



Dr. Ray's Seasoned Rider eCourse

Week 3: Ride Preparation

Lesson 1 - Before you ride

If you do not yet own a motorcycle, there are special considerations for selecting a motorcycle to take your age and physical condition into account. If you are an older individual who already rides, there are special considerations for preparing for the ride. Although these practices may be appropriate for riders of any age, they are particularly valuable for riders who are reaching their more mature years.

Motorcycle Choice

- Choose a motorcycle with large dials and easy-to-read symbols. Brightly illuminated gauges may be helpful for riding at night.
- Choose a motorcycle that fits well and doesn't cause muscles to strain because of an unusual seating position or because the controls are difficult to operate. How a motorcycle fits its rider may affect overall handling and performance at both low speeds and at higher speeds.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations in the owner's manual. Good maintenance will keep your motorcycle operating like new.
- Customize your motorcycle for your personal safety needs. Extra lights, larger mirrors, lower seats, and other modifications may enhance your comfort, control, and view of the road. Ensure that any modifications do not create any unsafe conditions; consult with your dealership if you have any concerns.

Personal Responsibility

- Wear protective gear. The muscles and bones are more prone to injury and the time for healing is often extended for an older person. Using extra body armor may help mitigate injury should a fall occur.
- Novices of any age should take a Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic *RiderCourse*. If you already have some time in the saddle you can renew your riding skills periodically by completing a Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic *RiderCourse 2*, *Advanced RiderCourse*, *Street RiderCourse*, or *Ultimate Bike-Bonding RiderCourse*. These partial-day courses are always fun and help keep riding skills fresh, and you take them on your own motorcycle under the helpful eyes of an MSF-certified RiderCoach.
- Separate alcohol and other impairing substances and conditions from riding. Over-the-counter and prescription medications could cause impairment. And don't forget the possibility of synergistic impairment that occurs when drugs are used in combination.
- Renew your car driving skills periodically. Enroll in the AARP Driver Safety Program. (AARP is the American Association of Retired Persons.) It is the nation's first and largest classroom driver improvement course specially designed for motorists age 50 and older. (It is eight hours in length and costs \$10. Insurance discounts may apply. Take the quiz on the AARP website at www.aarp.org under the topic of "Driver Safety.") Also, AAA offers a course for older drivers called "Safe Driving for Mature Operators" (contact your local AAA branch for details) and the National Safety Council has a course titled "Coaching the Mature Driver" (call 800-621-7619 for information).



Dr. Ray's Seasoned Rider eCourse

Physical Health and Fitness

- Have annual eye checkups. This is a good recommendation for anyone over the age of 35.
- If 60 or older, be sure your eye doctor checks annually for cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and other conditions associated with aging.
- Have annual medical checkups. Being physically fit and in good health helps ensure the safest, most enjoyable ride possible.
- Keep an exercise regimen to enhance flexibility, strength and endurance. Fitness is important at any age. Maintain good muscle tone and flexibility to improve the enjoyment of motorcycling.
- Ask a significant other if they notice changes that might affect safety on a motorcycle. Motorcycle operation is a complicated perceptual-motor skill, meaning it is a skill of the eyes and mind as well as the hands and feet. Identifying deterioration or weaknesses in other areas of normal living that require perceptual-motor skill, whether in the workshop, in the yard, or in the kitchen, should be used as clues that operating a motorcycle safely could also be affected.
- If/when the time comes to retire from a large, two-wheel motorcycle, consider a smaller motorcycle, scooter, or three-wheel motorcycle.

Please watch Video 3, “Before the ride”