

Secret to success

Expert tips on what to do and what not to do when starting out in motorcycling

If you are about to enter the wonderful world of motorcycling, we salute you! You will soon discover that life on two wheels is packed full of joy and excitement – and we're sure you'll love it!

However, when you're new to it all, it can seem a bit confusing when you're not only learning how to ride, but also getting to grips with the rules of the road, riding kit, and everything that comes with motorcycling. There's loads of information to be found online, but there are conflicting accounts, plenty of opinions, and a lot of downright misinformation offered by people who don't really know what they're talking about. Everyone seems to be an online 'expert'...

So, to save you the trouble of trawling through the internet in search of the ultimate guide to how it all works, we talked to Mark Jaffe, the owner and chief instructor of Phoenix Motorcycle Training, the largest motorcycle training provider in the UK. Phoenix helps thousands of people to get on two wheels each year with CBT training, 'try rides', and full licence training. These guys have seen learners of all sorts, and they know just how to give everyone the best start in motorcycling, so we asked them to give us some pointers. Here are their most essential dos and don'ts for anyone about to get into biking.

Do this:

1. Do learn to ride a bicycle first

If you are comfortable riding a bicycle, you will already have a good understanding of how to control the bike, avoid skids, and get relaxed on it. All of that will help you do the same on a motorcycle.

2. Do read and understand the Highway Code

Knowing how to ride a bike is just a part of being able to safely negotiate your way through the urban jungle. It's important to know how to deal with various traffic situations, what the traffic signs mean, and so on. There's a lot to learn.

3. Do relax and look where you need to go

It's important to stay relaxed on the bike, and look in the direction you're headed to help your bike go that way. This is also why you should not fixate on something you want to ride away from, such as potholes.

4. Do wear appropriate clothing

You should wear good quality motorcycle kit on every ride because, in case of a fall, it will protect you better than regular clothing. Always consider proper protective motorcycle boots, gloves, trousers and a jacket as well as a helmet.

5. Do progress at your own rate

We all learn at different rates, so even if progress seems slow, don't try and rush it. A good instructor will make sure that you are learning at a pace that suits you. It's better to take your time and be prepared than to rush and get it wrong.

Don't do this:

1. Don't assume it's easy

Learning to ride a motorcycle is not as easy as it seems. To make it easier for yourself, find a reputable riding school (remember to check their reviews) when you start learning as they can assess your level and tailor the learning to your needs.

2. Don't expect to complete CBT in one day

Many people complete a CBT course in a day, but this is not by any means a given. To complete the course, you need to demonstrate that you are skilled and safe enough to ride on your own, and on some occasions it takes a little longer to achieve this.

3. Don't buy kit before trying it on

Having decent riding kit is important, but it's also important that it fits well, that you're comfortable in it, and that all the armour is in the right place. The best way to achieve this is to try it on before you buy it as sizes and shapes vary between manufacturers.

4. Don't get frustrated

Learning to ride can feel like a long process. And when you get your CBT or even your full licence, there is still plenty more to learn. The more you discover about biking, the more there is to learn.

5. Don't believe the misinformation

The internet is full of information about biking, but remember that not all of it is true, and that not everyone who expresses an opinion really knows their stuff. Your best bet is to get your training done at a reputable riding school, such as Phoenix (phoenixmotorcycletraining.co.uk), and listen to your instructor.



Phoenix Motorcycle Training is the UK's largest motorcycle training provider, with 25 local training centres. The company provides high-quality courses delivered by fully accredited instructors and designed to meet a range of customer needs, from complete beginners to experienced riders.

Tel: 0330 223 4000

Email: bookings@teachmetoride.co.uk

Web: phoenixmotorcycletraining.co.uk