

# *Slow Riding Techniques*

*Everyone who attended the DWDAM slow riding day said it was a great session, I think everyone would have liked to have had longer to practice. So how about doing some now that many of the car parks are empty. Every time you go out, pop into one and practice for five minutes. By the summer you'll be an expert !*

## **Proper posture**

Sit comfortably on the bike and keep your knees against the tank. Try not to move around too much as this transfers weight around and provides steering input to the bike. Aim to keep your feet on the footpegs. RELAX !

## **Sighting**

Failure to look ahead is one of the most common errors with slow speed riding. A good way to practice this is setting up cones about four meters apart and slaloming through them. Vary the distance between cones if your bike can't make it. As you are going between two cones, you should be looking at the path you want to take in the next gate, which should be about 3 to 5m ahead. Many riders look 3 to 5 feet ahead which causes them to be shaky. Looking the proper distance ahead gives your mind enough time to plan a route, so you don't have to make so many last-minute corrections. Force yourself to look far ahead; "raise your gaze" is a commonly used quote.

## **No Front Brake**

Under normal conditions, the front brake is an invaluable tool for keeping your bike under control. However, at very slow speeds while the front wheel is turned, the front brake can be too strong to provide a smooth stop; the rebound from the dive of front braking throws the bike out of the vertical and tends to make the bike want to 'fall' to the inside of the turn. Do not use the front brake at very low speeds. The rear has more than enough power to stop you at these speeds, just be careful not to shift around to get your foot on the brake pedal (if it isn't already, as it should be), or you'll upset the bike's balance.

## **The Rear Brake**

Feathering (engaging the brake lightly to slow motion without bringing the bike to a halt) the rear brake will keep the motorcycle 'taut' and under control. A combination of feathering the rear brake, using the friction point of the clutch and subtle or gentle use of the throttle is essential to completing a slow speed manoeuvre; generally keep the revs up a bit and slip the clutch and use the rear brake to prevent the bike from picking up too much speed.

## **Clutch Slipping**

Another major key to slow speed control is the clutch. Most motorcycles have wet clutches, which means that the friction plates are bathed in oil to keep them cool. This means that slipping a clutch is not a problem for a short time. When riding at a speed that is slower than your idle will let you go, control your speed by pulling in the clutch past the friction point to disengage the engine from the rear wheel. The friction point is the point that the clutch just starts to 'grab' and transfer power to the rear wheel. When you feel unsteady because you are going so slowly you feel you almost have to put your foot down, then let out the clutch a bit to speed up until you're steady.

## **U-Turns and Figures-of-Eight**

When doing U-turns or Figures-of-eight, look where you want the bike to end up; don't just look at the path you think you want the front wheel to take. This means turning your head on your neck and looking behind you! You go where you look; if your eyes just follow the front wheel, you will draw too large a circle and not make the turn. 🏍️