

**BOOST YOUR
BIKING SKILLS**

THINK



TRAINING

YOUR TRAINING – BE ASSESSED BY THE BEST

LEARNING CURVE

So you need and want to learn the skills so you can safely control a modern motorcycle on today's roads? There are three possible ways you can do this:

- You can learn from your mistakes. But every mistake will cost you and one day you may have to pay the ultimate price.
- You can learn from your mates. But how good are they anyway?

OR YOU COULD LEARN FROM AN EXPERT...

...someone who spends all day every day in the saddle and really knows their stuff – and who knows how to pass that knowledge on to others. As a result, you might even end up with discounts on insurance, clothing and accessories.

EXTRA TRAINING

Any of these organisations will point you in the right direction for a professional assessment:

- Driving Standards Agency (DSA) (www.direct.gov.uk/ers)
0300 200 1122
- BikeSafe (www.bikesafe.co.uk)
08444 151 206
- The Motor Cycle Industry Training Association (MCITA) (www.mcita.co.uk)
02476 40 8032
- British Motorcyclists Federation (www.bmf.co.uk)
0116 279 5112
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (www.rosipa.com)
0121 248 2000
- Institute of Advanced Motorists (www.iam.org.uk)
0845 126 8600

DSA – GET TRAINED, SAVE MONEY

DSA, in conjunction with the motorcycle industry, has devised a package of training known as the Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS). The scheme is intended to benefit all bike riders who have a full motorcycle licence, irrespective of the size of bike or the experience level of the rider. You won't need to take a test or even any training if your skills are assessed as satisfactory. You'll also earn discounts on your insurance as a result.

The crash statistics among motorcyclists indicate that everyone should at least take a health check of their riding ability from time to time.

Don't take any unnecessary risks. Get yourself assessed by your local DSA accredited trainer today. You can find your nearest trainer by calling DSA on 0300 200 1122 or by visiting www.direct.gov.uk/ers and clicking on the link 'Find your nearest post-test motorcycle trainer'. To find out which insurance companies offer discounts click on 'Download 'Enhanced Rider Scheme leaflet''.

WHAT NEXT?

Once you've been assessed, you'll have a better idea of which areas of your riding you need to work on. You can then focus on finding the course that's right for you. For most people the bare minimum is a refresher on road positioning, planning ahead and what to do if someone you're riding with has a crash.



THROUGH BETTER SKILLS COMES BETTER BIKING

RIDING SKILLS

The best motorcyclists ride defensively so they are less likely to have crashes. We all see examples of bad driving from time to time and motorcyclists are vulnerable to these mistakes. Riders with good defensive skills ride like they expect a problem every second. They are in control, so they enjoy more relaxed riding.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU:

- anticipate the actions of motorists
- are alert and observant. This is especially important when you're negotiating junctions or roundabouts and when you need to look out for other vulnerable road users – children, pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders
- ride at a speed that will enable you to slow down and stop in good time. The unexpected can happen. Ride according to the conditions: slow down if it's wet, foggy or icy
- position yourself in the safest and best place to maximise your visibility of potential hazards and take up your road position in good time before turning right or left, showing others your intentions
- approach a right-hand bend, if possible, as far to the left on the way into the corner as you can; if approaching a left-hand bend, if possible stay as far to the right as you can
- overtake safely. Can you see potential hazards? Is there a bend or a junction? Can you overtake without speeding up or swerving too much?
- take a 'lifesaver' glance over your shoulder before carrying out manoeuvres, so you know where other drivers are and what they're doing
- have been seen. Dipped headlights, even in good daylight, can help you to be seen. Motorcycles built and sold after 2002 always have dipped headlights on, but does yours?
- don't act aggressively. Sometimes other drivers will wind you up. But if you act aggressively you may have to pay the penalty
- don't race on the roads, however tempted you are.

If you want to know more, read the DSA's publication *Motorcycle Riding: The Essential Skills*, available to order online.

Please also consider further skills training to improve your performance and safety on the road. Advanced training is available, with different schemes to suit your needs. (See the 'Your Training' section.)

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

A summer day and a relatively quiet rural B-road is bliss for a biker, but be warned: trouble can be just around the next corner, so expect the unexpected.

Every year bikes get faster and sharper but their owners don't necessarily increase their skills at the same rate. So it makes sense that every year you need to be sharper, more aware and at the top of your game every time you pull on your leathers and hit the starter button.

DOES ANY OF THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

- I often find that corners suddenly tighten up on me.
- I sometimes find I only just get away with overtaking manoeuvres.
- When I ride with my mates, I seem to have to thrash my bike to keep up.
- People are always pulling out on me and forcing me to take avoiding action.
- I worry about how secure my bike is, even when it's locked up.
- As soon as it rains all my confidence disappears.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

They're all common complaints, and it's easy to blame most of them on outside influences. In fact they're mostly problems that can be solved with a different approach. For example, corners don't suddenly tighten up – there are signs that can help you identify tight or tightening corners.

Similarly, when people pull out in front of you, it's often not because they haven't seen you but because you were going a lot faster than they expected – the average car driver has no concept whatsoever of the performance of a modern bike.

Putting the emphasis on yourself to avoid trouble rather than relying on others to avoid you is the first step towards getting more out of your bike and staying safe. The second step is improving your riding skills and becoming a better biker.

Book yourself onto further training via DSA.

WHAT IS BIKESAFE?

BikeSafe is a police-led scheme that engages with post-test riders to consider why motorcycle crashes are happening. Five strong trends have emerged throughout the country. Filtering, junctions, cornering, overtaking and group riding are problem areas. Really obvious things seem to be placing everyday riders in life-threatening scenarios. BikeSafe offers potential solutions to the most common crash causes. BikeSafe provides individual rider development reports, which can be taken to a post-test training provider. BikeSafe is all about bridging the gap into accredited training.

“We don’t have you with us long enough to train you how to ride, but we can point out why serious crashes happen. Generally, there are fewer reasons than you might imagine. We can work on hazard awareness and managing risks and let you know about the riding system that emergency service riders use to stay safer. We will observe your riding and provide a ‘training needs report’. We then point you, armed with your new knowledge, towards approved training providers, effectively bridging the gap to such trainers. These people can spend the time to put all the jigsaw pieces together to make you a better, safer rider.”

PHIL EDWARDS, NATIONAL BIKESAFE CO-ORDINATOR

To improve the classroom sessions, BikeSafe has an international award-winning DVD presentation that focuses on the collision causes that appear to be most problematic for motorcyclists. Through the use of modern 3D computer-generated imagery, people attending BikeSafe workshops are able to experience virtual collisions, using them as learning platforms to study the causes and explore how they might be avoided by good observation, thorough planning and a systematic approach to riding in the real world.

The majority of people who deliver BikeSafe are police motorcyclists who love biking and want to pass on their experience, although BikeSafe does have support from other suitably qualified volunteers.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT WWW.BIKESAFE.CO.UK**





GROUP RIDING

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

There's nothing quite like getting together with a group of friends and going on a ride through some country lanes. But, each year, many riders are killed or injured as a result of a group ride going wrong. Peer pressure and the desire to keep up with the pack can both play a part in raising the risk, and you should never allow the fun of riding with others to reduce your normal sense of caution. Good group riding is all about planning and communication, so by taking a few simple precautions and following a few rules you can make the run safer and more enjoyable.

PLAN YOUR RIDE

- Provide a map of the route with all the stopping places, including fuel stops.
- Exchange mobile phone numbers.
- Decide who leads, who backs up and who navigates.

ORGANISE A RUNNING ORDER

Playing 'follow the leader' can mean riders at the back trying to keep up, but methods do exist to improve group safety. Advanced riding groups tend to use a marking system, which allows overtaking without upsetting the group, with riders stopping at some junctions to mark the route for other riders. This method is effective but will need experienced riders. Advice on this system can be gained from advanced riding groups. Search on-line to find your local advanced riding group.

RIDE TO THE BIKE BEHIND

Crashes occur when riders try to keep up with those in front, by making rushed overtakes, crossing solid white lines, going too quickly into bends or even jumping red lights. Don't become impatient. Take your time. If you're ahead then try to keep the bike behind you in your mirrors all the time. That way progress can be made and you only need to slow down or stop if you can't see that bike for an extended period.