

Safety Article of the Month

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Long Distance Riding: Fatigue

Motorcycle riding is more physically demanding than driving an automobile. The abundance of fresh air and the rolling road can be so relaxing that it may induce sleepiness and a dangerously passive approach to operating a motorcycle. The following are suggestions on preventing and overcoming fatigue on motorcycle rides.

Riding Gear and Equipment

Extended exposure to wind and heat will accelerate dehydration and fatigue. Riding without proper gear may seem like the best way to deal with the heat, but will actually wear one out and heat one up quicker than when wearing a proper jacket. A full face helmet or an open face with face-shield / visor protects the face from the wind. This gives perspiration the chance to stay on your skin cooling it – where wind-flow is reduced but not eliminated. This will sharply reduce sunburn and wind-burn's fatiguing effects by covering the body. A windscreen on a motorcycle will also reduce and change the wind flow against the body.

Drugs

Alcohol is to be avoided when riding. Caffeine, in either coffee or cola, though briefly boosts alertness, are but temporary solutions and no substitute for adequate rest.

Rest

Adequate sleep can be a bit hard to come by before and during a multi-day ride. Best practice is to ramp up sleep hours the week before departure. Adding on a few extra hours of quality sleep will start one off stronger and more prepared for the ride. The first few nights on the journey may not provide quality nights' sleep- different surroundings, sore muscles and if camping, weather and conditions can interfere greatly. If over-tired, make the choice to take a day off just to rest, relax and catch up on pending sleep.

Diet and Physical Fitness

Being fit through diet and exercise also applies to fighting fatigue. Proper management will increase energy level providing more strength and alertness.

Hydration

Drinking adequate fluids is important too, especially considering that dehydration will happen more rapidly because of exposure to wind and heat.

Noise

Noise from exposure to wind at high speeds can not only increase fatigue but can permanently cause hearing damage. The best solution for noise are earplugs. These should be part of daily riding practice and an even greater asset for full day/long distance rides. Fatigue will be lessened, safeguarding long-term hearing, and will be appreciated when sleeping at night.

Vision

Vision clarity can be an issue on extended rides too. Significant distortion on a windscreen, visor, or even sunglasses can cause disorientation and even induce headaches. If vision has changed and the prescription is no longer adequate, a vision exam and corrective lenses should be obtained prior to the ride.

Preventing and overcoming fatigue on motorcycle rides provides benefits which go far beyond safety. Being alert and refreshed will ensure that the motorcycle journey is more enjoyable. One will get more out of the surroundings, sights and experiences ventured to explore!



Motorcycle Helmet.



Coffee Mug.



Rest Road Sign.



Motorcycle Earplugs.



Motorcycle Windscreen.