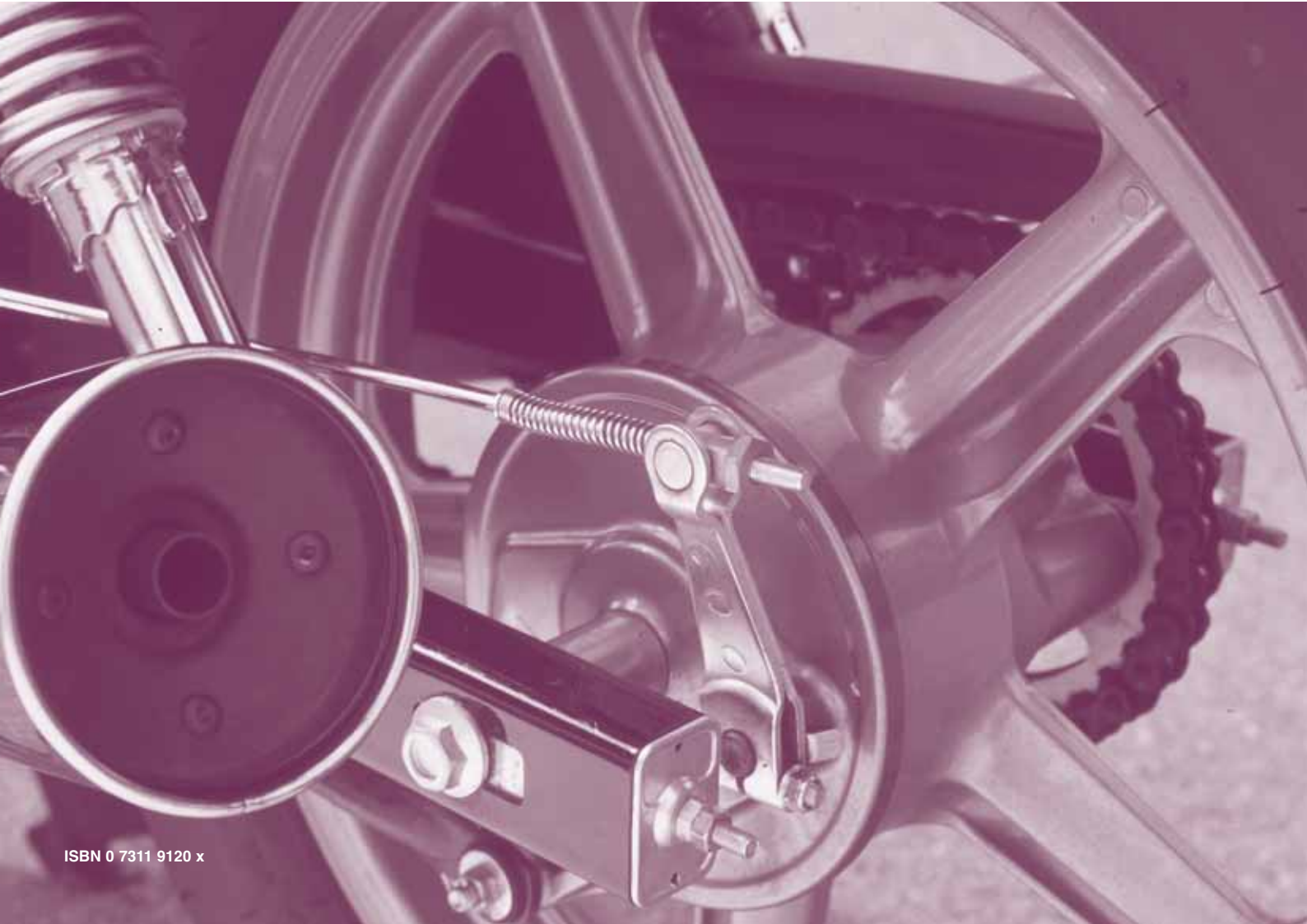


arrive  
alive!

vic roads

# Discover Safe Riding





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Discover Safe Riding

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VicRoads does not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred as a result of using the information contained in this manual. This manual is intended as a guide only. Any riders using this manual must exercise discretion and caution before undertaking any of the Practice Tasks. For professional motorcycle rider training you should contact an accredited training provider. Please refer to the Safety Guidelines commencing on page 9 before you try any of the Practice Tasks.



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# INTRODUCTION

## GETTING STARTED

If you're a new rider – or recently returned to two wheels – this is the practice guide for you.

It's aimed at people who are working towards their licence, returning to riding after a break or who want to improve their skills.

You won't find information here about how to ride (you'll need to consult an instructor for that), but you will find lots of information about how to practise effectively.

The aim is to help you practise the techniques that you were initially shown at your training courses. Practising the right way will make you safer on the roads, help reduce your risk of injury and make riding much more enjoyable.



# INTRODUCTION

This manual is divided into two main sections:

## 1. Checking Your Level

Questions and answers to help you work out exactly what stage of practice you're up to and identify the things you need to concentrate on in your practice sessions, start on p15.

## 2. Learning Stages and Practice Tasks

Learning to ride safely is a four stage process. The **Learning Stages** detail each step and contain relevant tips. These start on p36. Each stage is followed by a series of **Practice Tasks** designed to help you move from one **Learning Stage** to the next. They'll give you something to try the next time you ride and make you think about what you are doing, as well as help shape the muscles you'll need on the road.

There are no rules to follow when it comes to working through this manual.

Start at the beginning by '**Checking Your Level**' to work out where you need to spend more time and which **Practice Tasks** you should be working on, or go straight to the **Learning Stages** to find out if you know enough about how to practise for the level you're at now.

Any word highlighted in **blue** throughout the manual is defined in the Definition of Terms starting on p106. Don't forget to check out the Safety Guidelines on p9 before getting on your bike.



## Summary of the Learning Stages

1. Learning the basics	2. Coping with cars and corners	3. Handling the wide open road	4. Continuing to improve
Learner (3-12 months)	Probationary/Restricted (1-3 years)		Full licence

You can tackle the learning process step by step or select tasks at random. Find a [Practice Task](#) to try, practise it, master it, then find something else to try next time.

How ever you choose to work through the manual, each time you come back to it, you'll discover more helpful ideas and techniques. There's also handy information, such as where to find a training provider; look on p110.



# SAFETY GUIDELINES

**If you have any concerns regarding the safe condition, specification or operation of the motorcycle, you should consult the owner's manual or seek advice from a qualified motorcycle mechanic.**

# SAFETY GUIDELINES

## Before Riding

- Conduct a safety check of the motorcycle which includes:
  - Brakes – are they in good operating order?
  - Clutch and throttle – do they operate freely and smoothly?
  - Horn - is it working?
  - Lights and indicators - do they work?
  - Tyres – do they have tread depth of at least 2mm and contain the manufacturer's stated air pressures?
  - Mirrors - are they adjusted properly once the rider is seated in the normal riding position?
  - General wear and tear – on footpegs, panniers and accessories
- Make sure your helmet is in good condition and your visor or goggles are free from scratches.
- Safety check of self - don't ride if your mood or attitude will affect your safety.

## Legal Requirements

- Riders must be familiar with, and at all times obey, the road rules and traffic controls including any rules or directions that apply in car parks and other [road-related areas](#).
- Novice or inexperienced riders must hold a current motorcycle learner permit or licence. Coaches/helpers must hold a current motorcycle licence.
- Never ride a motorcycle whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Motorcycle learner permit holders and newly licensed motorcyclists must have a zero blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Full licence holders must be below .05 BAC.
- Do not trespass on private land.
- Riders and passengers must wear helmets that meet Australian Standard AS1698, both on the road and [road-related areas](#).
- All motorcycles used must be registered and roadworthy whilst operating on both the road and [road-related areas](#).

## Using Coaches or Helpers

- Coaches/helpers must be familiar with, and capable of demonstrating, the exercises in this practice manual to a high and consistent standard.
- Coaches/helpers should have at least three years continuous riding experience.
- Coaches/helpers should be aware that novice riders tire quickly, often without realising. They should consult regularly with each other to ascertain fatigue levels and take regular breaks.
- Coaches/helpers should set a positive example, especially in relation to wearing protective gear and following road rules.
- Refer to *The 'Mates' Riding Scheme* for more information.

## Adverse Conditions

- In hot weather it is important to take regular breaks and drink plenty of water.

- Cold climate can bring on early 'fatigue' symptoms, so maintaining your body temperature is important.
- Other conditions like rain, fog, sleet, snow and ice will always pose a problem for any rider. Appropriate clothing will need to be worn for these conditions - and be aware of the increased demand placed on a rider when it comes to coping with slippery road surfaces.
- Riding at night, make sure you can see, and be seen.

## Pillions

- Riders should not carry pillion passengers unless they are up to Learning Stage 4 with respect to their skill level.
- You must have an 'unrestricted' motorcycle licence.

## Common Sense and Common Courtesy

- When riding with a coach/helper, all riders must be aware of other riders' safety and the safety of pedestrians (particularly in car parks or similar road-related areas) and all other road users.

- Riders should be aware of surrounding properties and keep noise to a minimum.
- Riders should always wear proper motorcycle specific protective clothing suitable for the conditions.

## Maintenance

- Before you ride, and on a weekly basis, make sure your bike is in good working order by inspecting it carefully. Check:
  - Tyres - if the amount and kind of wear is uneven, you will need to replace the tyre. Many punctures are caused by worn tread, low pressure, cuts and scrapes, so look for these regularly.
  - Wheels - are there any missing or loose spokes? Are the rims cracked or dented? Lift the wheel off the ground and spin it to see if it spins straight and listen for any noises. Also move it from side to side to make sure it's not loose.
- Controls - make sure they are operating smoothly and check cables for smooth operation and any visible broken strands or kinks.
- Chain and sprockets - keep an eye out for wear and make sure you check the tension of the chain and adjust and lubricate it regularly.
- Shock absorbers - make sure they are set according to your owner's manual.
- Fastenings - are there any loose or missing bolts, nuts or split pins? It's easier to check if the bike is clean.
- Brakes - adjust and maintain your brakes as directed by your owner's manual.
- Spring pre-load tension and rebound tension – if in any doubt, check with a motorcycle dealer or service mechanic.









# CHECKING YOUR LEVEL

No matter what Learning Stage you're at, this section will help you find out how much of the important stuff you already know, and give you the answers to the things you need to know. The Learning Stages and Practice Tasks section will show you what to learn, while this section will show you how you can learn.

## CHECKING YOUR LEVEL

There are ten questions about essential knowledge in the side box. Ask yourself each question and if you're not too sure of the answer, go to the page number indicated to fill your knowledge gap.

This manual is a goldmine of information but you don't have to read it all at once. Even tackling one question at a time and using the feedback to shape your practice sessions will make a big difference.

These questions will be raised again throughout the [Learning Stages](#) and [Practice Tasks](#).

Ten questions to check how you're going with essential riding and survival skills

### Do you:

1. know how to practise to become a better rider?  
See p17
2. know how you learn best?  
See p18
3. know that nerves can be good and bad for riding?  
See p21
4. know how to check to see how you're going?  
See p22
5. know when you're going too fast?  
See p24
6. know a good way to learn bike control skills?  
See p25
7. know why it is so important to get the basics right?  
See p27
8. know the common mistakes people make when they practise?  
See p28
9. know that practice might increase your chances of crashing?  
See p30
10. know how to benefit from other riders' experience?  
See p32

# 1. Learning to become a better rider

Say this: 'I'm going out to practise riding'. Now say this: 'I'm going for a ride'. Do you see the difference? If you are going out to practise, you are getting on your bike for the special purpose of learning. Your mind is thinking about learning.

Practice is different from just going for a ride. In clever practice, you think about what you are going to practise, how many parts there are to it, where you will find a suitable place to practise, how far you should ride to get there, how much time you should spend, whether you should go with another rider, and how you're going to know when you're doing OK. You need to think about all of these things to get the most out of your practice. Plan your practice and make it purposeful.

Try to complete these statements about your next practice session. If you have trouble doing them, read or re-read the [Learning Stages](#) starting on p36 first.

- For my stage of learning I think I should now practise...
- This skill is made of the following parts...
- The best place for me to practise this is...
- I will practise this for about this long...
- I'll have a break when...
- I'll know I'm doing OK when...

**“When I practise, I always have a specific purpose in mind.”**

## 2. Recognising how you learn best

Knowing how you learn best, and recognising that there are other learning techniques that you could try, is useful.

Check out the statements below about learning riding - each one matches a different learning style. Find the ones that sound most like you and read the tips to help guide your practice. Even the tips that don't match your style could be worth giving a go.

Does this sound like you?

“If I knew more about the theory of motorcycle riding I'd feel better. I like to read up on whatever I'm learning.”

Tips to guide your practice:

If you like to read up on things, do ... but be wary of misinformation. Check information with someone in the training industry. If an article suggests you practise a particular technique, make sure this manual recommends it.

You should see common themes in your reading: protective clothing, **time and space**, head and eyes up, push the handlebars in the direction you want to go, **corner under throttle**, etc. The **Practice Tasks** will help you turn this theory into practice and the **Learning Stages** will help you work out whether you're ready to practise a particular skill at your current level.

### Does this sound like you?

“I’ll need to spend as much time thinking about my riding as doing it. I’ll practise a skill only when I’ve really thought it through.”

### Tips to guide your practice:

Thinking about riding is useful. It can help you rehearse actions in your mind before you try them, be better prepared for what might happen, and solve problems.

Skills require a little bit of knowledge to start with, but after that you have to program yourself to do things automatically. If you use the [Learning Stages](#) and [Practice Tasks](#) as recommended, you’ll enjoy becoming a safer rider.

### Does this sound like you?

“I don’t want to read about it. I just want to get out and ride. Just tell me what I have to do.”

### Tips to guide your practice:

Sometimes it’s OK to skip the detail and just do it. In fact, a lot of the theory behind riding is not essential knowledge, but taking the time to get out and ride purposefully might be useful. Your riding will improve by doing clever practice, not just getting lots of experience. If you are going to get out and do it, make sure you do it right. The [Learning Stages](#) will tell you how and the [Practice Tasks](#) will give you something to try while you’re out there.

Does this sound like you?

“I like to push myself a bit, find my weaknesses and work on them. If I follow another rider and see them do it, I know I should be able to do it too.”

Tips to guide your practice:

This is normal for many riders. Safe riding has a lot to do with confidence and knowing where your limits are. If you have a good idea of what a bike can do, you will ride well without stress. You might learn to do useful things such as tight U-turns. Always remember that bikes have only two wheels and crash when they exceed their limits. Just because another rider makes something look easy doesn't mean you should try it. Use the [Learning Stages](#) and the [Practice Tasks](#) to guide you safely towards the limits.

Does this sound like you?

“I think I'd do better if I could have someone show me. I'd like to see what it's like from the pillion seat.”

Tips to guide your practice:

This is very normal for learner riders. It can be tough finding another rider to help, and when you do they might not be the best person to help you learn. They might understand the right technique but not know how to communicate it. Consider booking in for some extra training. Most trainers offer one-on-one coaching. You could also try asking other riders - many will be keen to share their experiences and this could lead you to someone who can help you.

**“When I practise, I try to use my preferred learning style.”**



### 3. Nerves can be good and bad for riding

Do you remember when you first put your leg over a bike, started it and revved the engine?

You probably felt a bit of nervous excitement. That was good because it focused your attention and helped your performance. That feeling can also remind you to be careful. The type of nervousness you feel will change as you move through different riding and learning situations. If you did all right that first time, you probably learned that a tingle of fear can make riding fun. You need to learn how to protect yourself on a bike. Your understanding of the risks and challenges of riding will grow. When you practise riding, you have to manage the fear, fun, fright part of it.

Run a regular check on your feelings:

1. Fear is all right when it's keeping you safe, but not when it's so strong that you cannot ride well. If you feel really nervous, change what you are doing.
2. Recognise when the tingle of fear is turning into the buzz of fun. Fun can cause you to drop your guard and start pushing yourself. When you're having fun and it's tinged with fear, be ready for a fright - you're at your limit.

**“When I practise, I watch how feelings are affecting my riding.”**

## 4. Recognising how you are going

Riders who get good feedback on how their riding is going, improve more quickly than those who don't.

Feedback can take many forms. For example, let's say you're practising firm braking as explained on p72. As you brake, the rear tyre *skids*. You hear a squealing sound and the bike wobbles. The squeal and wobble are feedback from the bike, telling you that you haven't used the brake properly. The bike should have stopped quickly, smoothly and remained stable.

If you pay attention to feedback, you'll benefit more from practice and won't learn bad habits or get frustrated. With good feedback you might only need to practise a skill two or three times before getting the hang of it.

Good feedback is:

- Accurate. It provides a clear, honest picture of what happened, compared to what should have happened.
- Specific, not general. It concentrates on the important small parts of what went wrong, not the general problem.
- Immediate.
- Motivating. It has an achievable solution that guides you to better riding.

You can get feedback from the bike, other people, and yourself.

Feedback from the bike

If you ride a bike properly, the feedback will tell you that you're doing OK. A motorcycle should move, lean and stop without much effort. If you are fighting it, this is feedback that your technique isn't right.

## Feedback from others

Other people are a good source of feedback. You need specifics about how you ride and information you can use to improve. Refer to an accredited training provider for good advice.

## Feedback from yourself

Most of the time you're practising, you'll be the only one there to give feedback. This will be hard, particularly at first, because most of your efforts will be going into working out how to ride. Initially, you won't have the attention to see and remember your mistakes, but as soon as you do, start giving yourself feedback.

## What to do with feedback

After doing something that didn't seem right, have another go, but think about feedback or you will probably make the same mistake again. Try saying 'This is what I did..., this is what I should have done..., next time I will work on this small part...'.  
  
**"When I practise, I look for feedback and use it to plan what to do in future."**

## 5. Recognising when you're going too fast

Going too fast as a beginning rider is not the same as speeding. Depending on what **Learning Stage** you're at, even 10 km/h can be too fast! You're riding too fast when your brain can't work out what's happening and can't tell your body what to do with the bike.

As you move through the **Learning Stages**, riding will become easier. But, regardless of your experience or ability, you will probably find yourself in situations where you can't think quickly enough. One way to minimise this is to look well ahead and keep a survival space in front of you and to the sides. There are **Practice Tasks** to help you with this, especially in **Learning Stage 2**.

Even so, you could find yourself going too fast for your brain. You need to develop an internal alarm system - something that says 'Run a check, you might be going too fast'.

Practise running a mental check on your head, eyes, and arms. When competent riders are riding within their limits, they'll be looking well ahead (at least five seconds, and often 15 or more). Their head will be directed to where they want to go (in a curve or a turn, they look ahead to the exit), and their arms will be fairly relaxed (which means the rest of the upper body is also reasonably relaxed).

**“When I practise, I check my personal alarm system: head, eyes, and arms.”**

## 6. Learning bike control skills

Think back to your learner permit rider training. Look at what participants were able to do in just a few hours. Even people who had never ridden before could get on a bike, start it and ride in a straight line. People are expected to be able to demonstrate many skills by the time they finish the course because it's designed to be very efficient. You can apply the approach they use to your own practice. Think about everything you do as a combination of many small chunks.

### Chunks in training

Your instructor probably first showed you what a good riding position looked like and then went through the bits that combine to produce it: feet, knees, backside, back, arms, hands, head, and eyes. The instructor probably even broke these middle size chunks down into smaller chunks. For example, feet placed with arches on the pegs, pointing slightly down and out, where they can move to use

the gear lever and foot brake. You might have been taught key words, such as 'eyes up' or 'elbows relaxed', to remind you to do the steps. You had a go at doing each chunk and then put them all together. You then got feedback on how you were going (for more information on feedback, go to "Recognising how you are going" on p22).

By the end of your training, you were able to do much more than when you started - but you had not learned to ride. You now need to practise until you can perform a skill without having to think about it - that's when you have learnt it.

Recognising the chunks will help you learn and perform each task. When you are having trouble with something it will usually be because the chunks aren't right. Fix the chunks and you'll improve because you won't be practising mistakes!



## Want to try something?

Think of a riding skill that you are having trouble with. Write down the main steps needed to perform that skill. You'll probably get about four or five main parts. Then break each of the parts down into even smaller chunks. If you have trouble doing this, get some help before you practise the skill - it's no use practising if you don't know the steps that you should be using. If you do know them, work out which ones are most likely to be causing the problem. Go for a ride and work on these.

**“When I practise, I break tasks down into smaller chunks.”**

## 7. Getting the basics right

You're approaching a green light at about 60 km/h. The lights have been green for a while, but not too long. You are relaxed. Riding's good. But, in two seconds a car is going to run a red light and cross your path. Could you ever face such a scenario? It is highly possible, and if you do, which of the following two conditions would you like to be in?

**Condition one** - your hand is on the throttle and your eyes looking ahead;

**OR**

**Condition two** - you are rolling off the throttle, setting up the brakes and scanning on your left and right (even though you're not concentrating).

You suddenly see the car, but it takes about a second for your brain to register the unexpected! That's at least 17 metres gone. Your hand and foot dive for the brakes and another half second vanishes. You now have about eight metres to stop.

Condition two is better, with a chance that you will be able to react and stop in time. Now's the time to decide to be a condition two type of rider. You have a once-only opportunity to program in basic survival riding skills so they become second nature.

Practise the basics properly and your body will learn to protect itself even if your brain forgets to be careful. You got information on the basics during your training – things like **head checks**, looking ahead, **setting up the brakes**, and slowing down and moving away from threats. You have to really concentrate on practising the basics properly. Sometimes you might think you've got it, but when you check yourself you might not be there yet. It takes thousands of repetitions to make a skill a habit.

If you get the basics right, you might be a condition two rider.

Don't short-change yourself when it comes to mastering the basics. There's a lot riding on them.

**“When I practise, I pay close attention to the basics.”**



## 8. Common mistakes when practising

The traffic lights have turned green. You **wind the throttle on** and **feed out the clutch** but the bike shudders and shakes. Something's wrong!

You've **stalled** the engine and you're stuck in the middle of an intersection. You feel nervous. Your mind is racing. Your view of the world extends to just beyond your visor as you piece together your mistake. You eventually work out that you were in second gear when you let the clutch out.

This is actually a common mistake for new riders. They change down too few gears when they stop and end up being in second. One way around this is to practise tapping the gear lever twice when you get to first gear. Little mistakes can have a big impact on your riding, but if you know about them beforehand there will be fewer hiccups when you practise.

Here are some common mistakes that instructors say new riders make:

- They confuse practice with experience. They think that if they do lots of riding they are getting lots of good practice. You don't get good at something by just doing lots of it. You must pay attention to the details and make sure you get the techniques right first. Then you can go riding for enjoyment.
- They stop practising and go riding before they can do the basic things without thinking about them. If you have to think about a skill as you do it you haven't completely learnt it.
- They start using a skill for the first time when they need that skill rather than practising the skill for when they need it.
- I say to them, what are you going to practise? They say, I don't know, riding I guess. They don't have a plan.
- I used to tell people they were doing a great job and riding well, then they'd stuff something up. What I said went to their head. When they think they're doing great, they're in trouble.'

- Stiff, too stiff. If you can get them breathing and relaxing their upper body they do much better.
- They try to do too much all at once. For example, they buy a bike for the first time and try to use it as personal transport straight away.
- They're afraid of using the front brake to stop the bike, but when they get a fright they grab a handful of it, or just freeze on the throttle.
- Learners (and some scooter riders especially) think they are going to hold up the traffic so they stick to the left and end up having cars drive around them when it's not safe. They should stick to the normal riding position or pull over if they are worried. Better still they should practise away from traffic until they are ready to start using the correct lane positions in traffic.
- Learners often forget to turn their indicators off after they have turned. It's the same old thing – they don't practise little things like using the indicators because it seems so simple.

## Want to try something?

Choose a common mistake from the list above that applies to you. Think through what you have to do to avoid that mistake and then go for a practice ride with those thoughts in mind. If none of the mistakes apply to you, think of a mistake you do make. Think through the small steps for the skill you get wrong.

**“When I practise, I review my mistakes, looking for the steps I need to fix them.”**

## 9. Practice may increase crash risk

Generally, the more you practise, the better you get. But you might not become a safer rider. When people start to think they are getting more skilled, it can cause them to forget to be careful. One reason why people forget to be careful is that disasters are often rare; mistakes have to combine with other conditions before a disaster happens. For most risky activities, the mistakes that contribute to disasters are often simple. As the tingle of fear turns into the buzz of fun you can forget the little things. That's why programming in the basics is so important (see "Getting the basics right" on p27) and why you need to manage the fun factor (see "Nerves can be good and bad for riding" on p21).

There are other reasons why practice can be hazardous:

### A problem

Practising can use up thinking power. You need to be able to think clearly to recognise danger.

### A solution

If you have to think hard to operate the bike, choose a place where it's easy to practise.

### A problem

Practice can take you closer to your limits.

### A solution

Explore the limits of yourself and your bike gradually.

For example, if you are practising tight turns, don't try a really tight one first.

### A problem

Practice has you riding more. The more kilometres you ride, the more risks you are exposed to.

### A solution

Minimise riding in risky situations: night, poor light, bad weather, peak traffic, and tricky roads. Get gradual and specific riding practice before you ride longer distances or in these conditions.

### A problem

Practice can reinforce bad habits. Bad habits are hard to change.

### A solution

As you practise, keep checking that you are still getting the basics right. Do not ignore the **Protect** tasks in each of the Practice Tasks.

### A problem

Practising emergency skills can trick you into thinking that you can control an emergency better than you actually can.

### A solution

Give yourself **time and space** to avoid threats to your safety. If you're not, you are being tricked by your experience.

### A problem

Practice can find you riding with others. This might cause you to try keeping up with, or staying in front of, the group.

### A solution

Manage the fun factor (read “Nerves can be good and bad for riding” on p21) and benefit from other riders’ experience (see “Other riders’ experience” on p32).

**“When I practise, I can see how it is making me a safer rider.”**

## 10. Other riders' experiences

Some people make riding look easy. While good riding is part art and part science, most of it can be chunked down (see "Learning bike control skills" on p25) and learnt through training, practice and experience.

When you see other riders who ride well, chances are they have ridden tens of thousands of kilometres. These riders can help you. Just watching how they use the controls, position their head, direct their eyes, and position their body on the bike and the bike on the road is useful. To practise the right technique you need an accurate mental picture of what correct performance looks like.

Be aware that good riders often need help to communicate their technique. Ask them to describe what they are doing and why they are doing it that way. They can show you what they do by letting you ride with them, either following on your own bike or riding pillion.

If you can ride with another rider, he or she can help guide and protect you. Here are some tips you can give an experienced rider so that you get the help you need:

- Don't go too fast or get too far ahead. I need to keep a safe distance behind you, but I need to see what you're doing.
- Give signals - early.
- If we get separated, pull over and wait for me.
- Keep an eye out for me in the mirrors.
- If I forget to turn my indicators off, put your left hand out and signal by opening and closing your fingers.
- If we are on a section of road I know, change positions and watch me from behind. When we stop you can let me know how I'm going.
- Let's not go too far before we have a break.
- Is there anything I need to be careful about on this road? For example, I am not ready yet for merging lanes. Perhaps we can avoid them.

Want to try something?

Travel to a popular motorcycle location and observe other riders. Look for good and bad technique. If you are unsure, ask someone who you think is a good, safe rider to help you. This might give you a better idea of whether they are a knowledgeable rider.

**“When I practise with a helper, I give them tips on how they can assist me.”**

TIP

***The ‘Mates’ Riding Scheme* booklet provides good advice on tips and techniques for coaches/helpers to communicate their knowledge to novices.**





# THE LEARNING STAGES AND PRACTICE TASKS



# THE LEARNING STAGES

All experienced riders were once beginners. It can be a long, hard road and the only way to become safe and confident is to move through the four [Learning Stages](#). To begin with it's important that you recognise what stage you are at. Then you can make sure the type of practice you do is the most appropriate.

As your skills and confidence improve, you'll find that you are able to move step-by-step through the [Learning Stages](#), matching your skills to what you practise, as well as getting a better understanding of the difference between how well you think you ride and how well you actually ride.

By moving through the [Learning Stages](#) and the corresponding [Practice Tasks](#) for each stage, you will:

- Develop a good riding technique - the wrong practice can develop bad habits.
- Have more fun - it will definitely be less stressful.
- Build your confidence - a little confidence is a good thing as it gives you time to think and plan each manoeuvre.
- Practise the tasks most appropriate for the stage that you're up to.
- Be less likely to crash.

## How to use the Learning Stages

Read the ‘Summary of the [Learning Stages](#)’ on the next page. To work out which stage you’re at, tick the statements that sound most like you and go to the page for that stage. If you hover between two, go to the earlier stage. You’ll find lots of information on learning safe riding specifically for your level. When you’re ready, check out the [Practice Tasks](#) listed at the end of each stage to get you moving – safely. Then get out there and practise, practise, practise. The ‘Test Yourself’ questions at the end of each [Learning Stage](#) will help you decide when you’re ready to move on.

## Why cars, corners and conditions?

You’ll notice that the [Learning Stages](#) focus on cars, corners and tricky riding conditions. That’s because these situations are involved in most motorcycle crashes, so it’s important to practise dealing with them now to cut your risk of crashing later. The 2004 crash statistics show some of the dangers that could lie ahead - if you don’t get enough planned practice:

- About half of all motorcycle crashes involve other vehicles.
- Over one third of all motorcycle crashes happen at intersections.
- 20% of all motorcycle crashes happen where riders have lost control on bends.
- About 15% of all motorcycle crashes happen in wet conditions.

## Summary of the Learning Stages

### Stage 1

Learning the basics

#### Does this sound like you?

I'm still having to think hard just to operate and control the bike. If I mixed with cars and corners now, I'd run out of thinking power.

I know what I should be doing but it only happens if I really think about it.

If you ticked either of the statements above, then you probably need a bit of help to master what you learnt on the motorcycle learner permit course.

Go to p44.

### Stage 2

Coping with cars and corners

#### Does this sound like you?

I'm regaining thinking power. Operating and controlling the bike happens without me thinking too much about it.

I'm working out how to give myself enough **time and space** to mix with cars and corners and stay out of trouble.

If you ticked either of the statements above, you're probably ready to practise on the road with cars and corners. Want to know how to practise well and get the most out of motorcycle licence training?

Jump to p60.

### Stage 3

Handling the wide open road

#### Does this sound like you?

I'm used to riding now. I can comfortably mix with cars and corners and I'm getting used to riding in different road and weather conditions.

I'm learning how to get out of trouble when I make mistakes or am late seeing others' mistakes.

If you ticked a statement above, you should be ready to mix with cars, corners and other conditions and be better prepared if anything goes wrong. You might even have your motorcycle licence, but you'll still need help to master the on-road survival skills.

Check out p78 to go through - and beyond - the training.

### Stage 4

Continuing to improve

#### Does this sound like you?

I view myself as a real rider now. I've done lots of riding but still want to learn more and get better.

I'll probably be ready for a bigger bike, carrying pillion and touring soon.

If you ticked a statement above, you're ready to move on, get better and learn more. This stage helps you stay alert, aware and active even after you've had your motorcycle licence for a while.

Go to p92.



# ABOUT THE PRACTICE TASKS

At the end of each **Learning Stage**, you'll find **Practice Tasks** for that stage, designed to make you a safe, aware rider. Some of them are basic skills, but still very important because advanced skills won't work properly if the basics aren't right.

When you ride, you need skills to move the bike, to lean the bike for turns and corners, and to stop and slow the bike. Beyond that, you also need the skills to protect yourself against dangers. The Practice Tasks focus on these four key skills – **Move, Lean, Stop** and **Protect**. The table on the following page summarises the tasks that will help you gain these skills.

To get good at anything, you need to try it over and over and over again. If you take the Practice Tasks seriously, you'll be surprised how quickly you can improve.

You'll also discover:

- That doing little things many times can be better than just riding a long way.
- How to evaluate your own riding.
- That every ride is a chance to learn.
- That there is much more to riding than the tasks you tried on your first training course.

# SUMMARY OF THE PRACTICE TASKS

<b>Stage 1 Practice Tasks</b> Learning the basics	<b>Stage 2 Practice Tasks</b> Coping with cars and corners	<b>Stage 3 Practice Tasks</b> Handling the wide open road	<b>Stage 4 Practice Tasks</b> Continuing to improve
<b>Move</b> Get used to throttle and gears Pull out, pull in	<b>Move</b> Program in the feel of tracking a bike straight Slow riding and scanning Stop and go with feet up Change gears up and down many times Change down two gears and maintain speed Quick checks to test your attention	<b>Move</b> On the foot pegs Riding over obstacles	<b>Move</b> Improve gear changing Smooth enough for pillion? Manoeuvre with pillion
<b>Lean</b> Weaves Simulate turns Ride out of driveway Pull out and go in opposite direction	<b>Lean</b> Tight turns Walk a U-turn Ride a U-turn Weave faster Head and eyes for turns	<b>Lean</b> Swerve or quick lane change Go, stop, turn	<b>Lean</b> Winding roads Leaning with pillion
<b>Stop</b> Set up and squeeze Look ahead and stop in a straight line Check mirrors and stop in a straight line	<b>Stop</b> Brake in a straight line	<b>Stop</b> Quick stop, straight Brake into a curve	<b>Stop</b> Brake in a curve Brake and gear together
<b>Protect</b> Check your tyre pressures Looking up Able to look around? Head checks	<b>Protect</b> How soon do you respond to dangers? Can you stop for unexpected hazards? Move away from threats Stay away from threats in curves Respecting your brain's speed limit	<b>Protect</b> Recognise your own carelessness Balance safety against fun Ride on the edge or to stay safe?	<b>Protect</b> Risk check

## Where to practise

When you practise, choose the safest place possible for the **Learning Stage** that you're up to.

**Stage 1** needs a quiet, out-of-the-way location - you'll find extra tips for suitable locations on p45.

**Stage 2** suits quiet, local streets with little traffic and some easy corners. Stick to a 50 km/h area.

**Stage 3** will take you onto busier roads. It's time to tackle different traffic conditions, corners and curves and even different speed limits. You'll need a mix of quiet locations and streets with traffic plus a few other requirements. Each task will give you pointers for suitable locations.

**Stage 4** is about real-life riding on all types of roads in all sorts of conditions. You might find that your cornering is working well, but gets a bit sloppy in the rain. Car parks will still come in handy for practising manoeuvring and getting started with a pillion on the back.

## Setting up the Practice Tasks

Wherever you choose to practise, remember that riding around an empty car park or a deserted industrial estate can be misleading - in a big, open space you won't learn exactly how much space a bike needs to turn or stop.

You can get a better feel for this by setting out some markers to manoeuvre around. Squashed drink cans or plastic plant pots will do. Plan ahead and take them with you.

Make sure you check out the Safety Guidelines on p10 before you start riding.

## How often will you need to practise?

It can take many repetitions to learn a new skill and make it a habit. So, stick with it, and practise often - but make sure you know when to stop too. Finish doing a task (or part of one) when you are succeeding at it. Otherwise, stop and take a break when any of these occur:

- You experience difficulty with the task.
- You feel afraid of doing the task.
- You get some kind of fright as you attempt the task.
- You find it hard to concentrate.

Get off the bike. Take off your helmet and walk around. Breathe deeply. Try to work out what's causing the problem. Perhaps one of the steps you need for the task isn't right. You might need to go back and practise that movement, and get it right, before you can proceed. If you're tired, call it a day.

At times you might not be able to figure out what to do to fix the problem. Check the instructions for the [Practice Task](#) in case you missed a detail that could make all the difference.

Make sure the task is in your [Learning Stage](#). You could be trying something that you're not ready for.

If you're still not sure what's going wrong, ask a friend who is an experienced rider, or check with an instructor to track down the problem.

## Practice Tasks for scooter and moped riders



Scooter and moped riders can do most of the tasks too. There are even special scooter versions (for both automatic and manual scooters) for some tasks in Learning Stages 1 and 2. Automatic scooters cannot do any tasks that require using gears, but the tasks for **Stop** are sufficiently general for them to apply to scooters. The only significant difference will relate to using a hand lever for the rear brake rather than a foot pedal.

(Note: [Practice Tasks](#) marked with this icon are not suitable for scooters.)





# LEARNING STAGE 1 – LEARNING THE BASICS

**“I’m still having to think hard just to operate and control the bike. If I mixed with cars and corners now, I’d run out of thinking power. I know what I should be doing but it only happens if I really think about it.”**

## Thinking power rules

This **Learning Stage** is about regaining thinking power - you need it to survive and enjoy riding. As a beginner, your thinking power will be used up balancing the bike, managing the throttle and clutch, squeezing the front and rear brakes together, changing down, and so on. Initially, your brain won’t be able to do all these things plus watch for, and respond to, danger. To survive you need to strengthen your ability to think and react simultaneously by automating the basic skills - making them second nature. Take this **Learning Stage** seriously and you’ll get the confidence to mix with cars and corners sooner and have more fun riding!

## Want to do something now?

Put your bike gear on and start your bike in your driveway. Are you breathing steadily? Are you sitting close to the tank? Are your shoulders and elbows relaxed? Do you know what’s happening in the street? Not sure? Use the Learning Stage 1 Practice Tasks to get you ready for the road.

## Learning Stage 1 target

- To move, stop and lean without having to think hard about it.

## The plan

It’s no good just saying, “I’ll go out and practise my riding.” You need a plan. (If you think just riding is good for practice, see “Learning to become a better rider” on p17.) Your plan needs to cover all the steps, however small, that will get you ready to tackle Learning Stage 2. Set your target and you’ve got some direction - and something to aim for.

Remember to:

- Start small – Set yourself small tasks and try them often.
- Take frequent breaks – As soon as you start to feel tired, or notice that you are becoming tense, take a break.
- Include lots of variety – Try mixing harder tasks with easier ones - you can use the easier tasks when you need a break from the tougher ones.
- Do short sessions, often – You can get most value by practising a little, often. Aim to practise on several different days, don’t try to cram it all into a few long sessions.

## In your sessions

- Try a [Practice Task](#) or something you're keen to practise, and give yourself feedback. (See "Recognising how you are going" on p22 for more on feedback.)
- Have another go at the task or take a break.
- If you're not succeeding at a task, look carefully at every single move that makes up the task and concentrate on the small parts that might not be right. If you're not sure how to check all those small parts, you may need advice from an experienced rider or instructor. (See "Other riders' experiences" on p32 for tips on using a helper.)

## Where to practise

Find a practice site where you can afford to make a few mistakes without putting yourself in danger, such as an area that is flat, paved with asphalt and free from other traffic, with no kerbs or fences close by. Good locations include:

- New housing estates on weekends. Before you start, however, check that the road surface is clean. Avoid any fine sand, gravel or dirt - it won't give you enough grip.
- Industrial estates on weekends.
- Shopping centre car parks out of hours.
- Car parks near beaches or big public parks on cool days.
- Car parks and roads leading to local sporting ovals - after the weekend games.

The difficulty for a new rider is getting to an ideal practice site. Try asking someone you know who is fully licensed to ride your bike to the location. You can go pillion. This helper might also be able to watch you ride and tell you how you are going. But choose and use your helper wisely. ("Recognising how you are going" on p22 and "Other riders' experiences" on p32 tell you how and why.) Can't get a helper? You could do some of the very early basics in your driveway, or call a training provider. It's important to start out slowly and safely. At this stage, it's best to stay away from main roads.

## What to practise

You tried all the basics when training for your motorcycle learner permit. Now you need to practise them again and again, until they become automatic. The basics include things like getting on the bike and sitting properly, feeling comfortable balancing the bike, using the brakes correctly, looking around you and doing [head checks](#), operating the throttle, clutch and gears and stopping in a straight line.



TIP

Don't stretch yourself too far. Small steps are best. Pay particular attention to posture, basic braking techniques, looking up and **head checks**. Run a check on yourself too. Remind yourself to 'breathe and relax'. Being relaxed is critical - when you're stressed and tense, especially in traffic, it's harder to accurately perceive and respond to hazards.







# LEARNING STAGE 1: LEARNING THE BASICS – PRACTICE TASKS

## MOVE

These **Practice Tasks** deal with getting your bike moving, like pushing it out of the garage and pulling out from the side of the road. They'll also help you remember the important parts of moving your bike.

### #1. Get used to the throttle and gears

- A. Practise going to various throttle positions to develop a sensitive feel for it. Start the bike using the procedure you learned at training. Try these: throttle 1 is just off **idle** (about 1200-1500 rpm on many bikes), throttle 2 is about 2000 rpm and throttle 3 is about 3000 rpm. You could recruit a helper and ask them to call the settings out to you randomly. Try to respond as quickly as you can.

How to check yourself:

- Did you go to a setting without over-shooting or under-shooting the mark?

TIP

**If you have trouble quickly getting to the positions, try this Practice Task a few times with your gloves off, then put them back on and try again.**

- B. Skip this task only if your scooter has no control for changing gears.



**MANUAL SCOOTER RIDERS** should do this Practice Task.

Use the gears: neutral - 1st - neutral; let clutch out gently; 2nd - neutral; let clutch out gently.

TIP

**Double check neutral by looking at the warning light and rocking the bike forward and back. Even when you think you have neutral, still ease the clutch out gently in case you're wrong.**

### #2. Pull out, pull in

- A. Park your bike on the driveway or in an off-road area. Practise finding the **friction point** (or take-up point). Start the engine using the procedure your trainer showed you. Select 1st gear, hold both brakes on, and then let the clutch out just enough to feel the **friction point**.

## How to check yourself:

- Can you do this quickly, or do you have to slowly release the clutch lever to avoid **stalling the engine**?

### TIP

**If you have a lot of trouble moving off, a bike-clever friend might be able to increase the idle speed of the engine for you (just while you're learning).**



Practise finding the take-up point quickly. Scooters can be tricky in the way they don't respond immediately to the throttle when you want to start moving. Try this.

Hold the rear brake with your left hand. Twist the throttle to throttle 2 (see the previous Practice Task for details). The scooter wants to move forward. Carefully release the rear brake and you should start to move forward. The actions in this technique are very similar to those you would use with the clutch on a motorcycle.

**MANUAL SCOOTER RIDERS** - Use the motorcycle version of this task.

- B.** Ride the clutch facing up a slight incline. Have the engine running with first gear selected. Make the bike rock forward and back about 30cm using only the clutch to control how far forward and back you travel. Are you still looking up and around? Repeat several times.

Control rollback on a slight incline. With the scooter facing up the slope, hold the rear brake on. Increase the engine speed to about throttle 2.



Carefully release the rear brake to allow the scooter to move forward. Now carefully reduce the engine speed so that the scooter stops moving forward and starts to roll back. Can you make it move forward again, just using the throttle? Try repeating this. You can always use the rear brake to hold the scooter steady if this is too tricky at this stage.

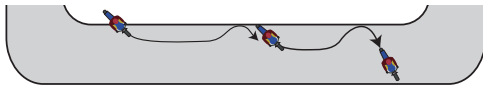
- C.** Ride in a straight line. Increase your speed enough so that you can practise changing up and back through gears. Go first, second, third and then come back down to second and first. Repeat this many times.

Ride in a straight line. Increase your speed to about 25 km/h and then slow down to walking pace. Repeat this many times so that you get the feel of how the bike responds to your actions with the throttle.



### How to check yourself:

- Can you shift your attention away from controlling the bike as you do this one? Is your upper body relaxed? Check for tension in your shoulders, elbows and wrists. Is your breathing relaxed? Where are you directing your eyes?
- D. Park your bike so that it is angled on to the road. Practise this sequence: pull out, ride a short distance and pull in. Use the procedure you used at your training course. Use **trigger words** for the sequence, such as: “mirror, indicator, **head check**, move into lane”. As you come back in, the triggers would be: “mirror, indicator, **head check**, and move into kerb”. Repeat this many times.

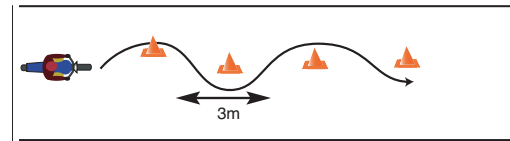


Practice parking your bike

## LEAN

### #3. Weaves

- A. **Slow** - Place at least six markers about three metres apart (this is about the same width as a single car park bay).



Ride around each marker at a walking pace. Keep your eye level up and look to where you want to go – not at the markers. To develop the feel for moving your head around while you ride, turn your head to check over your shoulder just after each marker.

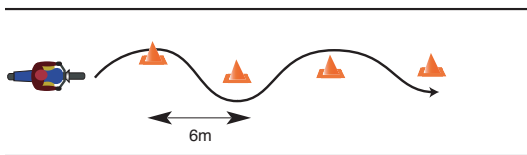


## How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Use steering and body input to maintain a steady course?
- Use both brakes to control speed?
- Direct your eyes a couple of markers ahead, then, do **head checks** prior to rounding each marker, then, return your eyes back to a couple of markers ahead?
- Keep your upper body and arms loose and relaxed?

**B. *Faster*** - Set the markers about six metres apart. Ride through the course at about running speed.



## How to check yourself:

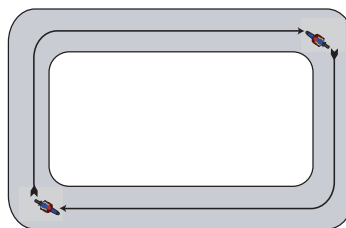
Did you:

- Keep the speed steady?
- Take a smooth path?
- Keep your eyes directed a couple of markers ahead?

## #4. Simulate turns

These are good if you're not sure that you're ready to cope with turning at an intersection.

Ride a rectangle to simulate riding around a block of streets. Again, use an empty car park or very quiet streets where you can ride around a block without meeting any busy traffic.



**Turn right.** Make the exercise realistic by including the actions for moving away from the kerb and into the traffic lane. Before each turn, stop, look to the left and right as well as use the indicators to show the direction of your turn.

**Turn left.** Change direction so you can practise doing left turns. Stop, check to the right, left and ahead as you would for a real intersection.

**TIP**

**Most riders find right turns easier to start with, because there's more room to turn. So why not start off with mastering right turns and build some confidence from the start? Then, start working on those left turns.**

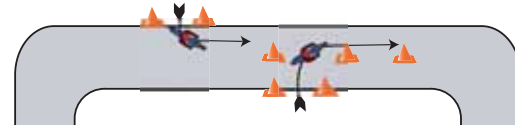
Now, try turning without stopping. Remember to angle the bike in the direction of the turn so the turn is less tight. You'll need to keep the revs up to gain momentum and control. Hold the clutch at [friction point](#) until the turn is almost complete, then release the clutch and ride away.

**TIP**

**When you are halfway around the corner, mentally check how much effort you are putting into the handlebars to keep the bike on track. It should be little or no effort. If it's a lot of effort, tell yourself what you're doing (you might be pushing on one side of the bars or slowing down), then tell yourself what you should be doing (turning head and eyes to the exit of the corner, body relaxed and leaning into the turn, throttle accelerating the bike slightly).**

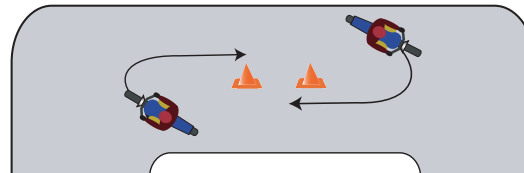
## #5. Ride out of a driveway

Use your rectangle to simulate the turns for leaving a driveway. Again, use indicators for the direction you will be going and check in both directions before you start the turn.



## #6. Pull out and go in opposite direction

Imagine that you are parked at the side of the road, angled to the kerb, but you have to go in the opposite direction. Can you make your bike do this as well as check for traffic and use the indicators?



## STOP

Braking is a critical skill for motorcycle riders. You need it for slowing for corners and adjusting to the speed of traffic. Most importantly, you need braking to avoid colliding with another road user or object.



The braking performance of a scooter differs from that of a motorcycle. Scooters need about equal distribution between the two brakes and stop best when you apply equal effort to the front and the rear brakes. Scooter riders can do all the [Practice Tasks](#) for stopping. When tasks mention holding the bike steady with the rear brake, you can do the same by holding the lever on the left handlebar.

**MANUAL SCOOTER RIDERS** - Use the pedal on the [floorboard](#) for the rear brake. But, remember that the distribution of pressure works the same as for automatic scooters. For best stopping power, apply equal effort to the front and rear brakes.

## #7. Set up and squeeze

Your braking method must enable the tyres to maintain grip on the road. The habit of applying the brakes by setting up then squeezing can help prevent locking the wheels in a [skid](#). (You can see this technique demonstrated and explained in the video. See *'Ride On'* p109.) Other phrases you might have heard for this include: collect and squeeze the lever, feather the brake then squeeze it, take the slack out then squeeze, or prepare the bike for braking. The aim is to take the free-play out of the braking system.



Use all four fingers to operate the brake lever.

Get on the bike and take up the position for riding away. Check whether you **set up and squeeze** the front brake. Set up and squeeze will become a habit only if you do it every time. (See “Getting the basics right” on p27). Practise at walking pace.

TIP

**Make sure the bike is upright and the front wheel is facing directly ahead when you use the front brake.**

Next, do it from straight line riding. Ask yourself regularly, do I set up and squeeze, every time I use the brakes?

TIP

**When braking, always use four fingers on the brake lever for maximum sensitivity, power and the shortest reaction time. And watch those revs. Many riders over rev during braking due to incorrect hand position. The knuckles of the hand should be higher than the wrist, and the fingers only should reach out to take up the brake lever.**

## #8. Look ahead and stop in a straight line

Ride in a straight line and accelerate to 40 km/h, changing into second or third gear. Do this in an area away from traffic. Once you have established the speed for a few moments, come to a complete stop. As you are working both brakes, you should keep your eyes looking up, well ahead and around you. Repeat this task often until you are always looking ahead and around as you stop your bike.

How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Have first gear engaged before you stopped?
- Finish by holding the rear brake with your right foot on the pedal?
- Look ahead and around?



### Mistakes you can make:

- You forget to set up the brakes before you squeeze firmly.
- You let your eyes focus on the ground directly in front of the bike as you apply the brakes.
- You stop the bike using one brake only (front or rear).
- You forget to hold the rear brake on when you stop to prevent the bike rolling if it is on a slight slope.

### #9. Check the mirrors and stop in a straight line

Stop the motorcycle in a straight line from at least 40 km/h - but, this time add in one more detail: before you start applying the brakes, check in the mirrors to ensure safe clearance from any vehicles following. Practise this many times. You need to make a habit of checking the mirrors just before you brake.

### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Check the mirrors before you applied the brakes?
- Move into first gear before you stopped?
- Finish by holding the bike with the rear brake with your right foot on the pedal?
- Look ahead and around?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You forget to set up the brakes before you squeeze firmly.
- You let your eyes focus on the ground directly in front of the bike as you apply the brakes.
- You stop by using one brake only (front or rear).
- You forget to hold the rear brake on when you stop to prevent the bike rolling if it is on a slight slope.
- You forget to check your mirrors.

## PROTECT

These **Practice Tasks** will help prevent:

- You from running into other road users or objects.
- Others from running into you.
- You from running off the road.

### #10. Check your tyre pressures

Motorcycles handle and corner best when they have the correct amount of air in the tyres. Under-inflated tyres can make a bike handle poorly. Form the habit of regularly checking the air pressure in your bike's tyres.

Buy your own tyre pressure gauge and look for a sticker or plate on your bike or scooter showing the correct pressures for your tyres. Usually it is on the left side of the bike. It may be on the chain guard or sometimes it's under the seat. If you can't find the information on the bike, check your owner's manual. Add air to the tyres if you need to then ride the bike paying attention to how it feels. It should handle better.

### #11. Looking up

Were instructors always telling you to keep your eyes up? This is because it is essential that you are aware of what is up ahead on the road and around you. Keeping your eyes looking up, around and ahead of you will build your confidence and give you thinking power.

Ride in a straight line and vary your speed from walking pace to running. Can you look from side to side while keeping the bike on a straight path?

#### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Stay fairly straight with few wobbles?
- Vary the speed smoothly without jerking your arms or body?

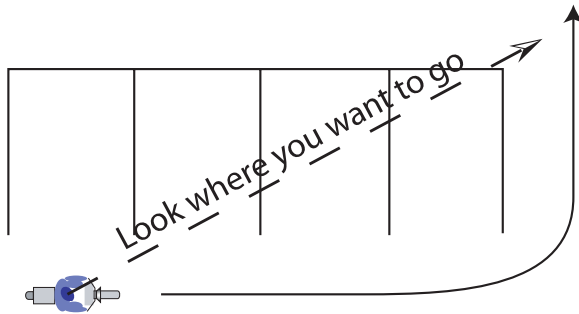


#### Mistakes you can make:

- You look down at the ground in front of you, especially if the bike starts to wander off your intended path.
- You go rigid in the arms as you try to keep the bike on your intended path.

## #12. Able to look around?

Ride a large rectangle. As you go along the sides, vary the speed up and down. As you approach the corners, are you turning your head and looking at the place on the next side of the rectangle where you want to finish up? This is called 'looking through the turn'. Do you make the bike go there or does your head lead you there?



## How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Look to where you wanted to end up before you started to lean the bike into the turn?
- Keep looking where you wanted to end up while you leaned into the turn?

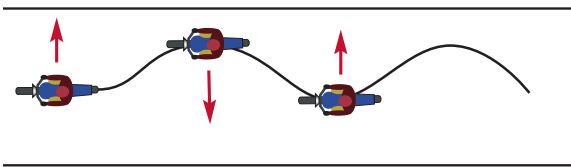
## Mistakes you can make:

- You let your eyes look down at the ground in front of the bike as you lean the bike.
- You go rigid in the arms.

### #13. Head checks

Motorbikes and their riders come off second best in any confrontation with another vehicle. It is vitally important that you never attempt to move into a space that something else is already occupying or will do so very shortly. Your training emphasised the [head check](#) as a basic habit for making sure you don't run into things beside you.

Ride in a straight line and simulate changing your position in a lane as well as changing lanes. Do this at around 40 km/h. Before you adjust your lane or lane position, look over your shoulder to the side you will be going to.





## LEARNING STAGE 2 – COPING WITH CARS AND CORNERS

“I’m regaining thinking power. Operating and controlling the bike happens without me thinking too much about it. I’m working out how to give myself enough time and space to mix with cars and corners and stay out of trouble.”

### It's time to mix with cars and corners

This Learning Stage is about developing skills for gaining time and space. You need time to make decisions, and you’ll need to be able to put some space between you and danger.

Even if you have your driver’s licence and think you’re a good judge of what’s happening with the traffic, it will be different on a bike. Drivers are less likely to see you, so you’ll need to be very aware of them so you can get out of their way.

Moving through this Learning Stage is your opportunity to turn safe riding into a habit - something you do automatically, without thinking. Riding skills that are habits are most likely to get you out of trouble. Remember, you won’t have the skills to get out of tight spots yet, so when you practise give yourself lots of time and space.

### TIP

**Do your bit to make sure other road users know you’re there. Wear bright protective clothing and a bright helmet (choose white, red, yellow or orange), ride with your lights on in the appropriate conditions and ride in the correct road position so you can be seen in both rear and outside mirrors of the vehicle in front of you. When you are travelling on a multi-laned road, try to avoid the centre lane (as you will need to look out for traffic on both sides), ride in the right wheel track of the vehicle in front of you when travelling in the left lane, and ride in the left wheel track when travelling in the right lane. Help car drivers anticipate what you are going to do by following the road regulations, using your indicators and being predictable.**

## Want to do something now?

Ride to a place where there is no traffic. If it is safe, brake firmly to a stop from about 50 km/h. As you are riding along at 50 km/h, pick out an object up ahead on the side of the road. When you get alongside that object imagine where you would end up stopping if you braked firmly.

### **Do you think the point you selected, would really be where you would stop?**

To check, ride the same section of road at 50 km/h again but this time, when you reach the object you have selected, brake firmly and stop. Park the bike and check out the difference between where you imagined you might stop and where you actually have.

It takes longer to stop than you think.

## Learning Stage 2 target

- To match the need to slow down and move away from hazards, to the riding situation.

This **Learning Stage** is more complex than the first. You will be developing your skills in two main areas:

1. Managing **time and space**, starting in simple conditions, then gradually tackling more demanding situations by riding in traffic.
2. Improving your control skills and regaining more thinking power by choosing quiet areas at first, building up to practise in traffic.

For the moment, slowing down and moving away are the main methods that can keep you out of trouble. Always give yourself more time than you think you'll need. As you develop your observation and judgement skills, you'll begin to learn when to slow, when to move away, and how much **time and space** you need.

## The plan

Start with a plan that includes a variety of things to practise and places to ride. But don't end up riding in tough conditions, such as particularly bad weather. At this stage you won't have the skills to ride in difficult conditions so leave that practice until you are nearer Learning Stage 3.

You could start to think about including some rides for reasons other than just practice, to gain real on-road experience. You need to practise the skills (so they take less and less thinking power) and you need to get experience. Vary your time between both types of practice.

## In your sessions

- Pick a [Practice Task](#) or an exercise from your learner permit training course.
- Try it a few times, stop and review how you went. "Recognising how you are going" on p22 will remind you how to get good feedback.
- Try again, paying attention to any parts that aren't being performed the way they should be.
- Be specific about what you want to fix. For example: "This time before I start turning I will be looking in the direction I want to go" or "This time I will make my arms relax at the elbows as I go through the turn".
- Keep up the process - ride, stop, review, and then try again with specific aims.

## What to practise

You need to perfect the slow manoeuvres from the learner permit training course - riders who can easily do them have no trouble getting their bike to do what they want when they corner or do tight U-turns. Instead, they can pay attention to protecting themselves and looking out for hazards.

Remember, you have much less protection than you do in a car and you need to develop your on-road survival skills.

Accurately calculating your survival space and keeping away from threats are your main survival tools for now. Ride with a purpose and try the **Protect** Practice Tasks for Learning Stage 2. They will show you how quickly you respond, and react, to threats as you see them. (Have a look at the two types of riders in 'Getting the basics right' on p27. Which rider are you?)

## LEARNING STAGE 2: COPING WITH CARS AND CORNERS – PRACTICE TASKS

### MOVE

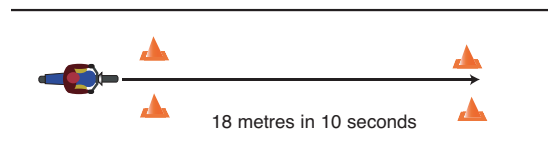
#### #1. Program-in the feel of tracking a bike straight

Take a break from practice and instead, use this task to just ride and get a feel for the bike going straight. Find a long straight road where you can ride for about five minutes without having to stop. Relax your shoulders, try not to think about controlling the bike, scan all around, don't forget the mirrors and speedo, rehearse **trigger words** for pulling into the kerb and then do it.

#### #2. Slow riding and scanning

This task is great for developing balance and a feel for the clutch. Use some markers to set out a straight course about 18 metres long. Start several metres back from the marked course and get going smoothly. Ride through the marked area at a walking pace. As you ride, look up and straight ahead, but regularly check in the mirrors. Go slow enough that you must use the clutch to avoid stalling. If you have someone to help you, they can time you. See whether you can take around 10 seconds or more to cover the 18 metres.

Variation: After checking the mirrors, add in a **head check** to each side.



Scoters can do this task. Follow the instructions above, but use the rear brake (left lever) to hold the speed down. Try using the rear brake with some throttle at the same time. Vary the pressure on the brake to control the rate the scooter accelerates.



**MANUAL SCOOTER RIDERS** - Follow the instructions for the motorcycle version of this task.

#### How to check yourself:

Did you:

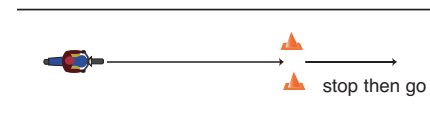
- Use steering and body movement to keep a straight and steady path?
- Use the rear brake mostly to keep speed down?
- Vary the clutch to prevent the bike from **stalling**?
- Look up and straight ahead, then in the mirrors and back to straight ahead?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You look at the ground directly in front of the bike.
- You go tense in the arms and shoulders, making it difficult to steer a straight path.
- You forget to use the clutch.

### #3. Stop and go with feet up

This task is good for improving your balance and coordination. In first gear, ride in a straight line. Pull the clutch in and bring the bike to a complete stop, keeping both feet on the footpegs. Then, before you lose balance, take off smoothly again. It will help if you pull the lever in just enough to **disengage the drive to the rear wheel**, otherwise it might take too long to get **friction point** again before you lose balance.



### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Brake only while the bike was going straight and was upright?
- Keep directing your eyes up and ahead?
- Pull the clutch lever in just enough to disengage the drive to the rear wheel?

**NOTE:** When you get good at this task you might be tempted to try it in slow moving traffic. This isn't a good idea, as it may take more attention than you can spare at this stage.

#### #4. Change gears up and down many times



Skip this task only if your scooter has no control for changing gears.

**MANUAL SCOOTER RIDERS** - should do this [Practice Task](#).

Ride along and deliberately change gears up and down to get as much practice as you can, without overloading yourself with the effort. Keep doing this for as long as the conditions permit - but reserve some attention to help you cope with turning or stopping at any intersections.

To get plenty of gear change practice: accelerate away from an intersection after a stop light or stop sign. As you continue to accelerate up to the speed limit (where possible), change through the gears, remaining in each one for about three seconds. Say “1001, 1002, 1003, change”.

When you change down gears, check behind first to make sure nothing is following closely. This is in case you slow down more than you intend and surprise a following driver.

#### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Maintain a steady straight path?
- Keep your eyes scanning ahead and around?

#### Mistakes you can make:

- You look down at the road or the handlebars when you change gears.
- You change gears poorly or roughly, over-rev or skid.
- You forget to [blip the throttle](#) as you change down and the bike jerks or the back wheel [skids](#).
- You select the wrong gear.

## #5. Change down two gears and maintain speed



Skip this task only if your scooter has no control for changing gears.

**MANUAL SCOOTER RIDERS** - should do this Practice Task.

Ride in a straight line at approximately 50 km/h, in at least 4th gear. Hold the speed steady and then change down one gear while maintaining the speed. Still keeping the speed, change down one more gear.

### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Remain at the same speed?
- Keep a steady path in a straight line?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You do not match the throttle to the new gear and your speed drops off. (The bike might jerk a little when you release the clutch to move to the lower gear.)
- You start looking down as you concentrate on making the gear changes smooth.

You might find this task challenges you. If you can do this one well, you have probably got all the pieces for changing gears working correctly. If not, ask a knowledgeable rider to watch you. They may be able to point out what is missing. You might also benefit from more training specifically for this skill.

## #6. Quick checks to test your attention

Try these quick checks to see if you're beginning to have attention for things besides basic control skills.

Keep a straight path, with your eyes scanning the scene. Take your left hand from the handlebar and place it on the fuel tap. Turn the tap to reserve. Ride a little further, then turn it back to the normal 'on' position. You will need to be able to do this quickly if you run out of fuel (main part of tank) while riding in traffic. If this does happen your bike may surge forward or the engine will cut out briefly.



Without looking, quickly find and operate the controls and switches. Try:

- Left and right indicators (These should be almost second nature by now)
- High/low beam switch
- Headlight flasher (if there is one fitted)
- Horn

Can you do these quickly? If not, what can you do to fix this?

### Mistakes you can make:

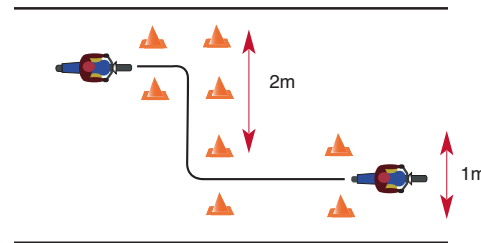
- You slow down from a steady speed
- Your path wanders away from a generally straight line
- You sneak a look for the control you need

## LEAN

The '**Lean**' tasks will help you to develop manoeuvring skills as well as feeling familiar and comfortable leaning the bike more. This will give you back more thinking power.

### #7. Tight turns

This one can prepare you for U-turns. Set up some markers, as shown in the diagram, and ride through at walking pace.



### How to check yourself:

Did you:

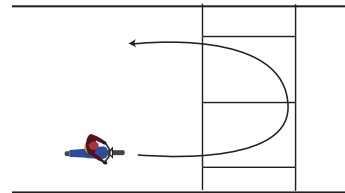
- Coordinate steering with body movement to maintain a steady course?
- Use both brakes to keep the speed down?
- Direct your eyes to the exit of the turn you were entering?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You focus your eyes to the ground immediately in front of the bike.
- Your arms and upper body go rigid and you can't allow the bike to lean into the turn.
- You attempt the turn without riding the clutch and working the rear brake.

### #8. Walk a U-turn

Find out how much space your bike needs to make a U-turn. Start with your bike parked on its side stand (in a marked bay if you're in a car park). Stand on the left side of the bike, place your hands on the handlebars and grasp the front brake to stop it from moving. Bring the bike upright, and raise the side stand out of the way. Now, turn the handlebars fully to the left and walk forward with the bike, keeping it leaning in towards you. (Normally you do U-turns by turning to the right, but this way you can walk on the inside of the bike and easily get to the side stand if you need to stop.)

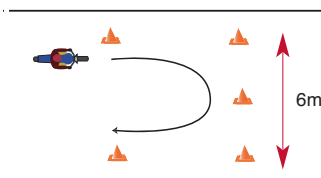


When you are facing in the opposite direction to where you started, straighten the handlebars and bring the bike to a gentle stop by setting up and squeezing the front brake. Put down the

side stand and park the bike. Now look at how much space your bike needs to turn around. In a car park it will be somewhere near the width of two parking bays. Will you take the same amount of space when you ride the turn or will you take more or less space? (Your bike will actually turn in less space if it is leaned over more - but don't try this to begin with.)

### #9. Ride a U-turn

Sooner or later you'll want to do a real U-turn out on the road when you're riding. Practise it in quiet places first. Try doing the U-turn at a quick walking pace (see diagram). Since this is a manoeuvre you will use on the road, include the indicators as you practise. Try both left and right U-turns.



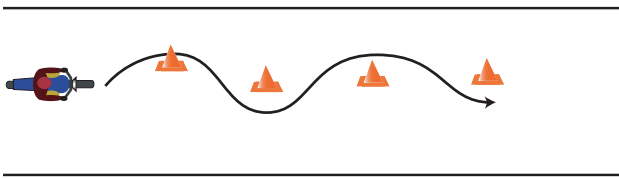
### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Go in wide enough to give yourself the most room for turning?
- Use the sequence: mirror, signal, head check, before you started to turn?
- Direct your eyes up and towards the exit as the turn started?
- Turn smoothly and steadily by coordinating the throttle, brakes and your body position?

## #10. Weave faster

Here's an exercise for developing a feel for leaning and making the bike change direction. Use your markers and ride a smooth path around them, at a running pace. Try to keep a steady speed as you go from one marker to the next.



### How to check yourself:

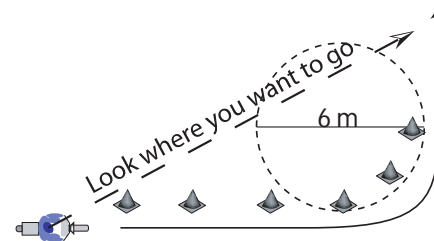
Did you:

- Keep a steady speed?
- Follow a smooth path around the markers?
- Keep directing your eyes toward the horizon?

Try this task at various speeds. What techniques give you the best results? Think about how you use the throttle and brakes, what you are doing with your arms and where you are looking.

## #11. Head and eyes for turns

In this task pay attention to what you do with your head and eyes when you turn. Set yourself some clearly defined turns that you will follow. The path should be similar to turning left at a small intersection. Don't make the turn too gradual or you won't get the most benefit from the task.



Ride around a rectangular shaped area in second or third gear. As you approach your turns imagine that a hook has grabbed the chin bar of your helmet and is pulling your head towards the area where your bike will be travelling straight and upright again (where you want to end up). As you ride around the turn, continue to keep your head pointed towards this area.

What did you discover? Can you make a connection between where you point your head and where you go? What happens if you keep your body and arms tense? What happens when you keep a steady throttle as you go round the turn?

Practise this task for other turns, such as turning at intersections, and riding around corners.

**TIP**

**Corner with care! Be aware that corners may have debris on the outer edges and close to the centre line, broken edging and sometimes oil on the road between wheel tracks. This is because the action of vehicle tyres pushes the debris outwards and vehicles drip oil into the centre of the lane between the wheel tracks, especially at intersections.**

## STOP

### #12. Brake in a straight line

To stop effectively you must use both the front and rear brakes. This task flows on from #8 and #9 in Learning Stage 1, getting you to do some stops using the front and rear brakes separately at first and then together. The review points and mistakes below apply to all the stops you do here. Start gently - you have many things to think about.

#### A. Front brake only

Normally you use both brakes together. This task lets you check whether you include the important step of applying the front brake when you stop. In your quiet practice area, ride in a straight line at about 40 km/h. Check behind and make sure nothing is following. Using the front brake only, bring the bike to a firm stop.

Be careful to make sure that the area you choose for a 'firm front brake stop' is free from loose materials and debris that may cause the front tyre to **skid** or break away.

## B. Rear brake only

Again, do this task to make sure you get the feel for using the rear brake only. Do not use this as your everyday method for stopping though. Ride in a straight line in a quiet practice area. The speed should be around 40 km/h. Make sure nothing is following you. Bring the bike to a complete stop using only the rear brake. What did you notice about how far it took you to stop? What do you think about relying on just the back brake to stop?

## C. Both brakes

Now, combine the two separate skills into an effective routine for braking. Ride in a straight line at about 40 km/h. Check your mirrors to make sure nothing is following. Bring your bike to a complete stop using both brakes. What do you notice about your stopping distance now?

## How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Use your mirrors to check behind you?
- Keep the motorcycle upright?
- Set up the brake(s)?
- Squeeze progressively until there was only a small reserve of tyre grip?
- Ease off just before stopping?
- Come to a complete stop with your left foot down?
- Keep your right foot on the brake to hold the bike steady?
- Have first gear engaged ready to move away again?



### Mistakes you can make:

- You stop looking around you and let your focus drop to the ground, looking only a few metres in front of your bike.
- You forget to put your foot down just before you stop.
- You forget to tap down through the gears and get to first gear.
- You forget to pull in the clutch, just before you stop.
- You lock a wheel and [skid](#).

## WARNING

**You must get braking right. It is extremely important. What you do as a habit, you will do in an emergency. If you have any doubts about your braking technique and think it might be faulty, do something about it. Check with a training provider and get professional assistance. Most training providers run courses or sessions for licensed riders. Don't take chances with braking.**

## PROTECT

Use these Practice Tasks to develop your skills for picking out things that could threaten you and your ability to ensure you have the [time](#) and [space](#) to deal with them.

### #13. How soon do you respond to dangers?

You might have the best braking skills in town, but you still need time and distance to stop. This task helps you find out how much time you are giving yourself to notice dangers and respond to them.

Ride for several minutes. Look for things that could be threats to your safety, such as traffic turning at intersections, a vehicle slowing in front of you, people or objects on the road, a blind crest, etc. At first do some practice at just picking these things out. Then, pick a threat and count aloud to see how long it takes you to reach it. Count: 1001, 1002, 1003, and so on.

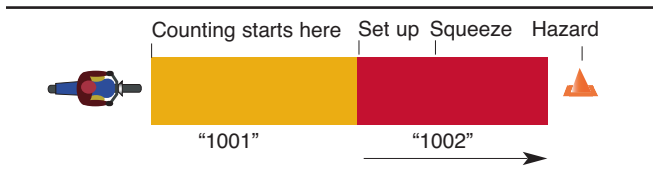
Even when you are riding through quiet locations, you can use this task to check how far ahead you look. Would you rather have five seconds to deal with a problem or two? The fact is, as an inexperienced rider, you're in trouble if you don't have at least three.

#### #14. Can you stop for unexpected hazards?

Once you have seen a danger your brain needs time to work out the best response to it. Should you slow down or move away or do both? Very occasionally you might even need to accelerate.

In this task you can find out whether you can accurately estimate the space you need if you have to react and stop. You need an area in which you can get up to at least 40 km/h. Place a marker to represent a hazard that you must avoid. Then check behind that you have no traffic following you.

Ride towards the hazard at 40 km/h. Keep the speed steady until you think you are about one and a half seconds from the point where, if you don't brake firmly, you will collide with the hazard. Now say, 1001, 1002, and then brake firmly to a stop.



Repeat this several times, until you are stopping close to, but not beyond, your marker. Do this only on roads without traffic

This task helps you refine your judgment on how long it takes to stop. Don't forget to pull in the clutch and select first gear, ready to ride off.

#### #15. Move away from threats

Do you move around in your lane to adjust for threats and hazards? Unlike larger vehicles, you have many more options for adjusting the space between you and others.

Think of the road having three options for you:

- Position 1 is the left hand car wheel track.
- Position 2 is in the middle of the lane.
- Position 3 is near the right hand car wheel track.

Do this task in two parts.

- A. As you are riding, ask yourself five times in a few minutes, "Why am I in this position on the road?" You should try to maximise the distance between yourself and other vehicles.



- B.** Ride for a few more minutes, over several blocks. Count how many times you change from position one to three or back again.

#### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Vary your position many times to adjust for the changing events around you?

#### #16. Stay away from threats in curves

Apply the idea of position in the lane to riding through corners. Ride around several corners on a road with two-way traffic. As you go through the tightest part of the corner, ask yourself: “Am I staying away from the greatest danger in this position?”

#### Mistakes you can make:

- You go too close to the centre line in blind right hand corners.
- You cross the centre line.

#### #17. Respecting your brain's speed limit

Sometimes you should ride more slowly. Here are some examples of when you should do this:

- When you are learning new skills.
- When you ride in a new locality.
- When you ride in busy or congested traffic.
- When you ride a different bike.
- When you have to do a difficult riding task.

You can exceed your brain's ability to process information and make decisions. How do you tell if you are about to exceed the brain's limit, or worse, have already exceeded it? (For more information read 'Recognising when you are going too fast' on p24.)

Go for a ride. Start in an area that you're comfortable riding in. Then take yourself into some territory that is less familiar. Ride for a few minutes, then pull over to the side of the road and park your bike. Review how you felt.

### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Feel relaxed, especially shoulders, arms, and wrists?
- Breathe normally?
- Keep moving your eyes around and to the mirrors, scanning the environment?
- Move the controls smoothly?

Review your riding with this checklist at the end of any ride or section of a ride. Answering ‘no’ to any of these might indicate something is missing. If you can’t decide which step is not working for you, ask for some assistance from an experienced rider or trainer.

## TEST YOURSELF

You’re ready to test yourself on Learning Stage 2 once you’ve done the following:

- You’ve covered the [Practice Tasks](#) for this stage.
- You’ve ridden in a variety of traffic and weather conditions.
- You’ve been riding both day and night.
- Your riding in Learning Stages 1 and 2 totals around 120 hours.

Test yourself by riding for five days in a row, mixing with cars and corners, and keep some simple statistics. How many times did you have to brake firmly or swerve?

If your answer is more than zero, then you haven’t made slowing down and moving away a habit. Your **Protect** group of skills isn’t fully formed. If you got a zero for your score, well done. But was it good luck or good habits?

## LEARNING STAGE 3 – HANDLING THE WIDE OPEN ROAD

**“I’m used to riding my bike now. I can comfortably mix with cars and corners and I’m getting used to riding in different road and weather conditions. I’m learning how to get out of trouble when I make mistakes or am late seeing other’s mistakes.”**

### Dealing with trouble

This **Learning Stage** is about developing the ability to deal with trouble and learning the skills to handle a variety of riding conditions.

You might even have passed your motorcycle licence test by now, but you are still learning. The more you ride, the more you’ll be exposed to adverse conditions and situations. If you crash it will most likely involve either a car or losing control on a straight or corner.

The skills you need to avoid trouble are evaluation, decision making and bike control skills. For example, if a car suddenly gets in your path you need to evaluate if there’s time to get around the car. If not, decide on your best course of action and use your skills, such as hard braking and **countersteering**.

A lot of riders have fun practising these bike control skills but if you spend too much time practising them you might actually increase your chances of crashing through overconfidence. (See ‘Practice may increase crash risk’ on p30.) During this stage, you will continue to practise firm braking and quick lane repositioning.

### Want to do something now?

Ask an experienced rider to tell you how far he or she would travel if forced to swerve at 80 km/h to avoid something blocking their lane. Ask them how they would steer to avoid an obstacle. Check their response to that in the **Practise Task** for swerves or quick lane repositioning on p85. You might also ask them to give the most likely reasons why they would have to swerve. Do you think they could see they ran out of safe space?

## Learning Stage 3 target

- To have the thinking and physical skills to manage trouble.

In Learning Stage 3 you have the chance to continue steadily improving. Remember, it's early in your riding career that you lack experience and crashes are more likely.

As you become comfortable with cars, corners and different road and weather conditions, you may start to relax. You must stay alert for signs of complacency, even after you're licensed. It's important that you don't let your own practice plan slip.

## The plan

Your plan for this stage is to:

- Automate the skills for avoiding trouble covered in the licence training course.
- Gain experience in a wider variety of road and weather conditions.
- Avoid becoming lazy and self-satisfied with your riding.

Go for learning rides regularly and practise the tasks from all the groups of “**Move, Lean, Stop and Protect**” in the [Practice Tasks](#). The fun ones are great but don't neglect the rest.

## What to practise

### In the dark or wet

After you've begun to ride in more complex traffic such as main roads and busy shopping areas, try other conditions - for example, ride in the rain. It's better to do this gradually than suddenly be caught in a downpour for the first time a long way from home.

In the same way, ease yourself into the different conditions you'll find riding at night. Start with short, simple journeys so that you don't make the task too difficult and wear the right clothing for the conditions.



**When riding in wet conditions, it's important to ride smoothly without sudden changes in speed or direction. Avoid panic or late braking by staying alert. Applying the brakes earlier than normal will give the tyres time to disperse water and grip the surface. Complete braking and release the brakes before leaning and turning. To help with braking in adverse conditions, keep your speed down and increase the distance you would usually need for stopping.**

## Problem road surfaces

It's no perfect world out there. You have probably already found roadworks, gravel roads, wet and slippery surfaces, even small obstacles on the road.

Difficult surfaces present new challenges. Have a go at the **Move** tasks in the Practice Tasks. Seek out and slowly conquer those problem surfaces.

### TIP

**There are plenty of slippery surfaces out there - and they all need extra care. They include not only gravel roads, but also sealed roads, particularly just after it starts to rain or when covered with sand, gravel, mud, snow or ice. Painted lane markings and oil spots on the road, as well as steel surfaces such as service pit covers and tram lines, can cause problems for the unwary. To keep your grip, you need to reduce speed. It takes longer to stop on slippery surfaces and there is a greater chance of skidding, so use both brakes. Ride smoothly and gradually and don't make sudden movements. Look for the safest surface that you can. Watch out for oil spots and stay away from the edge of the road**

**if you are making a sharp turn, because dirt and gravel tends to collect along the sides of the road.**

## Social Rides

As you become comfortable and experienced with various riding conditions, you will think about going for longer rides, possibly with other riders. Riding with other people is a different condition, and can contain different pressures and challenges. Work up to this step by step.

Start with short group rides. Review how you went. Did you feel the need to keep up or stay in front of the group? Can you stay within your skill limits?

When you ride with a group, you must set your limits. Make sure your co-riders know your limits and, if necessary, ask them to wait for you at agreed points on the journey. Use the time when you are riding solo to run a practice session.

Concentrate on your riding and try to improve. The Practice Tasks from Learning Stages 1, 2 and 3 will give you plenty of ideas.

## Practice Rides

Find a quiet location and work on those slow-speed manoeuvring tasks. They should be taking less thinking power now. The [Practice Tasks](#) for this stage also contain a couple of exercises that may challenge you.

## Spot the carelessness

It's easy to gradually reduce your effort in riding and hardly notice it happening... until you get a fright, which could be too late. It can take many repetitions to make any skill a lifetime habit. Regular practice and regular checking are vital. You'll find a [Practice Task](#) in **'Protect'** that specifically deals with carelessness. Try it every few months. It's a great reality check.

## Fun versus safety

Another [Practice Task](#) in **'Protect'** for this stage gives you a chance to notice any conflict between the need for fun and the need for safety.



**The main control skills that must become automatic are quick stops and swerves. These skills may help you avoid trouble when you haven't seen it early enough. Ideally, if your mental skills developed from the *Protect* tasks are working well, you should rarely need to call upon quick stops and swerves. But, there are unexpected times when you might have to brake hard or swerve. To survive, you need to be able to do both without thinking. This means practising them regularly, even when you think you have mastered them.**

The **'Stop'** Practice Tasks have suggestions for firm braking in a straight line and braking in a curve. The **'Lean'** Practice Task for avoiding trouble includes a swerve or quick lane repositioning.



# LEARNING STAGE 3: HANDLING THE WIDE OPEN ROAD – PRACTICE TASKS

These **Practice Tasks** can help you develop skills to get out of trouble and help make up for any **carelessness** on your part.

## MOVE

### #1. On the foot pegs



*Note: This task is not suitable for small scooters.*

This skill is useful for riding over rough surfaces, bumpy or grooved roads and potholes. Ride in a straight line at a steady speed, in second or third gear, and stand up on the foot pegs. Keep your back

reasonably straight, your knees slightly bent, your elbows relaxed and your eyes up. Keep a firm grip on the bars.

### Where to practise

Don't do this in traffic, as standing up might alarm other road users. Try a car park or deserted street.



### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Keep a steady speed?
- Keep looking up and ahead?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You start looking at the ground directly in front of the bike.
- Your arms go rigid, especially if your bike's riding position makes you lean forward.

### #2. Riding over obstacles

Imagine that you come across something on the road, a pothole or rough patch. You don't notice it in time and you don't have the option to swerve around it. You'll have to ride over it in a straight



line. When you do this for real, your bike is likely to buck a little. You can help the bike over the rough patch or object by making the bike drive forward, slightly lifting weight from the front wheel.



## Where to practise

You can practise this in an area with no traffic, on a straight road or roads with speed humps. In a car park you could use a plank of wood to ride over.

## How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Rise up from the seat slightly, taking your weight on the foot pegs?
- Accelerate the bike slightly?
- Pull back on the bars?

## Mistakes you can make:

- You shut the throttle as you cross the obstruction.
- You let your focus drop down to the ground.
- You come at the obstruction at an angle rather than square on to it.

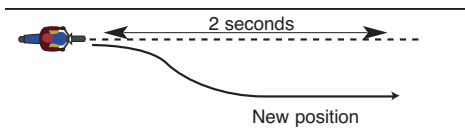
## TIP

**Uneven surfaces, such as bumps, roadworks and broken surfaces, may affect your control of the bike. When you ride on an uneven surface, slow down, have the bike as upright as possible and raise yourself slightly on the footrests so that you can absorb the road shocks with your knees and elbows.**

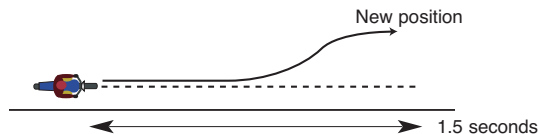
## LEAN

### #3. Swerve or quick lane change

Ride in a straight line at about 30 km/h. Check the mirrors and do a **head check** to make sure no one is following. Now, steer the bike from the left part of the lane to the right taking about two seconds.



Now try it in only about one and a half seconds. What did you have to do to make the bike swerve more quickly?



Repeat at speeds of 40 and 50 km/h. What effect does the greater speed have on the amount of pressure you need to put on the handlebars? This is known as **countersteering**.

### Where to practise:

You need a straight piece of roadway with two lanes in your direction. Make sure the road is relatively quiet.

### How to check yourself:

Did you:

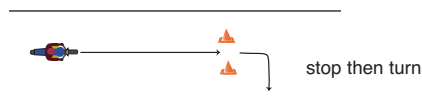
- As part of the **countersteering** process, press firmly on the handlebar in the direction you wanted to go?
- Change to the new position and back to the original position?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You don't press hard enough on the handlebar to make the bike change direction quickly.
- Your movement is not smooth.
- You do not take up and remain in the new position accurately.

#### #4. Go, Stop, Turn

This exercise is good for extending your balance and coordination. In first gear, ride in a straight line. Bring the bike to a complete stop with the clutch in, keeping both feet up on the foot pegs. Then, before you lose balance, take off again and immediately turn left or right, looking in the direction you want to go before the bike leans that way. This task can take more skill than you think. Don't try it even in slow-moving traffic until you are expert.



#### Where to practise:

- This one is best in quiet parking areas, away from traffic.

#### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Brake firmly to a near stop with the bike upright?
- Look in the direction you wanted to turn before you turned?
- Pull the clutch lever in just enough to **disengage the drive to the rear wheel?**

- Accelerate smoothly just as the bike reached its maximum lean?

## STOP

#### #5. Quick stop, straight

This task is for a quick stop. It's not the same as smoothly riding up to stop at a stop sign or a red traffic light. Practise a series of stops first using the front brake only, then using the rear brake only. Now, see how you combine the two separate skills into an effective routine for stopping firmly. Ride in a straight line at about 50 km/h. Check your mirrors to make sure nothing is following you at a close distance. Bring your bike to a complete stop using both brakes. Repeat several times. Note whether you reduce your distance. For extra information check out Practice Task #12 on p72.

#### Where to practise:

A location with a good, sealed surface and a speed limit of at least 50 km/h. It needs to be relatively quiet so that you don't endanger yourself or inconvenience other traffic. (Note: this is more advanced than the braking in Learning Stage 2 as you will be going slightly faster.)

### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Check behind you?
- Keep the motorcycle upright?
- **Set up the brakes?**
- Use both brakes the same way as you did when you practised them separately? (You can't answer this question accurately unless you first practised the separate components. You might be surprised how you used the brakes when you practise them separately.)
- Ease off the brake pressure just before stopping?
- Have first gear engaged ready to move away again?

### Mistakes you can make:

Be very sure you understand the technique you will use for this task. In your enthusiasm to stop as quickly as you can it is very easy to:

- Forget all the basics, just grab the brakes and give them everything you've got. Failing to prepare the bike for hard

braking can have serious consequences such as locking the front brake. The bike could then fall very quickly.

- Look down at the ground directly in front of the bike. You then lose touch with events around you.
- Forget to tap down through the gears and get to first gear. You won't be able to move away smartly if you need to.

### WARNING

**You must get braking right. It is extremely important. If you have any doubts about your braking technique and think it might be faulty, do something about it. Check with a training provider and get professional assistance. Most training providers run courses or sessions for licensed riders. Don't take chances with braking.**

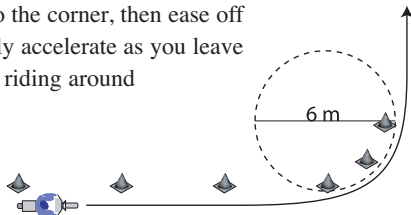
## #6. Brake into a curve

In a perfect world everybody would always go into turns and corners at the right speed, but at some stage you could find yourself going into a turn at an intersection or going into a corner too fast.

This task lets you feel what it's like to keep braking as you ride into a turn. It is highly recommended you do this task with an instructor or coach and at 20 km/h.

It is important that you are actually using the brakes as you go into the turn. You won't get the benefit if you just close the throttle before you reach your corner.

Go to an empty car park. Set out your markers (see diagram) and ride in a straight line towards your corner. As you approach the corner, slow down for it using both brakes. Continue to brake as you go into the corner, then ease off the brakes and gently accelerate as you leave the curve. Continue riding around your practice area. Return to the corner and repeat.



## How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Apply both brakes while you were travelling straight?
- Keep braking as you leaned the bike for the corner?
- Ease off the brakes before accelerating gently out of the corner?

After you've done this several times, try increasing your speed a little. Review how you went and check 'head, eyes, arms'. Ask whether you have thinking power available as you do the task. As you gain more thinking ability, you can then try the task on quiet roads.

## Mistakes you can make:

- You may discover that this task makes you tense up as you approach your corner. This can make you just slow before the corner and not use the brakes at all.
- You look down at the ground just in front of your bike.
- You tense up your arms making it difficult to lean the bike for the corner.

TIP

**Skids in braking can happen and it's important that you know how to gain control, just in case! To regain control of a front wheel skid, immediately release the front brake lever to allow the wheel to start turning again and then re-apply. To regain control in a rear wheel skid, steer the bike straight (in the direction of the skid) to get the wheels in line and release the rear brake, then re-apply.**

## PROTECT

### #7. Recognise your own carelessness

Find an intersection on a main road, one where you can't see traffic approaching from the left or right, and where most drivers seem to drive through at about the speed limit, assuming that drivers in the intersecting road will give way as the law requires.

Approach the intersection just like any other driver, making sure not to go over the speed limit.

When you are three seconds from the intersection check how you feel. Do you sense fear or discomfort? You should, because at this point you should be **setting up the brakes** and slowing to a safe speed – one where you can stop if another driver does not give

way. Those who don't do this are increasing their risk of having a crash.

### #8. Balance safety against fun

Balancing the need to protect yourself against the desire to have fun can be hard. This task helps you find out how strongly those needs compete for your attention. Use it to see another side of your riding.

Ride behind a slow moving vehicle for several minutes (the longer the better). Try to keep a following distance of at least three seconds. Pay attention to how you feel while you are doing this. Do you feel a need to overtake the vehicle? Do you want to move in closer to the vehicle? Do you feel frustrated by travelling at this speed?

If you felt comfortable about staying back from the slow vehicle, you probably can keep your need to have fun in check. If you felt uncomfortable keeping back and holding a safe following distance, you might need to continue to practise doing safe things so that they become normal for you.



## #9. Ride on the edge or to stay safe?

Fright is a human response to the unexpected or unplanned and a realisation that you're not equipped to deal with that situation. Most skilled, safe riders say they get less than two or three big frights a year, even though they cover great distances, in all conditions. Does that sound like you?

If you are already up to two or three frights and haven't ridden many kilometres for the year, then you're doing something wrong. If you get that many frights in a single ride there is something very wrong.

### Do any of these comments sound familiar?

- This corner is tighter than I thought.
- I wasn't expecting gravel to be in the middle of the corner.
- I didn't expect the driver to turn.
- That U-turn worried me a bit.
- The idiot nearly ran me off the road.

If they sound like you, then you're probably riding on the edge. You don't have to be riding too fast or dangerously to be riding on the edge. In fact, any situation that puts you under pressure -

or gives you a fright - is on the edge. If you're registering frights, it's time to recheck your safe riding skills.

## TEST YOURSELF

You're ready for this test, if you've already...

- Been riding regularly - about 400 km per month.
- Covered the [Practice Tasks](#) for this [Learning Stage](#).
- Specifically practised quick stops and quick lane repositioning.

If that sounds like where you're at, then you're ready to test yourself:

1. Can you describe the careless elements of your last ride? These might include giving in to needs that compromise safety.
2. Can you demonstrate bike control skills that require sensitive or assertive input?





## LEARNING STAGE 4 – CONTINUING TO IMPROVE

“I view myself as a real rider now. I’ve done lots of riding but still want to learn more and get better. I’ll probably be getting a bigger bike, carrying pillions and maybe touring soon.”

### Move on to greater things

By now, you’re a rider with substantial experience behind you. You’re probably passionate about riding too - riding because you want to, not because you have to. But what sort of rider do you really want to be? One who continues to improve, one who maintains your current performance, or one who slips back? It’s your choice and this is the Learning Stage where you can go forward and improve or maintain your current level of performance (providing you have completed Learning Stage 3).

This stage is about finding out what you don’t know and making it your business to find out how to do it well. You need to remember to run checks on your riding and start stretching yourself. From now on, it’s important to periodically bring your riding to the front of your mind, examine it and improve it. The path to staying safe has no end.

Stay alert to every move you make. Don’t let things slip.

### Want to do something now?

Go for a short ride that includes some small roundabouts. Try a couple of right turns, around the roundabouts, and a U-turn or two.

Can you take those turns with spare thinking power? Review how you did the turns. How do you think an instructor would review how you went? How would they rate you for safety and technical skills?

### Learning Stage 4 targets

- To achieve a level of excellence.
- To maintain a level of safe riding for you and any pillions.
- To stay in touch with riding and avoid becoming careless and complacent.

## The plan

Different plans and practices that change to match your changing targets are needed now. You need to find out what you don't know and make sure you find out how to do it. Discovering what you don't know can be tricky. These tips might help:

- Start with this manual. Browse through the [Practice Tasks](#) for all the [Learning Stages](#) and have a go at any you haven't done for a while. They might get you thinking.
- Ride in new locations. This can highlight bad habits that you might have slipped into. For example, if you're getting careless about keeping your eyes searching for the exits of corners, you might find yourself cornering poorly. After riding on an unfamiliar route, review your performance against your model of correct performance and fix any mistakes.
- Read 'Recognising how you are going' on p22 for tips on how you can use feedback to improve.
- Ideas about your own riding can come from watching others ride. Think about what they are doing right – and wrong. Have you seen something you want to try? Make sure it looks safe and suits your current [Learning Stage](#).
- If you know any riders who really know their stuff, talk to them about riding. They could give you some great tips about what you need to know. 'Other riders' experiences' on p32 has some hints on making the most of information from other riders.
- Try a different bike. Riding someone else's bike can show you how well you apply the basics. Be cautious though – when you're on an unfamiliar bike you run a greater risk of crashing. Make sure the bike you borrow is registered and roadworthy and ask the owner about any peculiarities. Make sure you know where all the controls are and how to operate them. Find out as soon as possible how the brakes behave. It might stop better than yours – or worse. Take it slowly and review how you went as soon as you can after the ride. This will help identify the skills that you need to include in your plan.
- Don't forget the value of training providers – check p110.

## What to practise

### Stay in touch

Staying in touch with riding is really your minimum target. You should come back to this manual regularly so that you don't become careless. There are [Practice Tasks](#) for checking your braking technique and how you are balancing the fun-fear-fright combination.

### Move on to higher levels of excellence

Riding better at a higher level of technical excellence requires constant vigilance and an inquiring mind. Do the Checking Your Level questions on p16. Read other publications about riding. [Practice Tasks](#) for control skills at this stage include using the brakes and gears together, improving your gear changing, checking your [body technique for corners](#) and controlling the throttle while braking.

## Improve the ride for pillion

You will be surprised when you first carry a pillion, especially if you're on a small to medium capacity bike. The bike will handle differently and it will take much further to stop. Many riders discover that their riding is actually quite rough. When they brake or change gears, their pillion's helmet bangs their helmet! You can try some [Practice Tasks](#) for manoeuvring with a pillion, smoothing out the ride for the pillion and leaning the bike with a pillion.



**Remember, when you are carrying a passenger, your bike will respond more slowly. The extra weight means it will take longer to speed up, slow down and make a turn. To compensate, you'll need to ride at a slower speed, particularly on corners, curves and bumps, make sure you increase your following distance and look for larger gaps when you cross, enter or merge with traffic.**



# LEARNING STAGE 4: CONTINUING TO IMPROVE – PRACTICE TASKS

## MOVE

### #1. Improve gear changing

Mastering smooth gear changes can give you a sense of achievement, especially on a bike with a difficult gearbox. It can also help make you a lot safer on the road.

Changing gears up and down smoothly ensures that the tyres make good contact with the road. This is especially important for changing down, when you don't want to lose grip, as you may also be slowing or about to lean into a turn.

Carrying a pillion is one way to really test your gear changing skills. Use this task to help you prepare for carrying a pillion comfortably.

- a) From a stationary position, accelerate up to the speed limit, going through the gears, remaining in each for about three seconds. This is similar to the gear changing task in Learning Stage 2.
- b) Hold a steady speed and change down gears. You might have done this in Learning Stage 2, but it's worth revising because you should now be able to do this with some precision.

- c) After you have done well at the first two steps above, try changing down a gear in a corner only. Don't make this part of your regular riding method. Occasionally you might need to change down a gear while the bike is leaning. It is better to experience this with your mind on the job, rather than suddenly finding you don't do it very well in an unexpected real riding situation.

### Where to practise:

Anywhere you can safely ride at the posted speed limit. Make sure there are some corners and straights.

### Mistakes you can make:

- On up changes you don't **back off the throttle** just before you change.
- On down changes you don't use the throttle accurately enough to match the engine speed with the new gear.

## #2. Smooth enough for pillion?

Carrying a pillion can quickly give you strong and useful feedback on your riding. Many riders are dismayed to discover they bang helmets with their pillion when they change gears (and at other times). The pillion doesn't anticipate the precise moment you back off the throttle, accelerate firmly, brake or change direction. As a result, their body will tend to lurch before they can tense themselves to adapt to the changing motion of the bike.

When you're ready, ask a pillion to ride with you so you can practise smooth control. Explain that you want to check what you are doing. With your pillion on the bike, try these:

- In a straight line and holding the same gear, vary your speed up and down using only the throttle.
- In a straight line, accelerate changing up through the gears. Hold each gear for about three seconds and then go to the next so you do several gear changes quickly.
- In a straight line, vary the speed up and down using throttle and brakes.
- Make some turns such as at intersections, roundabouts, slip lanes and off ramps.

## Where to practise:

Locations where you can travel at the speed limit, but can vary your speed without inconveniencing other traffic.

## How to check yourself:

Pay attention to the reactions from your pillion. Can they sit relaxed, or do they have to brace themselves hard and hang on tightly? Can you accelerate, change gears and brake without banging helmets?



## Mistakes you can make:

A common reaction to carrying a pillion is to tense up and become rough with the controls. When you first start carrying pillions, your bike might feel unfamiliar, behaving almost like a different bike.

You might:

- Open and close the throttle too quickly, throwing the increased weight forward and back.
- Leave braking too late, not realising how much more pressure you need to apply.

### #3. Manoeuvre with pillion

Trying some slow speed exercises with a pillion on the back can give you the chance to explore your bike handling under another set of conditions. Any slow speed task from Learning Stages 2 or 3 will do - but this time with a pillion. Notice how the feel of the bike changes. It will feel heavier and probably less nimble. How well can you adjust to the new conditions and maintain your performance?

#### Where to practise:

Try some initial practice in an empty car park and places where you don't have to worry about taking more space than you expected.

#### How to check yourself:

- Use the same checks as for the slow speed manoeuvres in Learning Stages 2 and 3.
- Run the check on where your head is turned and eyes are focused, and whether your arms are relaxed. (See 'Recognising when you're going too fast' on p24.)

#### Mistakes you can make:

- You tense up and start fighting the bike.

## LEAN

Cornering intrigues many riders and they want to become good at it. However, in their haste to improve they try to achieve too much, too soon, often not paying enough attention to the basics. (Remind yourself about this by reading 'Getting the basics right' on p27.) Setting off to ride corners without a plan in the hope of getting better can also lead to problems.

### #4. Winding roads

If you spend most of your time in city areas, then you probably aren't getting regular experience with bends and winding roads in the country. The occasional ride in the hills can be the setting for serious bike crashes.

Try this task after a break from riding, such as after an extended period of wet weather or after winter when you might start riding more often.

But, first, practise the **Lean** tasks from earlier Learning Stages, spending extra time on Task #11, 'Head and eyes for turns' on p71. When you've got these tasks to the point where they require little thinking power, you could try selecting a series of even bends including, if you can, some with shorter sight distances.

Remember you need to get your head and eyes working automatically otherwise you'll exceed your brain's speed limit (read 'Recognising when you're going too fast' on p24). Ride through the set several times, slowly enough for you to have enough thinking power to analyse your performance. Stop and review how you went.

#### Where to practise:

A location that has a set of bends that are fairly level. Avoid steep inclines or descents.

#### How to check yourself:

Did you:

- Direct your head towards the exit of the bends, and did your head stay horizontal?
- Have your head leading you towards the exit well before you started the lean? (This is the first thing to get right – see 'Recognising when you're going too fast' on p24.)
- Adjust to the correct speed before you started leaning into the turn?

- Have slight **positive throttle** on as you rode through the bend?
- Relax your arms after finishing the braking?
- Feel the bike flowing through the corner with little effort?

#### Mistakes you can make:

- Trying to fix everything at once, leading to **paralysis by analysis**.
- Fighting the bike, going rigid. ('Head, eyes, arms'.)

Remember, corners are risky for riders. (Refresh your understanding of the risk in 'Practice may increase crash risk' on p30.)

### #5. Leaning with pillion

Before you take someone on a long trip, try practising riding corners with a pillion. Ride through a series of turns or corners. Try to discover how the pillion affects your performance for turns. Ten or 15 minutes should be plenty of time. Before starting, make sure you've made good progress on most **Lean Practice Tasks** from the other **Learning Stages**.



### Where to practise:

Try some initial practice in an empty car park and become used to the feel of the extra weight; then you can go to a location where you can lean the bike in a set of turns. You can use a series of turns at intersections and roundabouts. Select times of the day when there is no traffic so you can think clearly about the task.



### How to check yourself:

Review the basics of leaning and braking. Do they continue to work under the extra weight of a pillion passenger?

### Mistakes you can make:

- You don't apply the brakes early or firmly enough to compensate for the extra weight.
- You brake late and have to keep the brakes on into the turn.
- You tense up your arms and body in an attempt to control the bike, affecting the accuracy of your steering and braking.

## STOP

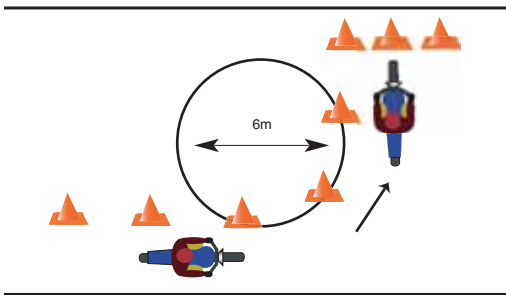
Braking is a critical skill. You simply can't afford to be slack here. Check your braking technique regularly, particularly after any break from frequent riding. Before you try these tasks, make sure you've practised all the earlier **Stop** tasks in other [Learning Stages](#), especially those in Stage 3. You can't afford not to have all the steps in place.

### #6. Brake in a curve

Instructors recommend that you should always brake smoothly and gradually so you are at the right speed to enter a curve, rather than trying to brake in a curve. However, at some point you may find that you are going too fast to slow gently for a hazard when you're in a corner and you will have to brake hard.

This task reminds you what it feels like to brake firmly in a curve when you are thinking about it.

Arrange some markers around the edge of an imaginary circle about six metres across. Ride towards the circle at about 20 km/h. Start to go around the curve. Now **set up the brakes** and bring the bike upright with the front wheel pointing straight, then use both brakes as you would for stopping in a straight line. Do this several times.



### Where to practise:

An empty car park with room for your markers.

### How to check yourself:

Did you:

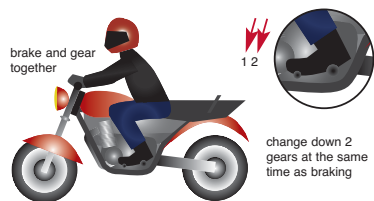
- **Set up the brakes** and bring the bike upright?
- Squeeze both the brakes as the bike became upright?
- Progressively squeeze both brakes until there was only a small reserve of tyre grip?

If you often have to brake like this in a corner, you are riding too fast for the conditions and taking risks.

## #7. Brake and gear together

From time to time you may encounter situations where you only have a short time to reduce speed and select a new gear.

Use this task to develop the skills you need for such a situation. It is designed to help you fine-tune the basics and those skills you need for getting out of trouble. So make sure you can change down gears and hold a constant speed. Check the tasks for **Move** in Learning Stage 2 before tackling this one.



When you're ready, travel in a straight line, accelerate up to about 60 km/h. Make sure no traffic is following closely. When it's clear, brake firmly while changing down two gears at the same time.

### Where to practise:

Find a location where you don't have to deal with traffic. You will be slowing down and the task may take some thinking power while you practise.

### How to check yourself:

- Think through the likely steps that you need to do this correctly.
- Go back to the tasks that contain the parts that help you solve this, especially the Learning Stage 2 **Stop** tasks and the **Move** tasks in Learning Stages 2 and 3.

### Mistakes you can make:

- You don't match the throttle position to the speed of the bike when you release the clutch. This results in the bike jerking or skidding.
- You don't operate the brake and throttle correctly with the one hand.

## PROTECT

### #8. Risk check

Are you determined to protect yourself? Are you risky, just trusting, or careless? If you do no other [Practice Tasks](#) after you get your full licence you should at least do this one.

Ask yourself these questions:

- How many events do you ride through without at least easing off the throttle?
- Do your habits protect you, or make you vulnerable?

### How often do you do these?

- [Ease off the throttle](#) for green lights.
- Look left and right at green lights.
- [Head check](#) every time you deviate more than a vehicle's width.
- Maintain a survival space between you and the other vehicles.

- Check “mirror/brake” when slowing and stopping.
- Only increase speed in a curve when the view is clear.
- [Set up the brakes](#) to prepare for hazards.
- Slow down if you can't read the scene at least five seconds ahead.
- Wear full protective clothing no matter how far you have to ride.

If it isn't always, it isn't a habit!

#### TIP

As weather worsens, so too does visibility. **Spray, rain and fog obscure hazards, and helmet visors and goggles can mist up with condensation, making things worse. Always use a clear, scratch free visor, and consider use of a breath guard, which deflects warm breath away from the visor. Most helmets come with breath guards.**

## TEST YOURSELF

The tests you use for Learning Stage 4 will vary to suit the target you have set yourself.

### 1. To achieve a level of excellence.

The level of satisfaction you get from riding is the best test for this target. You might not be able to do everything you want, but you can enjoy the process of discovering how much you didn't know.

### 2. To maintain a level of safe riding for yourself and pillions.

Measure this by the number of times you have to brake firmly or swerve to get yourself out of trouble. If you never have to brake hard or swerve, that's great, but it could be luck rather than skill. Run the reality check: do I have so much fun that I let my guard down and go beyond the limit?

### 3. To stay in touch with your riding and avoid becoming careless and complacent.

How many times in the last month of riding did you consciously practise with the aim of learning or reviewing how you're doing? Remember, going for a ride is not practice. See 'Learning to become a better rider' on p17.



#### TIP

**Even though you're a confident rider now, come back to this manual from time to time to get ideas for some practice sessions. Remember, you need to continually practise skills just to maintain them, especially braking and swerving. If you take breaks from riding, say during winter, practising is even more important.**



**HIGH RISK  
AREA**



**Back off the throttle**

Close the throttle as you're changing gears.

**Blip the throttle**

Short, sharp opening/closing of the throttle (briefly rev the engine).

**Body technique for corners/body movement**

You must lean with the bike, keep your line of sight level and look where you want to go when cornering.

**Carelessness**

Being inattentive or not taking care with your riding.

**'Checking Your Level'**

A series of statements to help you work out which Learning Stage you are up to and pointers to help you work out what you need to know and how you should be practising.

**Corner under throttle**

Keeping the throttle slightly open when cornering assists stability.

**Countersteering**

Pressing forward the handlebars in the direction you want to go. Press right - go right. Press left - go left.

**Disengage the drive to the rear wheel**

Pull in the clutch lever and/or select neutral.

**Ease off the throttle**

Partly close the throttle on approach to an intersection or similar hazard.

**Feed out the clutch**

Let out the clutch lever progressively.

**Floorboard**

The platform section of a scooter where you place your feet.

**Friction point**

The point where you feel the engine trying to move the bike as you slowly release the clutch lever.

**Head check**

A look over the shoulder (left or right) to see if anything is beside you before changing lanes or pulling out into traffic.

**Idle speed of the engine**

The speed of the engine with the bike in neutral and throttle closed.

**Learning Stage/s**

The four stages of learning to ride that you need to work through to help you safely move from being a beginner to an experienced, safe rider.

**Paralysis by analysis**

Thinking about a skill so much you get confused and get worse at that skill.

**Positive throttle**

Slightly open throttle.

**Practice Tasks**

Exercises for you to practise, appropriate for each Learning Stage, that are designed to help you think about what you are doing and shape the muscles and skills you'll need on the road.

**Ride the clutch**

Let the clutch lever out to friction point, then alternate from just before to just past friction point so the bike doesn't move or moves very slowly.

**Road-related areas**

Areas like footpaths, nature strips and parking areas. The road rules generally apply to road-related areas in the same way as they apply to roads.



**Set up and squeeze**

Begin to apply the front and back brakes just until both brakes start to work (set up). Then, progressively squeeze as firmly as you need until you stop (squeeze).

**Set up the brakes/Setting up the brakes**

See ‘Set up and squeeze’

**Skid/s**

A tyre losing traction with the road surface. A skid can be caused by sudden braking or slippery road surfaces.

**Stall/Stalled/Stalling the engine**

The engine cutting out, usually because the clutch lever is released too quickly.

**Time and space**

The time needed to make decisions and the space between you and danger.

**Trigger words**

The words such as ‘mirror, indicator, head check, move into lane, etc’, that you use to help you focus on actions.

**‘Unrestricted’ motorcycle licence**

A motorcycle licence not subject to zero BAC, the 260cc restriction, or the passenger restriction imposed on new riders.

**Wind the throttle**

Open the throttle smoothly and progressively.

# WANT TO KNOW EVEN MORE?

Check out these other great references:

*Ride On* - motorcycle skills video. Copies can be ordered from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau on 1800 026 349 or the VicRoads bookshop in Kew (tel: (03) 9854 2782).

*Victorian Rider Handbook* - you need to read this to get your Learner Permit and Licence. Available from newsagencies, VicRoads offices and the VicRoads bookshop in Kew (tel: (03) 9854 2782).

*The Right Stuff* - protective clothing brochure. Available from VicRoads offices and the VicRoads bookshop in Kew (tel: (03) 9854 2782).

*The Right Line* - handy riding tips brochure. Available from VicRoads offices and the VicRoads bookshop in Kew (tel: (03) 9854 2782).

*The Mates Riding Scheme* - a program for motorcycle clubs to help their novice rider members survive on the road. Available through VicRoads Road Safety Department (tel: (03) 9854 2726).

*the Drive Smart CD-ROM* - although developed for drivers, can help you with your hazard perception skills. Go to [www.drivesmart.vic.gov.au](http://www.drivesmart.vic.gov.au)

*the Ride Smart CD-ROM* - this product is being developed specifically to assist riders to develop hazard perception skills. For information on the availability of Ride Smart go to [www.tacsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.tacsafety.vic.gov.au)

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**For other information:**  
*the VicRoads website* – [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)  
*the Spokes website* – [www.spokes.com.au](http://www.spokes.com.au)  
*the arrive alive website* – [www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au](http://www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au)

## **Signal faults and road conditions:**

**13 11 70**

Call any time to report traffic signal faults and hazardous road conditions.

## **VicRoads**

**13 11 71**

Customer services and enquiries including licences, registration and much more.

## **Vehicles Securities Register (VSR)**

**13 11 71**

Find out whether a bike still has money owing on it before you buy. If it does, it could be repossessed from you!

# TRAINING PROVIDERS

## **Armstrongs Driver Education Pty Ltd**

Fairfield  
(03) 9464 6464  
[www.armdrive.com.au](http://www.armdrive.com.au)

## **Aust-Link Pty Ltd**

Mildura, Swan Hill  
5023 8581

## **Baylink Motorcycle Training Academy**

Hastings  
5971 9312  
[www.baylinktraining.com.au](http://www.baylinktraining.com.au)

## **DECA**

Ardeer, Bairnsdale, Bendigo,  
Carrum Downs, Leongatha,  
Newborough, Sale, Shepparton,  
Wangaratta, Wodonga  
1300 365 400  
[www.deca.com.au](http://www.deca.com.au)

## **HART**

Kilsyth, Tullamarine  
(03) 9335 2766  
[www.hartridertraining.com.au](http://www.hartridertraining.com.au)

## **Motorcycle Motion**

Moorabbin  
(03) 9532 0509  
[www.motorcyclemotion.com.au](http://www.motorcyclemotion.com.au)

## **Motorcycle Training Academy**

Doveton  
(03) 9706 9733  
[www.motorcycletraining.com.au](http://www.motorcycletraining.com.au)

## **Ride Tek**

313 Hammond Road  
Dandenong  
(03) 9701 7304  
0414 331 037  
[www.ridetek.com.au](http://www.ridetek.com.au)

## **South West Institute of TAFE**

Hamilton, Portland, Warrnambool  
5564 8967  
[www.swtafe.vic.edu.au/shrt/shrt.htm](http://www.swtafe.vic.edu.au/shrt/shrt.htm)

## **Stay Upright Motorcycle Techniques**

Ballarat, Geelong, Hoppers Crossing,  
Horsham  
1300 366 640  
[www.stayupright.com.au](http://www.stayupright.com.au)

## **SWAN Training**

148-150 Campbell Street  
Swan Hill  
5033 1334



You can help VicRoads improve its services for motorcyclists.

Simply mail this completed form to **Discover Safe Riding Survey, Road Safety Department, VicRoads, 60 Denmark Street, Kew Vic 3101** before 30 June 2006.

**Tick (✓) where appropriate:**

**Gender**  Male  Female

**Age**  18-20  20-29  30-39  40-49  50-59  60+

**Riding experience** \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years

**How often do you ride?**  Daily  Weekly  Monthly  Infrequently

**Type of motorcycle ridden**  Cruiser  Sports  Sports-Touring  Touring  Trail  Scooter

**Please answer the following questions:**

**1. How did you find out about Discover Safe Riding?** (Tick One or More)

- Friends/family  VicRoads  Motorcycle instructor  Library  Motorcycle club (Please specify ..... )  
 Website (Please specify ..... )  Other (Please specify ..... )

**2. Where did you get Discover Safe Riding?** (Tick One only)

- VicRoads Bookshop  Downloaded from the internet  Was given to me  Other (Please specify..... )

**3. Which sections of Discover Safe Riding did you use?** (Tick One or More)

- All sections  Introduction  Safety guidelines  Checking your level  
 Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 1  Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 2  
 Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 3  Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 4

**4. For each section you used, rate how useful you found the information from ‘not useful’ to ‘very useful’.** *Tick (✓) appropriate rating:*

	Not useful	Useful	Very useful
All sections.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety guidelines .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Checking your level .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 1.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 2.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 3.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Stage and Practice Task – Stage 4.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Indicate what in particular you like about Discover Safe Riding** (Tick One or More)

- Style  Photos/illustrations  Language  Order of information  The practice tasks

**6. How do you think Discover Safe Riding could be improved?** \_\_\_\_\_

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