

RIDER'S GUIDE TO RAIN AND WET WEATHER RIDING



No matter how prepared you are or how much you try to avoid riding in it, in the end: Rain happens. You need not fear it, or run for cover at the first sight of little dark clouds. But you should respect how rain changes the game and adjust your riding accordingly. While it's no fun riding through the wet sometimes you just get stuck in it. The best thing to do is slow down, pay attention and be safe. Any time you find yourself riding in questionable road conditions, the first thing you can do to improve your chances of arriving to your destination safely is to slow down and create more cushion between you and any surrounding vehicles or obstacles. Riding fundamentals really come into play during challenging riding conditions, as rain riding tends to amplify any mistakes. Stay calm, be alert and try to look as far ahead as possible.



BRAKING TIPS

When braking in wet conditions, use both brakes but apply lighter pressure to the front brake than you normally would in the dry. Ease into it, slowing down without being abrupt is important in the dry but critical in the wet. When wheels and roads get wet and scary it's easier to lock up the wheel if you aren't making a conscious effort to be smooth. If you grab a handful of front brake when the street is slick it almost always leads to you and your bike going down.

CORNERING

Give yourself more distance to slow down, apply your brakes well before entering corners and turn-in more slowly and deliberately. This is not the time for aggressive riding. This isn't to say you should creep along so slow you can barely keep the bike vertical and cause car traffic to run up behind you, but when traction goes liquid, caution should be your first concern.

TIRES

Any time we talk about cornering we have to discuss tires. Motorcycle tires are often a forgotten part of any bike. Since your safety depends on them, it's a good habit to check your tires frequently for wear, proper inflation and any defects or damage. A tire in proper riding condition will help you survive the ride when the elements are against you. For those of us who like big, fat rear tires, remember the broader the contact patch increases your chance to hydroplane. Knuckles go white when water floats your rubber and you feel your front end getting lighter and harder to steer while rear-end fishtails. If this happens, try not to brake or make any dramatic changes, but you should back off the throttle a little and ride it out.