

Get your cornering right

# GOING ROUND the bend

Riding round a nice series of bends, and getting it right, is one of the best feelings you get on a motorcycle. Get the corners wrong, however, and you are in a world of trouble. We spoke to Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS) trainer Ian Burchell from Phoenix Motorcycle Training to find out how to get your cornering just right and enjoy the ride as much as possible.

That feeling of gliding through a set of bends, with the bike and rider in perfect harmony, is something that only bikers know. If you have experienced it, you know exactly what we are talking about. If you haven't got that elated feeling yet, here are some top tips for you, so you can join the club.

First a word of warning: As much fun as riding round corners can be, it is not without its dangers. If your speed is too high, your riding line not taking you where you want to be, your balance unsettled, or the bike not gripping to the road properly, you are in danger of getting the corner wrong, and that can have very serious consequences. The phrase, 'We should only travel at a speed such that we can stop safely on our side of the road within the distance we can see to be clear' applies on bends as well as everywhere else – perhaps even more so.

So, what should you do to make sure you ride through the bends with the biggest smile on your face? Well, we could fill the whole paper with detailed advice, but in a nutshell, this is what you should be concentrating on:

Firstly, you need to look and plan well ahead. This gives you more time to assess the bend and decide on the line you want to take through it. Also, it gives you time to adjust your speed and position to best suit the route ahead, and you don't end up panicking and making last-minute decisions. With good

planning, you will be ready for the corner, perfectly placed on the road, travelling at the optimum speed with your bike in the right gear, and all set for enjoying the ride. Planning ahead, looking in the distance, and observing your surroundings also help you identify any signs of potential hazards that might make you change your riding plan.

If you get some advanced rider training, you will cover some useful planning tools for cornering, such as vanishing points (or limit points as they are sometimes called), observational links, reading the road, and planning and anticipation in general.

Being able to control your bike through the corner is essential, and a good understanding of both the general physics of riding motorcycles as well as the particularities of your own bike (how it handles, does it have any corner-sensitive rider aids, etc.) are important to get the corner right. Use of controls, brakes, throttle and steering are all skills that will develop over time, and the more time you spend on honing your skills, the bigger the rewards.

There are lots of detailed aspects about cornering that we could spend time with, but one of the key ones is counter-steering. Understanding how counter-steering affects your machine is essential to cornering and will make your riding much smoother and more enjoyable. The short explanation is that you push the handlebars forward on the side that you want to turn to. It sounds weird, but if you have ever ridden

around a corner, you will have already done it without realising. It makes your bike lean into the corner and takes you on the right line. It's a technique that deserves its own article, so for now just trust us. It's physics. It works.

A good way to approach cornering is by using a safe system to negotiate bends. A system such as *IPSGA* (short for *Information, Position, Speed, Gear, Acceleration*). This is the system that police riders use to approach and negotiate hazards on the roads, and it can be applied to bends, too. The *Information* part of the system continues throughout the process with the rider taking, using and giving information about the riding situation before, during and after the bend. The other parts of the system are run in succession, starting with considering your *Position* on the road, the *Speed* you are travelling at, the *Gear* you are using, and finally *Acceleration* once you have dealt with the bend. All of these are done to put you in the right position, at the right speed, and in the right gear to best negotiate the bend, then accelerate out of it. *IPSGA* works great for corners, but also provides a system to deal with pretty much any hazard that you may face on your bike.

As always, the only way to get better at cornering is practice. Whether you do it on your own or join a training course such as the ERS, it's important to keep repeating the drills, and not get disheartened if you get it wrong – we all sometimes get it wrong. The key is to persist and always improve.

**ERS PART SEVEN**  
How to ride bends and corners



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#### How to get better quick?

Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to becoming an advanced rider; it will take time and practice. However, you can make the process much quicker and easier by signing up to do a training day like the one-day Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS) with a qualified and DVSA approved trainer.

#### Where to get the skills?

Phoenix Motorcycle Training is the UK's largest motorcycle training organisation, with ERS courses available at several locations. To find your nearest location, visit phoenixmotorcycltraining.co.uk or call 0330 223 4000.

