

# CORNERS

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Most riders don't have much experience of cornering when they first start riding. Open road speeds tend to be higher, so you'll come up to corners faster than you will in built up areas. Even seasoned riders can benefit from a few pointers in this regard.

Firstly, know your own limits and the limits of your bike. Remember and appreciate that everyone is different and should be riding according to their capabilities not yours. The road is not a racetrack and it's not a competition to see who can get there the fastest!

In New Zealand a high proportion of motorcycle accidents are caused by riders losing control of their motorcycle on the open road in situations with no other vehicle involved. This tells us there is a real need for many riders to improve their motorcycle control skills and particularly their cornering skills.

Remember your bike is most stable when travelling upright, in a straight line at a constant speed. Your corner 'set up' - decelerating, braking or gear shifting should be done long before the corner, whilst the bike is still upright.

Braking or accelerating through a corner reduces tyre grip, which makes the bike want to go straight ahead or drift wide on the exit of the corner. Loss of front tyre grip on a corner nearly always leads to a crash.

When approaching a corner, think about your positioning on the road, your speed, your gear, the traffic on the road in all directions, corner visibility and potential hazards. You need to turn your head and look towards the vanishing point of the corner. This is an optical illusion that is created when you look around the corner and it's the point where both edges of the road appear to come

together - i.e. as far around a corner as you can possibly see.

You can often gauge the severity of a corner in advance by looking at tree lines, the position of power poles, fences and hedges that follow the corner, roadside marker pegs or the speed and position of vehicles in front of you.

Road speed signs are a good indicator of how fast you can travel around a corner, and a good rule of thumb is to use these signs to determine what gear you should be in for a corner i.e. 65kmh = change down one gear, 50kmh = change down two gears, 30kmh = change down three gears. Try this out for yourself until you know what is right for you.

As you ride around a corner maintain a constant speed that is slow enough to be able to stop quickly if you have to and will keep

the bike stable and give you better control of it. Accelerate out of the corner if you can see the exit and it is safe to do so.

Remember that there may be speeding vehicles coming around the corner from the opposite direction that you may not see until you're in there.

When following drivers/riders into a corner, keep a healthy distance behind them in case they panic mid corner and brake hard, forcing you to react. Don't assume that anyone else knows how to take a corner safely.

Keep an eye on the road to check for hazards around the corner that would cause you to make an unsafe correction at a critical point.

Also avoid fixating on stationary objects such as poles or road signs, because you will steer the bike where you are looking...

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