

Performance Tip

Winter Maintenance Tip

By Steve Smith

Sacramento Motorcycle Service Center

916-972-8100



This spring performance tip is focused on something more important than your motorcycle. It is focused on you and your body. Bikers don't often think of maintaining their health and bodies in terms similar to motorcycle maintenance.

Ignoring or forgetting about maintaining your body often results in sunburns, road rashes, bug smacks, busted toes and sore eyes from wind and sun. How much fun will you have tomorrow when suffering from any of the above? Here are some things to remember as the weather warms and we are on the road.

To maintain and protect yourself, ride with the best protection you can get. I mean more than the D.O.T. approved helmet. (Which is not approved by anyone, let alone the Department of Transportation, but that is another story.) No, what I am talking about is protecting the rest of your body, like with gloves, good clothing, glasses and boots.

Let's start at the top and work our way down. The choice of eye protection is the most vital decision you make. Pay attention here, because you know there aren't very many sightless riders piloting a motorcycle. Choose goggles or glasses that fit your face tight enough to stay there. They must fit snug enough around your eyes to keep bugs and other flying objects from getting around or under the lenses and into your eyes. Windshields are not adequate, as they often kill bugs on the top edge and send them right into your face. Bees are really bad because they are pissed off and sting you before dying. So wear the goggles and glasses that fit right, and live to see and ride another day.

Next down is your shirt. Riders like to ride in the warmer weather with a short sleeve t-shirt or tank top. Think about this for a minute, and remember the images of desert dwelling people covering their whole bodies in the hot sun and drying winds. Long sleeve shirts protect your skin from sun, wind, and those ever smacking into us bugs and angry bees. Long sleeve shirts actually keep us cooler by insulating us from the hot sun and dry air.

Moving on down, I wear gloves all year. There are few things as distracting as the sting of a dragonfly hitting your bare knuckles at eighty miles per hour. Except of course the pissed off bee stinging your face. The gloves are good preventative maintenance.

Now we get to our britches. All I can say here wear long pants, not shorts. Girls, we love your long beautiful legs, but wear chaps over them until you arrive at your destination. You won't like them sunburned, covered with road rash, bruised or speckled with dead bug juice.

At the bottom are the feet. I am seeing guys wearing sneakers while riding. At least your feet are covered, but not very well protected. Wear a leather shoe or boot, and avoid sandals or other open toes footwear. Bruises to your feet hurt, and make it hard to walk.

So now that I have picked on your wardrobe, let me that yes, I know that I have not mentioned "LEATHERS." I am not saying that you shouldn't wear leathers. This maintenance tip is simply a reminder that when not wearing leathers in warm weather, your body still needs protection. Put on the sun block and whatever protective clothes you choose and ride safe.