has many other backroads to ride! Here's their story:

Fox Mountain Inn, a charming 10-room roadside motel established in 1982, is now a destination boutique inn.

Conveniently situated at exit 84 on I-81 on historic Route 11 in Max Meadows, Virginia.

Fox Mountain Inn is family-owned and operated by photographers and avid motorcyclists, Jim and Michelle Overdorff.

The Inn offers clean, quiet, and comfortable accommodations in a peaceful mountain setting. With just 10 guest rooms, we specialize in personalized service and a relaxed atmosphere where guests can truly unwind.



Conveniently located near local race venues, universities, ball fields, festivals, and regional attractions, Fox Mountain Inn is an ideal choice for business travelers, families, couples, and groups. Many of our guests are repeat visitors who value our consistency, hospitality, and attention to detail.



Amenities include well-maintained rooms, outdoor seating areas, grills, and a firepit, creating a welcoming space to relax after a day of travel or events. Select pet-friendly rooms are available by direct reservation only. At Fox Mountain Inn, we are committed to honest business practices, clear communication, and guest satisfaction. Our goal is to provide a dependable, comfortable stay and a positive experience from booking through checkout.

Our mission is not only to offer comfortable accommodations but also to highlight the local charm, attractions, and events of the region.

Where everyone becomes a friend.

Experience the warm hospitality and throwback to yesteryear with simple accommodations, peaceful grounds to walk or sit, and direct phone reservations, answered by us (the owners).

**Visit foxmntinn.net to see all they have to offer.
Give them a call to book your reservation today: (276) 920-2319!**



HOLD ON – How a Motorcycle Passenger Holds On Safely



In the last edition of Virginia Rider - Rolling Into Spring, we covered the topic of 'Riding Two-Up – Riding With A Passenger'. It's just as important for your passenger to know how to 'hold on' before they climb onto the back of your bike for a ride. Some of this information can be life-saving, for both you and your passenger, so please be sure to share it with them before riding two-up.

If you're planning on taking a ride on a motorcycle as a passenger, you may be wondering how you'll need to hold on, especially if this is your first time. As a passenger, there are a few things to consider when it comes to your safety, and a lot of that depends on how you keep yourself anchored on the bike.

How does a motorcycle passenger hold on? The best way for a motorcycle passenger to hold on is to either hold on to the operator's waist or hips, wrap arms around the operator's torso, or hold on to the designated handles on the motorcycle specifically manufactured for passenger use and safety.

A motorcycle passenger's safety depends a lot on how he/she is holding on to the motorcycle. There is a right way and a wrong way to do it, and this article can explain exactly how to stay safe while holding on appropriately so you can enjoy yourself being a passenger.

The Correct Way To Hold On



People can get pretty creative with ways to hold on to the back of the motorcycle. But some of those ways aren't the safest, so if you plan on being a passenger on a motorcycle, you should know exactly how you're going to cling on to the machine.

There are two main ways to hold on to a motorcycle. The first way is to hold on to the operator of the motorcycle, who has a good grip on the motorcycle itself. If you have a firm hold on the driver, you have a firm hold on the bike itself. The best way to go about this is by holding on to the operator's waist or hips. It may be helpful to hook your fingers through the belt loops of their pants if they have any.



An alternate way to have a firm grip on the bike (if you're going to use the "hold the operator" route) is to snugly wrap your arms around the biker's torso. This is a popular option for two people who are romantically involved, though you don't have to be to use this method. This gives you the tightest grip and will ensure you won't fall off the back of the motorcycle in the case of a sudden acceleration.



If holding on to the operator seems a bit awkward to you, you're not alone. Some motorcycles, such as touring bikes, will have handles on the back specifically placed there for passengers



to hold on to. If the motorcycle you're riding has these, use them. This is likely the safest way to keep yourself anchored to the motorcycle and will ensure further safety for both you and the operator.

If none of these options are available or there are obstacles making it difficult to hold on, such as the size of the operator or lack of handlebars, you should consider not riding on the motorcycle at all. Your safety is first priority, and if you're unable to hold on to anything, you're endangering yourself and others on the road.

Ways You Should NOT Hold On

Now that we've covered ways you should hold on as a passenger on a motorcycle, let's go over ways you should not hold on. There are plenty of ways to do it wrong that can make the experience unsafe.

Don't hold on to the operator's shoulders. Though it is something for you to hold on to, the physics of it doesn't work as well as holding on to their waist, torso, or handles.

Keep your legs lower than your waist. Some motorcycle passengers think it's cute/comfortable to wrap their legs around the back of the operator. Not only is this unsafe for you, but it's dangerous for the operator because your legs can get in the way of their riding and potentially cause an accident.

Don't keep your hands free, even if you have a backrest. Having a backrest on a motorcycle can make a passenger feel more relaxed and give them the feeling they're safer than they actually are. Though having a backrest does help a lot with anchoring yourself to the bike, you still need to hold on and not let down your guard.

How To Stay Safe

Having the right hold while riding on the back of a motorcycle is just the first step in ensuring your safety. The accompanying positions of your body will greatly help you stay on the motorcycle and keep you and the driver much more comfortable.

As it was stated earlier, always keep your legs down below your waist and never have them wrapped around the operator. Keep your feet on the back foot pegs the entire time the motorcycle is on, even during stops at lights and signs. Remember to wear the appropriate footwear to prevent burns from the exhaust pipes. Having the right clothes during a motorcycle ride will make you much more relaxed and enjoy the ride more.

Be sure to lean with the motorcycle operator during turns and corners. This will be easy to do if you are holding on to them, as they will be much easier to follow. Not leaning with them will offset their balance. Ensuring you have a snug hold on either the motorcycle or the operator will greatly help with the operator's balance.

When you first mount the motorcycle, make sure you have a firm hold and that you are comfortable with the position you're in. This is important because once you're out on the road, readjustments are dangerous to do unless the motorcycle is stopped and turned off. Sudden jerks and movements can throw the operator off balance.

If, for any reason, you need to let go of your hold while out on the road, communicate with the operator and let them know. You may need to move your hair out of your face, adjust clothing, get that terrible itch on your nose, etc. These things tend to happen in the least convenient of times, so let the operator know ahead of time so they can either stop, slow down, or brace themselves until your issue is solved.

What Happens When You Don't Hold On Properly

Unfortunately, there are a lot of consequences to not holding on properly while being a passenger on a motorcycle. The most obvious is, of course, falling off the motorcycle. But a lot of passengers don't realize that not holding on properly has a lot more consequences outside of what could happen to them.

When a motorcycle passenger doesn't have a good hold or anchor to the bike itself, that also puts the operator at risk. An unstable passenger makes the operator unstable, which increases the risk of an accident.

A motorcycle passenger having a weak hold on the bike also puts the drivers around them at risk. It's kind of a domino effect; when the passenger doesn't have a good hold, that puts the operator off balance, which in turn makes them less of a defensive driver, which means they could possibly hurt someone else.

Aside from physical harm, there are also some legal consequences. According to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, all state laws require that in order for a passenger to ride on the back of a motorcycle, there needs to be additional seating for them as well as extra foot pegs that they are able to reach with their feet.

A good hold from a passenger should include these factors. If a motorcyclist and their passenger are caught without abiding by these laws, either or both the operator and the passenger could receive some hefty fines and consequences.

If you're going to ride on the back of a motorcycle, make sure you're aware of where you're going to hold on and that there's room for you to securely ride on the road. It's not worth your safety if you feel uncomfortable and don't have the ability to appropriately anchor yourself to the motorcycle.

Stay safe out there & enjoy your ride!



VIRGINIA RIDER MAGAZINE

Source: https://motorcyclehabit.com/how-does-a-motorcycle-passenger-hold-on/?fbclid=IwAR1Bx0Tmclwt3x95zJkr9BzIA-N21yNi-RAHisGjTEHAJstAY_o0g3RxJQ

MUSIC & MOTORCYCLES



RIDE TO LIVE, LIVE TO RIDE



Alabama's Sailcat only released one album and only had one hit, both titled Motorcycle Mama. The song, of course, is better-remembered than the album, as it was one of many hazy oddities that played on AM pop radio during the early '70s and subsequently was recycled on many CDs of '70s hits. Sailcat's Motorcycle Mama one of the more fascinating one-shot wonders of the early '70s: maybe not a record that would be played often, but certainly one worth hearing once.

MOTORCYCLE MAMA

Tell your Daddy and your Mama too. You got something better to do. Than stick around the house the rest of your life. You're eighteen you can do what you like. You'll be the queen of my highway, my motorcycle mama.

We'll see the world through my Harley.

We'll get matching jackets and helmets too. We'll get respect from the towns we ride through. We'll sleep at the roadside in the soft green grass and if the squares walk by well let them pass. You'll be the queen of my highway, my motorcycle mama.

We'll see the world through my Harley.

And maybe in a year or two, we'll have a little one, she'll look just like you. We'll add on a sidecar, electric guitar. We'll be a trio, the baby makes three, oh.

Tell your Daddy and your Mama too. You got something better to do. Than stick around the house the rest of your life. You're eighteen you can be my wife. You'll be the queen of my highway, my motorcycle mama.

We'll see the world through my Harley.

We'll see the world through my Harley.

We'll see the world through my Harley... if the chain don't break



VIRGINIA RIDER MAGAZINE

1st annual WV Gold Star Mothers Biker Ball



Not a Valkyrie event but we support veteran events. All money raised went to WVGSM



Does YOUR RELATIONSHIP NEED SOME T.L.C.?

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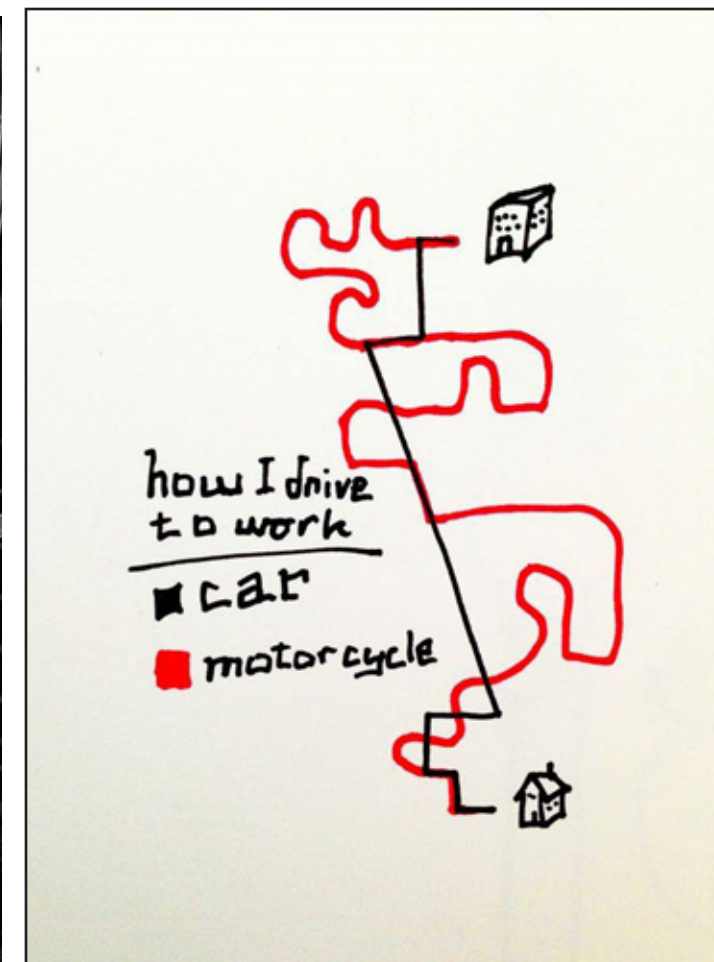
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RRRuff Riders

PATCH

Hello, meet Patch. He is a Border Collie, Blue Heeler and Black Lab mix. He chose me as his human, and he is my service dog. On 1 April 2026, he will be 4 years old. A friend made the cage that is on my 2019 Can-Am F3-T. It took a few weeks to get him comfortable with the noise of the bike and not be afraid of it. We started with getting him used to getting in and out of the cage on the ground, and also getting on and off the bike. Once the cage was on the bike, it was easy. We started just riding in the neighborhood, getting him used to it. Now, when I say, "Wanna go for a ride on the bike?", he goes and gets in the cage.

Many thanks to Patch's owner, Nicole Smith, for sharing their story. 😊



GET PREPARED TO RIDE

With the T-CLOCS pre-ride bike inspection plan!

T-CLOCS is the acronym for a simple but thorough pre-ride inspection plan created by the internationally recognized Motorcycle Safety Foundation - the same steps that our Service Consultant takes when a motorcycle comes in for a service visit.



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|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>T: TIRES, WHEELS + BRAKES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Air Pressure - Bearings - Tread - Brakes - Spokes | <p>C: CONTROLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levers - Switches - Cables - Hoses - Throttle | <p>L: LIGHTING + ELECTRIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-and-low-beam - Taillights + Brakes - Turn Signals - Wiring Conditions | <p>O: OIL + FLUIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fluid Levels - Leaks | <p>C: CHASSIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frame - Tension - Handlebar - Chain/belt - Suspension | <p>S: SIDE STAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tension Spring on Jiffy Stand |
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EASY DOES IT

CRISPY SPRINGTIME SHRIMP TACOS

Spring is in the air! It's time to shift from heavy, comfort-food-focused winter eating to light, easy, and delicious foods that you can whip up in a jiffy, so you have more time to ride. 😊 There's no better way to welcome in the new season than enjoying some yummy shrimp tacos. Air-fried shrimp tacos become a cinch to whip up thanks to store-bought popcorn shrimp and an air fryer, which is great at crisping up frozen fried food. Frozen breaded popcorn shrimp is generally pre-fried but raw inside, meaning it must be fully cooked before eating. While the breading is often browned, the shrimp itself requires heating to an internal temperature of 165°F, so be sure to check the package for any adjusted air frying times as needed.

Here's all you need:

- ½ (18 oz) pkg frozen popcorn shrimp (breaded or battered) or *frozen small or medium shrimp that are fully cooked & peeled
- 2 plum tomatoes
- 8 small 6-inch flour tortillas
- 1 cup prepared coleslaw
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves

Here's all you need to do:

- Preheat air fryer to 390°F. In batches, arrange the shrimp in a single layer in the basket and cook 7 min., until crisp, shaking once halfway through.
*If you want to skip the breading/batter, thaw the frozen fully cooked shrimp & sprinkle with Old Bay seasoning – no need to air fry since they are fully cooked
- Meanwhile, finely chop the tomatoes. Wrap the tortillas in damp paper towels and microwave on high 1 min., until warm.
- Serve shrimp in flour tortillas topped with the coleslaw, chopped tomatoes, and cilantro. Feel free to add whatever you like & make it your own!

Happy spring eating...Bon appetit! 😊



Are Your Motorcycle Tires Ready For Riding?

When dawn breaks to clear, blue skies and warm golden sunshine, every motorcyclist is itching to ride. You know the feeling. You step outside in the morning on your way to work and breathe in that fresh air. There's an irresistible urge to leave the four-wheeler home and take the motorcycle. If you haven't ridden your bike in a while, your mind soon races with thoughts about the state of your motorcycle. Is it ready to ride? So, you start a list. And of all the things on your pre-ride safety checklist, your motorcycle tires deserve careful consideration.

Your connection to the road

We live in a connected world. Our everyday life is filled with information, often delivered to a phone in the palm of our hand. Our motorcycles are connected to the road by a pair of tire contact patches not much bigger than the palm of your hand. Every time we accelerate, brake, or lean into a curve, our motorcycle tires make the connection to keep us going. Think about this for a minute. Put your palm down on a nearby surface. What you see is the small area your motorcycle tires have to grip the road surfaces, no matter the riding conditions. That's why maintaining your motorcycle tires is so important.

How much do you think about your motorcycle tires?

Have you ever caught yourself daydreaming about riding your dream motorcycle? Of course you have, we all do it. But what about daydreaming about your motorcycle tires? Yeah, that's not a likely scenario. As motorcycle riders, what's better than just dreaming about tires is being educated about what the best tires are for our bikes. Motorcycle tires are critical riding gear, and the more we know, the better and safer the ride gets.

How to pick the best motorcycle tires for your bike

When it comes to choosing the right tires, the place to start is with your owner's manual or a manufacturer's service manual for the correct make and model year you own. There will be a precise specification for the type of tires your motorcycle was designed to operate with.

Motorcycle tire specifications can seem confusing at first. Original equipment motorcycle tires are usually made by a company that worked in conjunction with the motorcycle manufacturer during the design phase. If those tires aren't available, there are many brands to choose from for replacement tires. With some research and consultation of various motorcycle tire size charts, we can find the perfect fit for our motorcycles. But getting the best motorcycle tires is just the start of the journey. Pre-ride inspections and maintenance are required throughout a tire's life.

How to perform a good tire inspection

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) places tires first in their pre-ride inspection checklist known as T-CLOCS —the "T" is for tires. While your whole motorcycle needs inspecting before every ride, in this post, we'll solely focus on your tires. Here are some important items you should inspect to extend your tire life:

Tread depth and tread pattern

This is the height of the blocks of tread as measured from the bottom of the rain sipes. Rain sipes are the channels in between the blocks of tread that allow water to be displaced outward so you have good traction in wet conditions. Tread blocks wear away when riding, and there's a minimum height of tread needed to provide proper performance. The best way to measure this is with a tread depth gauge. Check around the whole circumference of each tire.

Tire sidewall

The tire sidewall holds the tire up. With proper inflation, this area helps create a good contact patch while flexing to absorb surface irregularities and bumps. It also contains the bead, which connects the tire to the wheel's rim. All the important information about the tire is printed on the sidewall. Look for cuts, bulges, and other damage. A compromised sidewall can result in catastrophic failure.

Age cracks

Motorcycle tires are made of highly engineered rubber compounds designed to deliver high performance and good service economy in a truly harsh environment. Motorcycle tire compounds include agents designed to resist UV radiation from the sun and slow down oxidation. Over time and from exposure to the sun, ozone, and chemicals from the road, these compounds wear out. If you see fine cracks in the sidewalls, tread blocks, or rain sipes, your tire has aged out and should be replaced promptly.

Tire inflation pressure

Probably the most overlooked part of motorcycle tire maintenance is proper inflation. Inflation is not a set-it-and-forget-it proposition and can impact handling. The air molecules in your motorcycle tires slowly work their way out. A change in ambient temperature changes the pressure in your tires. Under-inflation is the most common problem affecting tire performance, service life, and tire wear. Always check inflation pressure on a cold tire.

Embedded objects

Look for any objects like glass or metal that are embedded in the tire tread. Small things that don't puncture the tire can be removed. Some punctures in the tread can be plugged with rubber plugs. Only trust these tire plugs long enough to ride to a nearby motorcycle shop and replace the tire.

Select, inspect, and check

Check your motorcycle owner's manual and always select the correct types of motorcycle tires for your machine. Inspect them before every ride. Check the cold tire pressure and adjust for the load before every ride. Following these tire tips, you'll know your tires are ready for riding.

Source: <https://www.dairylandinsurance.com/resources/motorcycle-tires-ready-for-riding>

THE BIKE SAVER

with John Peterson



The Charge of The Milk Brigade

By the time you read this, Snowstorm Fern and that horrible blizzard in New England will have long since passed us by, hopefully without any dangerous repercussions; but like any winter storm, it was the usual – frenzied shoppers out fighting in the aisles over the last gallons of milk and bread while clutching packages of bottled water in their attempts to grab the last few cups of Ramen noodles.

I had prepared a little earlier than that (he said smugly) and got all my stuff bought before the latest version of what Hunter Thompson refers to as “The Fear”- Consumer Edition broke bad upon the populace, so at least I was spared the brunt of snowstorm paranoia. I did return to the store, hoping against hope because I’d forgotten to buy half-n-half for my morning coffee, but by then the shelves had been stripped clean of anything remotely tagged ‘half-n-half’ or even regular creamer, and I’ll be damned if I’m going to put “Zio” or whatever it is in my coffee. It’s my opinion that something like almond milk has no business in a proper cup of coffee, but Hey..! You Do You. Looks like I’ll just have to use regular ol’ milk to get through this. Quelle Horreur.

But what really pisses me off is that Mother Nature has effectively shut me out of my own garage!



I have a big steel garage where the magic happens, and as temperatures dropped through the basement, it was like trying to work in a freezer. And it sucks because I’m right in the middle of putting together another 1972 CB500 to relate that experience here.

And there’s more snow coming! As we head into March - which in MY mind should be the return of decent temperatures and No More Snow – yet there is ANOTHER snow storm headed our way! It is to Weep...

Work is progressing, although this bike has started to show all its dirty laundry. Taking advantage of a few days of mild weather, I was able to get the cylinder head into my vapor blaster and remedy what I thought was going to be a problem, that being really nasty valve seats.



I thought for sure this head was ‘done,’ but then I got to thinking, ‘Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained,’ and ran it through one more time and was very pleased to see that they cleaned up nicely, so at least it looks like I’ll be able to grind the seats. Yay!



I turned my attention to the front brake reservoir, which was locked up solid.



Ewww!

At least I managed to get all that crap out of there and rebuild the whole thing with new parts, which was nice – It’s very satisfying to get parts or mechanisms working like they’re supposed to.



Here I’m using some heat and trying to get the dang mirror out without breaking it off...rust is a helluvan adhesive! It eventually DID come out okay, but if you work on old machines, you know that feeling of borderline torque you feel just before it *SNAPS!*?? Yeah, it felt like that. Made me sweat a little bit, because as you know, if that or any other bolt snaps trying to get it out, well, you’ve just turned a ten-minute operation into a three-day job.

And then THIS happened –



This is one of the two pistons out of the four that were locked up tight by rust, of course. As you can see, I originally tried using a pick to get the rings out, but rings are fragile things that don’t like being coerced, and *SNAP*!

I figured there had to be a better way. I tried soaking them in parts cleaner, which didn’t do much, and then consulted the Interwebs for a better solution, and lo and behold, there was! And I shamefully admit that even after all these years of repairing bikes, I didn’t know about this method until I knew!

And you might already know this too, but if you take some propane like MAPP gas – (in the yellow cylinders at places like Lowes, Home Depot, etc... It burns hotter than regular blue-bottled propane) and heat the stuck rings really well, you can actually SEE the stuck rings becoming UN-stuck! Add a little PB Blaster or the like to the ring lands and keep heating it; you can actually get the rings unstuck without breaking them; I had no idea! Be advised, the piston does get super burn-your-fingers-quick hot, though, so be sure to wear some heavy-duty gloves to handle them – but it works!

So that’s where I am in this rebuild process. I contemplated whether or not I should get just the new rings, or a whole new kit and replace all the pistons and rings with new ones... yes, all new parts would be nice, but now that I have the pistons sorted, all I really need is the rings. What to do...

In the end, I went with just the rings, since the pistons are good, but there is still much to do – vapor blast the pistons, rebuild the top end, get the points sorted, get the frame assembled and the engine back in, refill the forks, and try to get some tires for it – you know, The Usual.

So that’s about where I am now, and probably where it will sit for the next ten days or so, or at least until Mother Nature gets over it and stops trying to kill us.

But Spring is coming...! Be safe, stay warm, and hopefully I will see you all on the other side.

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FIT FOR THE ROAD

Catching some Zzzz's - THE POWER OF A NAP



With the start of Daylight Saving time this month, our bodies' circadian rhythms are being disrupted, trying to adjust to the darker mornings and lighter evenings. Even if you get a good night's sleep, at some point in the day your body may need to take a moment. Enter, "The Nap."

Nap: (nap or cat nap – definition of: To sleep for a brief period, often during the day; doze.)

According to a growing body of research, napping is a smart thing to do. It can help refresh the mind, make you more creative, boost your intelligence, and even help you live a longer, healthier life. It's slowly gaining acceptance as part of a healthy lifestyle, even in some corporate offices.

In our modern, hurried world, making time for even a short nap might seem like an impossible luxury. Yet, for some, they may be necessary to make it through the day at peak mental and physical performance. Our bodies crave naps for a reason, some based on our evolution, others on our habits.

The No. 1 reason many people need a nap? Not getting enough sleep at night. While there is no magic number of hours that people need to get at night (the ideal varies by age and other highly individual factors), the National Sleep Foundation suggests that adults get seven to nine hours. Unfortunately, a CDC study found that more than 40 million workers get less than six hours a night. That lack of sleep can have consequences, and if it happens often enough, your body may start seeking out rest during the day, leaving you in dire need of a nap.

Poor nutrition is another easily remedied reason for feeling sleepy throughout the day. Many people feel tired in the afternoon because of plummeting blood sugar levels after a poorly planned lunch. This can be caused by two things: not eating enough at lunch to supply enough energy to get through to dinner, or by choosing foods that don't contain enough protein and fiber and far too much sugar and other carbohydrates. Either way, these kinds of lunches leave most feeling tired, sluggish, and worn out well before the workday is over.

It may be more common for people in the U.S. to only sleep at night, but that isn't exactly the way our bodies are necessarily designed to work. Wakefulness throughout the day is governed by our natural biological clock, a phenomenon more commonly referred to as the circadian rhythm. While some may not feel sleepy until evening, others experience a small "hump" in sleepiness in the mid-afternoon. That sleepiness is entirely normal and is actually programmed into the circadian schedule. As a result, the desire to nap is simply an expression of the natural rhythms of our bodies, regardless of whether we get enough sleep at night.

It's an evolutionary necessity... As the day goes on, learning ability, alertness, and focus degrade. A nap can help counteract that effect and give those mental faculties a boost. While this might not be an absolute necessity for survival today, especially with the invention of caffeine-laden energy drinks, at one point in our evolutionary history, it just might have been. Slowed reaction times and decreased watchfulness could have meant the difference between life and death for our ancestors (and can still have a marked effect on our own success today). A short nap, even just 15 to 20 minutes, can greatly increase the faculties that increase the odds of survival, so it's only natural that we're predisposed to want to sleep.

If you've tried taking naps in the afternoon and found yourself feeling groggy after waking—if you manage to force yourself back out of bed—you may just be going about them all wrong. Even if you don't work in a job where napping is acceptable, there's a very clear reason why the best naps are the ones that are usually around the half-hour mark. Take advantage of the first two phases of your sleep cycle: stage one, where you're probably "dozing," or feel relaxed but if someone woke you, you probably wouldn't even notice you'd been asleep, and stage two, where your brain starts to consolidate memories, organize its biological bookshelves, and shuts the brain off from external, non-dangerous stimuli. If you're the type who says, "It takes me 10 minutes just to fall asleep," that 10 minutes is probably leading you into stage one—after that, you're in stage two.

The trouble comes in stage three, or the part where we're sleeping deeply, and waking is difficult. That's when you start to feel groggy and hate the idea of getting up. If you hate mornings, you're probably waking up during this phase. So the key to getting all of the benefits of naps without the drawbacks is to sleep only for about a half-hour, or the time it takes your brain to go through the first two stages, but not enter the third.

Timing is important when you nap, but whenever you choose to try and nap—whether your company is okay with napping in the office or you slink out to your car for a quick snooze during your break, make sure not to sleep too long. A power nap of about 15 to 20 minutes is your best bet when you're feeling weary, but only if taken between 1:00 and 3:00 PM. If you work from home or you are retired, it may be easier to nap longer, so don't forget to set your alarm. ...Pleasant dreams

Stay fit for the road for a happy, healthy, & well-rested riding season!



What Does 2 Fingers Down Mean To Motorcycle Riders?

The "two fingers down" gesture in motorcycling means "keep two wheels on the ground" or "ride safe," serving as a universal sign of respect, acknowledgment, and camaraderie between riders, symbolizing wishing fellow motorcyclists safety and good travels. It's a simple way to say "hello" and show solidarity, especially when passing other riders on the road, and signifies wishing them to stay safe and make it home.

"Keep the rubber side down": The most common meaning, referring to keeping both tires on the pavement and avoiding accidents, as highlighted by this article.

Ride Safe / Stay Safe: A direct wish for the other rider's well-being.

Hello/Acknowledgment: A simple greeting and recognition of another member of the riding community, notes Reddit users.

Brotherhood/Solidarity: A gesture of shared passion and community, showing care for fellow riders regardless of their bike, say Facebook users.

How It's Done – make sure it's safe to do so:

Typically performed with the left hand (as it's the hand often free when riding). Extend two fingers (index and middle) and point them downwards towards the ground.



You said
no more
bikes!

I said
no, more
bikes.



GETTING YOUR MOTORCYCLE READY FOR SPRING

Riding Season Is Here!

A little maintenance today will help ensure that your bike is ready to go.

The snow is melting, the temperature is starting to rise, and you are itching to get back on your bike. It's been a long winter for you and your motorcycle. Before you jump on your bike, take some time now to get your machine ready for all those rides you have planned.

Brakes



Because you never know when you'll need to apply your brakes, this is the perfect time to take a close look at your bike's braking system. Start by checking the brake pads: if they show signs of excessive wear, replace them. Take a look at the brake lines, keeping an eye out for any cracks or leaks. Finally, perform a test on both the front and rear brakes to make sure they are working properly. If you hear any squealing, scraping, or growling noises, have your mechanic check it out before you take your bike out on the road.

Tires



Inspect your tires for damage such as cracks or dry rot. Check the tread – are both tires in good shape, or do they need replacing? Worn tread can make your bike harder to handle, so don't overlook this important safety check.

After sitting in storage all winter, your tires may have lost air pressure. Using an air pressure gauge, check the air pressure to ensure that both tires are at the correct level. You can check your owner's manual for the manufacturer's recommended setting. Also, be mindful of flat spots that might have developed from sitting for an extended period of time.

Battery



Your battery helps power your motorcycle – thoroughly examine it to ensure that it is ready to go each time you fire up the engine. Are the terminals clean and cables securely connected? Does everything appear to be in good working order? If your bike's battery wasn't on a trickle charger over the winter, test your battery. Sitting in storage can quickly drain your battery; it is likely that it will need to be charged.

Fluids



If you didn't change your oil and oil filter at the end of last season, this is the ideal time to take care of this key maintenance step. Consult your owner's manual for the proper oil filter and oil to use. Check and top off all the other fluids in your engine, including brake fluid, coolant, transmission oil, hydraulic clutch fluid, and fork oil. Look for any changes in consistency and color of the fluids. If you suspect that any of the fluids have degraded, you may need to perform a system-specific flush, like a coolant flush or a flush of the brake system. Check your owner's manual for the recommended service schedule.

Lights



Make sure that you can see and others can see you by checking your lights. Make sure your headlight (high and low beams), taillights, brake light, turn signals, and flashers are all in working order. Replace any bulbs that are burned out.

Spark plugs



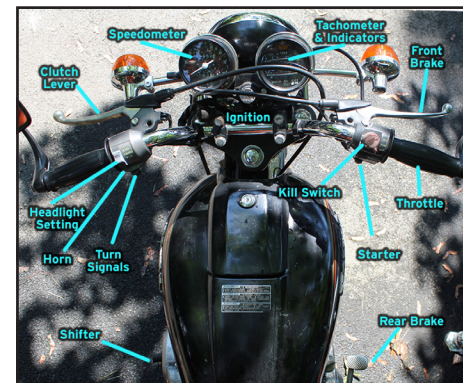
Prevent problems down the road by checking your motorcycle's spark plugs. If any are dirty or show signs of damage, replace them before you are left stranded on the side of the road.

Belts & chains



Take a moment to inspect your drive chain or drive belt for cracks or signs of wear that could cause it to malfunction. Also, check the tension to ensure that it's at the manufacturer's specs. Take care of any issues now before they ruin a day of riding.

Controls



Test all of your controls to ensure that your bike is road-ready. Check your steering, clutch, throttle, and other key controls. This is the time to address any problems.

Stay safe & enjoy a great riding season!

The content contained in this article is for informational purposes only and should not be used in lieu of seeking professional advice from a certified technician or mechanic. We encourage you to consult with a certified technician or mechanic if you have specific questions or concerns relating to any of the topics covered herein.

Source: <https://www.championautoparts.com/Parts-Matter/automotive-repair-and-maintenance/getting-your-motorcycle-ready-for-spring.html>

Gear

Fool's Gear

HEAD. Considered precious by sensible people; never exposed by the pros. When fully in view, allows immediate identification of unsafe person not using his or hers. Hand out rider education info on sight.

EYES, EARS AND FACE. Exposure leads to irritated eyes, noise-deafening windblast, and distracting impacts from bugs and road debris.

HANDS. *Au naturel* (not for long). Known to lock into curled position when exposed to cold; not genetically evolved to withstand abrasion.

BARE LIMBS. A phenomenon seen only in riders who think it's other people who crash. Subject to ridicule in riding circles.

FLIP FLOPS. Terminology for what sandals, toes and feet do upon contact with road surfaces, shift lever, brake pedal, or footrests.

BOTTOM LINE. Fool's gear identifies an unaware rider. Learn how to avoid embarrassment, ridicule and injury, while gaining valuable skills and knowledge by completing an MSF RiderCourse®.

800.446.9227 or www.msf-usa.org or contact:

Cool Gear

HELMET. Most important piece of protective gear a rider can use. Protects against head injury, windblast, cold, and flying objects. Full-face helmet recommended.

FACESHIELD. "Saves face." Any rider who's been hit in the face by stones, insects, or debris can tell you the benefits.

GLOVES. Keep hands comfortable, functional, and protected. There's an infinite variety for all seasons.

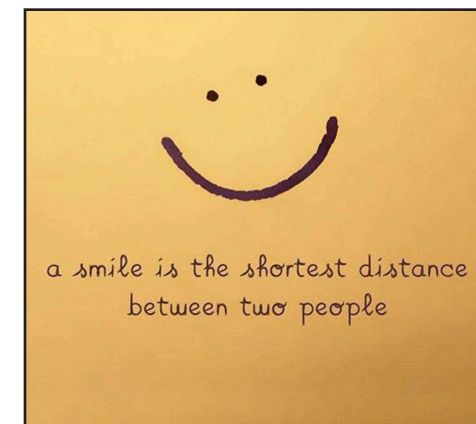
JACKET AND PANTS. Long sleeves and sturdy trousers resist abrasion and protect against sunburn, dehydration, or hypothermia. Some riders wear padded gear with "body armor" for more protection. Light colors in the daytime and reflectivity at night make it easier for car drivers to see you.

BOOTS. Provide protection against foot and ankle injuries and give you a good grip on footrests or road surfaces.

BOTTOM LINE. Dress for the ride as well as for the crash. Proper riding gear allows you to enjoy the ride in comfort and helps minimize injury.

The more you know, the better it gets.

Finally, don't neglect your riding gear. Check your helmet for cracks or other signs of damage that could compromise it. If you see any issues, replace them immediately. Many manufacturers recommend replacing a helmet every 5 years, regardless of whether you see any visible damage. Replace gloves and boots that have become worn and invest in a new visor if yours is scratched. Also, look at your emergency road kit – is it complete? Replace any items that may have been taken out.



ROCKY ROAD

As much as you may try to avoid anything but clean pavement, eventually you're going to have to deal with a gravel driveway, dirt highway shoulder, or other loose surface. When the inevitable happens, here are some basic off-road techniques to make your encounter safer & maybe even enjoyable!...

*Slow Down - This reduces the risk of sliding

*Brake Right - Use a light amount of front brake in favor of more rear brake to keep better traction.

*Clutch It - Keep the throttle steady & slip the clutch to control your speed... You can also drag the rear brake.

*Eyes up - Scan the road ahead & look for the safest route... it helps you maintain balance too!

*Stay Loose - The bike may move around underneath you more than usual so stay calm, sit your body slightly forward, lightly clamp your legs against the tank & allow your arms & upper torso to move freely.

*Counterweight - When turning on loose surfaces, position your butt on the outside edge of the seat while pressing down on the outside footpeg for better grip.

*Stand Up, Sit Down - If you can, get off the saddle over rough terrain so your legs can act as a 2nd pair of shock absorbers & allow you & your bike to move independently for more responsive maneuvering.



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