

MOTORCYCLE TRAINING IS WORTH THE EFFORT!

Submitted by: Kenny George

After spending the last three years living the pedestrian lifestyle, I felt a bit of frustration at the thought of taking a job where I would have to drive. After careful consideration, I decided the obvious compromise would be to get a motorcycle so that if I were forced to accept the doldrums of commuter traffic, I could at least enjoy the open air, not being confined to a steel cage.

Prior to purchasing my current motorcycle, my riding experience was limited to the vacant roads of rural West Africa, and dirt bike trails on farmland. I knew that if I were going to share the road with aggressive, impatient, and less than alert drivers, I would need higher confidence in my ability to maneuver my new motorcycle. Before taking my bike for a spin, I enrolled in a three-day motorcycle rider safety course. I figured that a little more practice on a motorcycle couldn't hurt me, not to mention that taking a weekend course swerving between cones to earn my motorcycle endorsement seemed far less painful than dealing with the BMV.

My experience with the motorcycle rider safety course left me pleasantly surprised. My initial thoughts were that the class would be largely review since I was not new to motorcycling, but in reality it was quite the opposite. My instructors alerted me to small things I could do differently that would not only increase safety, but also make my riding experience more comfortable. Riding a motorcycle takes an incredible amount of dexterity, and although we don't always think about it, requires performing several tasks at once. Breaking down each of these tasks (e.g. shifting, initiating turns through leaning, watching for hazards, and clutch control) and enforcing how to best control each makes for a more aware rider.

It has now been several months since my rider safety course, and I am happy to report that I constantly consider the riding techniques presented to me during my training. I believe that I now have a heightened awareness of both my motorcycle and the dangers of the road, and this alone makes the taking a motorcycle rider safety course well worth the time and money.