

BMMC Rider Training

Twisties – A Ribbon Of Curvaceous Roads



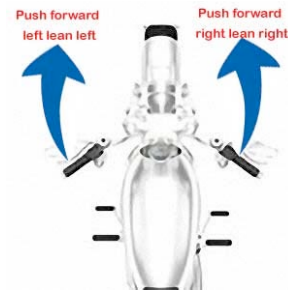
Riding a motorcycle through continually twisting roads is one of the greatest joys of motorcycling.

Unfortunately, many riders are intimidated by their motorcycles, feeling that they lack the skills needed to navigate a twisty road safely and efficiently. In worst-case scenarios, some riders approach turns unplanned, entering too fast and too soon and losing control. Learning how to properly ride through a turn can sometimes be difficult, but with practice, cornering in the "Twisties" will become second nature.

A. Some Basics:

1. Where you look is where you'll go.

- The bike will look after itself, and if you don't make any nasty changes, like stand it up or hit the brakes, there is every chance that the bike will go where you look.



2. Look as far through the turn as possible.

- The proper use of vision will slow down your perception of speed, allowing you to react quickly to obstacles ahead of you.

3. Taking a turn too fast is one of the biggest causes of motorcycle rider accidents.

- In tight turns, follow the mantra, "Slow in, fast out".

4. Do not overload your motorcycle's available traction by applying too many inputs at once.

BMMC Rider Training

- Separate braking, turning and accelerating to maximize the tire's traction and prevent a loss of control.

5. *Hold yourself on the motorcycle with your knees.*

- Keep your feet on the footpegs/floorboards.
- Does not apply to racers with knee pads.

6. *Lean angle is counteracted by centrifugal force (and vice versa).*

- The more you lean the faster you must be going.
- Too slow for the lean angle and you will "fall" into the turn.
- Too fast for the lean angle and you will straighten up the bike.



B. The How To's:

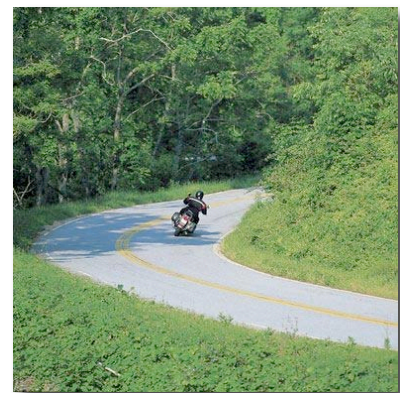
1. Look ahead of where you are going, scanning for obstacles along the road and looking for the "entrance" of the turn.
 - The entrance is the point at which you will begin to steer into the turn.
2. Position your bike to the outside for the turn (assume a two lane road).
 - This means if you are turning left, your bike should be 2-3 feet in from the right side of the lane.
 - When you want to turn right, the motorcycle should be 2-3 feet in from the centerline of the road.
3. Before entering the turn, set your body position on the motorcycle by shifting your weight into the direction of the turn.

BMMC Rider Training

- How far you shift your weight will depend mostly on your riding style and the type of motorcycle you ride, but be sure to move your weight past the center of your motorcycle.
- This will necessitate a small amount of counter-steering to keep the bike tracking straight.

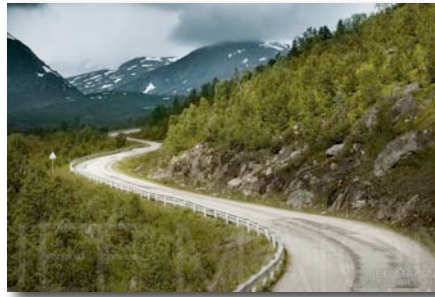


4. Shift into a lower gear to keep your motorcycle within its torque range, providing the maximum amount of usable power by raising the motor's RPMs.
5. As you approach the entrance, slow down to a good entry speed that will allow you to roll on the throttle as you prepare to navigate the curve and speed up later.
6. As you enter the turn, relax the counter-steer you were holding to track straight and allow the bike to lean into the turn (it will naturally lean into the side you have your weight shifted), then push on the hand grip on the inside of the turn until the motorcycle is tracking where you want it to.
7. As the curve tightens, you should be leaning more into it. Point your chin (your eyes will follow) in the direction you want the bike to go. At the same time you should be aware of oncoming traffic.
8. If you get into trouble and find yourself veering toward the shoulder, or the center stripe, increase your lean and roll on more throttle. Do not brake or try to straighten up the motorcycle.
9. When you can see the exit point, position your bike to aim for a straighter line instead of following the angle of the curve all the way through. The bike's track within your lane is more like outside, inside, outside again.
10. Do not use your brakes while in the turn as your motorcycle will bobble and could lose traction (possibly high-siding). Increasing the throttle here will keep your motorcycle stable and settle its suspension.



BMMC Rider Training

11. Accelerate after you have negotiated the tightest part of the curve (apex) and when you can see where the road straightens out. You should be moving away from the inside of the curve and more towards the inner lane as you accelerate. Acceleration will push your motorcycle up straight again as you prepare to ride on a straight line.



C. "Get Comfortable With Being A Little Bit Uncomfortable." *

1. Riding the twisties as fast as humanly possible is not the goal. Trying to stay up with more proficient riders is not the goal either, nor is not riding your own ride. What *is* the goal is for your learning curve and level of comfort to continually rise, although it's easier said than done. There *will* be times when you unintentionally exceed your comfort level.
2. If you're always in your comfort zone, though, when the time comes that you're edged out of it, you may not be able to deal with your fear. If that happens (maybe entering a curve a little faster than you should or have an approaching car appear slightly over the center line) and it gives you a "hot flash" by exceeding the comfort limit than you're accustomed to, then you're much better prepared to handle it without panicking.

It won't happen overnight, but it will happen. The more you practice the better you get, and the more fun you'll have.

Hope this helps.

* Lee Parks from his book, "Total Control".