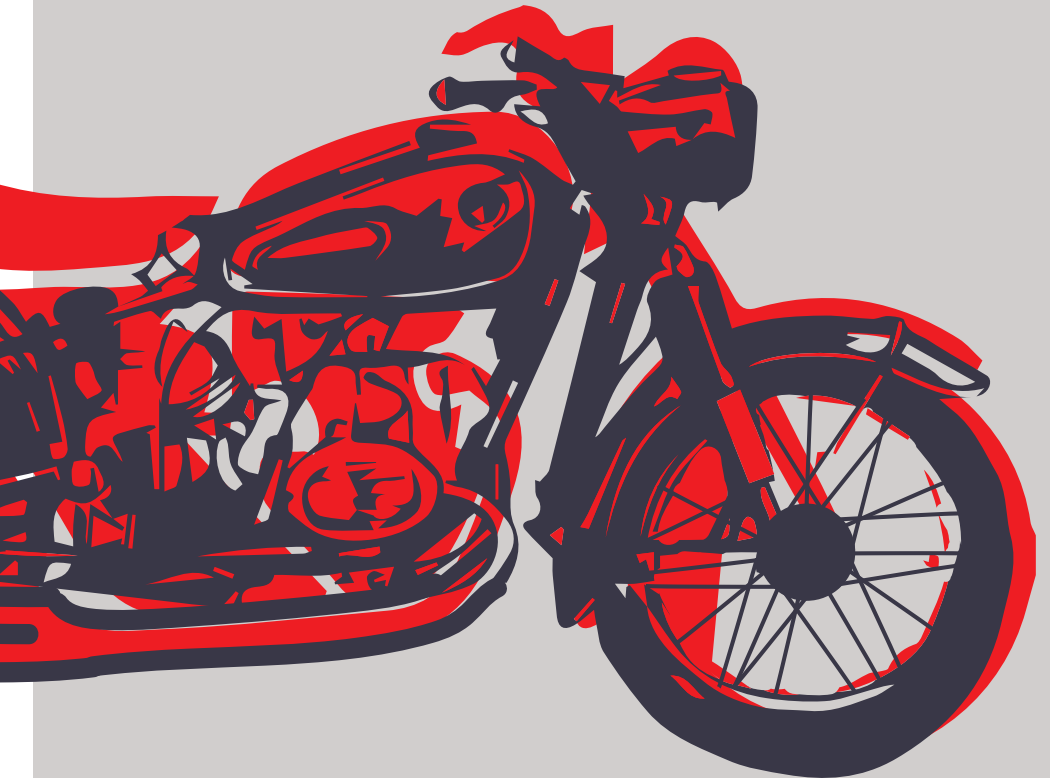


NEW RIDERS GUIDE





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FIRST THINGS FIRST, WELCOME TO THE BIKING WORLD!

Getting a motorbike licence is a great achievement, and probably one of the trickiest things you'll do to date, and it will allow you to experience the freedom of the open road like no car or van will.

But getting your licence is about more than just being allowed to ride your bike. By passing your test, and getting your first bike, you will join a group of bikers who believe that four wheels move the body, but two wheels move the soul. When one rider speaks to another, they talk of the thrill of the wind on their faces, the agility of the bike,

and the freedom they feel on two wheels – and you'll soon be part of that community.

When getting your licence, you'll be faced with a whole new world of decisions to make, laws to follow, and jargon to learn. Here at Bikesure, we've put together this guide to bring you our top tips and hints on how to get started on two wheels, and hopefully become a better rider.

Welcome to the biker community – enjoy the ride!

TYPES OF LICENCE

Before you begin scouring the web for your dream bike and sorting your insurance, it's worth checking what type of motorcycle or scooter you can ride on what type of licence. Because of the

number of licences available, figuring this out can seem like a bit of a minefield – but all you need to do is check the category on your practical test certificate and look at the table on the next page.

WHAT MOTORBIKE CAN I RIDE?



New motorcyclists in the UK often want to get on the roads as soon as possible, but the variety of licences available and the rules associated with them can be quite confusing and potentially off-putting.

Bikesure has compiled this simple graphic to explain the legal requirement for each bike and when you can apply to take your test.

	MOPED		RESTRICTED LICENCE			FULL
CATEGORY	CBT with Provisional	AM or p	CBT with Provisional	A1	A2	A
MINIMUM AGE	16	16	17	17	19	24 under direct access, 21 under progressive access*
MAX SPEED	28 mph	28 mph	Legal limit of the road you're on	Legal limit of the road you're on	Legal limit of the road you're on	Legal limit of the road you're on
ENGINE SIZE	50cc	50cc	125cc	125cc	No restriction	No restriction
POWER OUTPUT	Not exceeding 4 kW (5.3bhp)	Not exceeding 4 kW (5.3bhp)	Not exceeding 11 kW (14.6bhp)	Not exceeding 11 kW (14.6bhp)	Not exceeding 35 kW (46.6bhp)	No limit
LICENCE REQUIRED	Provisional and CBT	Either: 1. Full car (taken before 01/02/01) 2. Full car (taken after 01/02/01) plus CBT	Provisional and CBT	A1	A2	Full Category A Motorcycle Licence
LENGTH OF LICENCE	2 years	No restriction on full AM or qualifying full car licence.	2 years	No restrictions	No restrictions	No restrictions
RESULT OF PASSING	Can ride mopeds up to 50cc with L plates	Can ride mopeds up to 50cc without L plates	Can ride a lightweight motorcycle of up to 125cc with L plates	Can ride a lightweight motorcycle of up to 125cc	Can ride a bike of any cc (that doesn't produce more than 35 Kw (46.6bhp))	Can ride any roadworthy motorcycle
CAN I CARRY PASSENGERS?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
CAN I RIDE ON MOTORWAYS?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Also cannot ride a power-limited vehicle which has been restricted by more than 50% to make compliant or was over 70kW (93.2bhp) originally. Following restriction the bike cannot have a power to weight ratio of more than 0.2kW/kg

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESTRICTED LICENCE & FULL LICENCE



RESTRICTED LICENCE

Full restricted A1/A2 licence: You can ride a 125cc bike with a pillion and on a motorway. A full restricted A2 lets you do the same on a bike of up to 35 kW (46.6bhp).

FULL

Allows you to ride any motorcycle of any capacity and power with or without a passenger on any road.

*DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIRECT ACCESS AND PROGRESSIVE ACCESS:

PROGRESSIVE:

This allows people who already have an A2 licence to go for a full category A licence before they turn 24 provided they have held a full restricted A2 licence for a minimum of two years.



DIRECT ACCESS:

This route allows trainees over 24 years old to achieve a full motorcycle licence without previously holding a licence for a smaller bike.

Sources
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code-in-max-2-motorcycle-licence-requirements>
<https://www.gov.uk/ride-motorcycle-moped/learn-to-ride>
<https://www.gov.uk/cbt/compulsory-back-to-back-training-course>
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/default.asp?compulsory-basics-training-cbt>
<http://231p.com/how-fast-125cc-bike-can-go-speed.html>
<http://www.cambridge.com/licenses-and-law/all-licence-types.html>
<http://www.roadwise.co.uk/bikes-2/bike-facts/the-law/>

Bikesure
 Freethinking Insurance

TIPS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT INSURANCE

For first time riders, insurance can be a bit of a headache. Packed with insurance jargon – which almost seems like its own language – even just finding out what you want and how to get it can be a fraught experience. There are all sorts of options, extras and add-ons that you can take when you buy bike insurance, so how will you know which is best for you?

Well, never fear, Bikesure is here to help. Here are just a few of the most common terms you'll find when you look for motorbike insurance:

LEVELS OF COVER

Some of the most common things you will see are the terms fully comprehensive, third party only, and third party, fire and theft. These explain what you will be covered for – with higher levels of cover often costing a little more, but providing better protection. Third party only is the minimum you need, as the law says that you must have enough protection to at least pay the costs involved with helping the other party in the event of an accident and should you be found at fault.

DISCOUNTS AND ADD-ONS

Keep your eyes open for discounts and add-ons of all varieties. From discounts for certain types of bike, through to cheaper premiums once you have more experience, there are plenty of opportunities to save money.

Add-ons, like personal injury cover, comprehensive breakdown cover and protective clothing and helmet insurance, also provide ways to increase the level of cover you receive and manage your premium.

NO CLAIMS BONUS (NCB)

A no claims bonus is exactly what it sounds like; a discount offered by insurers based on the length of time that you have been riding without making a claim. While for new motorcyclists this will obviously start at zero, after several years you could rack up a bonus worth hundreds of pounds – not to be sniffed at.

EXCLUSIONS

Be careful of exclusions and conditions when applying for motorbike insurance. Many cheaper insurance policies could enforce rules about a rider's age or the insurance band of their bike, meaning motorcyclists may either be refused cover, or forced to pay more than they had expected.

When looking for your first motorbike insurance policy, a specialist insurer may be best for you. Bikesure offers tailored insurance that has been specifically designed to offer great cover at an affordable price – exactly what any new rider needs.

WHAT TO AVOID

As much as there are things to look for, there are things to avoid when sorting out your insurance. Be wary of overpriced premiums, and always shop around. Make sure that you are truthful on your application too, as even little white lies can come back to haunt you when it comes to claim time – see page 10 for details on common application mistakes.

TIPS FOR CHEAPER INSURANCE

Your motorcycle insurance is affected by various factors and, while you can't change your age, or easily change your address, there are a number of things you can do to reduce your premiums.

- Lower-powered bikes are obviously cheaper to insure, and a good way to pay less for insurance while you build up your no claims bonus, which can translate to cheaper insurance once you're ready to move on to a more powerful bike
- Riding fewer miles. Insurers look at your annual mileage to assess the likelihood of an accident or claim
- Storage and security measures. The harder your motorcycle is to steal, the lower your premiums. Keeping the bike locked away in a garage (if you have one) reduces premiums, as will anti-theft measures such as ground anchors, immobilisers and bike locks
- Single seater bikes, which mean you can't carry a passenger, tend to be a lower insurance group than two-seaters, and therefore cheaper to insure

- Get on the electoral roll: those with their names registered correctly on the electoral roll get cheaper insurance rates
- Keep an eye on your credit score: those with a good credit score can get more favourable rates from insurers. You can check your credit score for free online.
- Increasing your excess, which is the amount of any claim that your insurer will expect you to pay in the event of a claim, will usually reduce your premium. Make sure you can afford to pay any increased excess should the worst happen.

Here at Bikesure, the specialist motorcycle insurance division of Adrian Flux, we want to make sure that your new motorbike insurance is as cost-efficient as possible, whilst providing a high level of cover. We have access to a wide variety of specialist motorbike insurance schemes, and can offer cover tailored to your needs.

Read on for more information on a few of the insurance deals offered by Bikesure.

YOUNG RIDERS

Bikesure is committed to helping young riders save money on their motorcycle insurance. We take a measured approach and can reward young riders who put in the extra effort to improve their riding proficiency and experience. If you're a young rider who has a category A licence at 21, we can take your greater experience and skill into account when we calculate your rate. We can offer direct debit payments for 16 year olds (subject to a suitable adult taking out the credit agreement).

CONVICTED RIDER

Convicted rider insurance is available for riders with motoring convictions or criminal convictions. We will cover riders with drink driving convictions as well as riders previously banned for other offences. When you have a conviction, it's important to choose a company that sees you as an individual, rather than a statistic. By understanding the circumstances of a conviction, we can often offer you a cheaper rate than you might expect, because we don't have to assume the worst.

MULTI-BIKE INSURANCE

We know that many passionate bikers have more than one motorbike. A lot of firms will issue separate quotes for each bike, without considering that only one bike can be ridden at a time, or that real enthusiasts take better care of their bikes. However, we can offer you a multi-bike insurance policy with a single low premium for all of your bikes, saving you time and money.

HOW TO BUY

It's easy to buy insurance through Bikesure. With our online motorbike quote-and-buy system you can instantly see the cheapest motorbike insurance quote we have available based on your details. If you like the price you see, you can buy online or speak to one of our knowledgeable staff to take up the policy or discuss further options. Alternatively, you can give us a call on 0800 369 8580 and one of our colleagues will help you with your quote.

TOP FIVE MISTAKES ON INSURANCE APPLICATIONS

Everyone wants cheaper motorbike insurance, and why wouldn't they? The costs of motoring are high enough and are rising all the time, with gear, MOT and fuel to pay for even before you consider the cost of the motorbike itself.

People will go to great lengths to save money on almost anything, and motorcycle insurance is no exception. As many as one in 10 of us isn't entirely honest when giving information to our insurers, telling little white lies in an effort to secure lower premiums.

Giving out false information on insurance quotes is technically fraud, and anyone who bends the truth, even just to try to save a few pounds on insurance, runs the risk of having their policy cancelled and claims dismissed – not to mention getting in trouble with the law.

Insurers often investigate any information that they consider to be suspicious, so you're best off telling the truth from the start – as one cancelled policy can affect your chances of getting cover from other insurers in the future.

Here are the five most common mistakes people make on their applications:

- 1** Bike modifications: Most people don't realise that almost any change to your motorbike counts as a modification. Every modification needs declaring, but fortunately Bikesure understands your passion and can update your policy. Mods won't necessarily push the cost of insurance up, but you won't be covered if you don't disclose them.
- 2** 'Forgetting' previous claims: You must tell your insurer if you have had a claim or accident within the previous five years – even if the incident wasn't your fault or it has been fully settled. Insurers can check against a central database to see your previous claims, so there's no hiding.
- 3** Withholding motoring convictions: This is one of the most common issues, as people tend to assume that riders with convictions must pay a lot more for their insurance. If you've had a motoring conviction in the past five years, insurers have to know about it or you run the risk of the policy being cancelled.
- 4** Incorrect details: Two details that people get wrong, are where the vehicle is kept and what it is used for. Sometimes these are genuine mistakes, a person gets a new job and starts using their bike for business, or their garage is full and they move it on to the street – but insurers must be kept informed, or your policy is at risk.
- 5** Cancelling during the winter: A common mistake made by bike owners is to cancel their insurance during the winter months when the bike isn't being used. Not only will you not earn any no claims bonus, but thieves are also aware a lot of bikes are locked up during the winter, meaning they often target garages and lock-ups. Cancelling your policy can prove a costly mistake, but one that can be rectified by getting seasonal cover and securing your lock-up.

CASE STUDIES

We've told you about the wide range and great value of Bikesure's policies. Don't just take our word for it – look at our case studies below to see how our customers have saved money.

VESPA LIBERTY S 50CC

Steven has just turned 16, his provisional has just come through and his CBT is booked for a week's time. His parents have bought him a Vespa Liberty S 50cc to get around on, which is worth around £500. He lives in Rhyl (LL18) and will be using the bike for social, domestic and pleasure. Steven has been dreading the cost as he is so young.

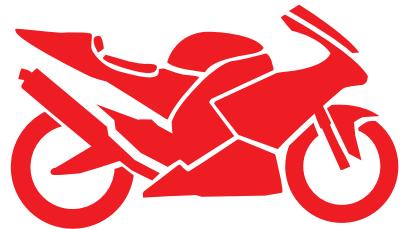
Steven's rate is just £197.38 for Third Party Fire and Theft



HONDA CBR400

Louis is 19, from Worcester, and has just passed his Category A2 motorcycle licence. He's thrilled to be hitting the road on his recent £750 purchase - a 1995 Honda CBR400. He's an experienced rider, of course, having acquired his licence via staged access, and he has one year's no claims discount available for this policy.

Louis's rate is just £225.27 for Third Party Fire and Theft



AT BIKESURE WE UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO GET THE RIGHT COVER FOR YOU AND YOUR BIKE. WE OFFER SPECIALIST POLICIES, WHICH WE TAILOR TO YOUR OWN RIDING HISTORY AND PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS. OUR QUOTES ARE COMPETITIVE AND WE FOCUS ON FINDING YOU TAILOR MADE INSURANCE SCHEMES WHICH CUT PRICES NOT CORNERS.

WE CAN COVER...



Scooters



Quads & Buggies



Classic Bikes



Trikes



Per formance Bikes



Modified Bikes



Cruisers



Imports



Multi-Bikes



Pedal Bikes



Adventure Bikes



Laid-Up Cover



Custom Bikes



Provisional Licence



Electric Bikes



Off Road & Enduro



Track Day

POLICY BENEFITS AVAILABLE INCLUDE:

- FREE Legal Cover
- Agreed Value
- Cover for Convicted Riders
- Modifications Cover
- Laid-up Cover
- Great Value Multi-Bike Rates

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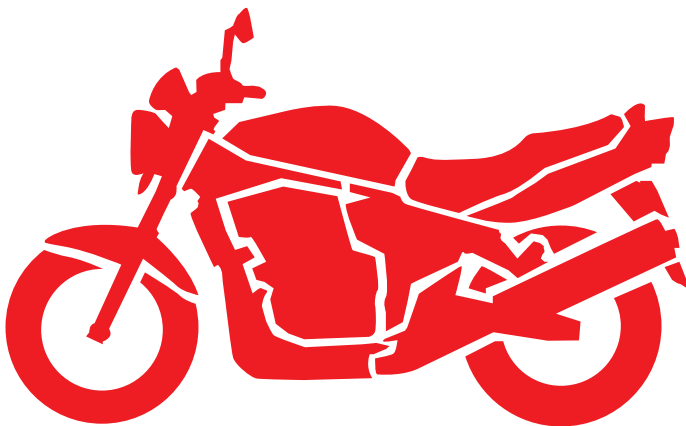
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BUYING A BIKE

Buying your first bike is an exciting and important moment. Although you may have a two-wheeled dream machine in mind, you need to think about how much it will cost. It's not just running your bike, there's also the price of insurance, tax and an MOT to consider. A brand new bike with a large engine may save you money on MOTs but could cost more for insurance. It could be worth building up your no claims bonus and level of experience on a starter bike before buying the bike at the top of your wishlist.

When you're searching, it's a good idea to consider whether you want to buy a new or used bike. If you're buying a used motorbike you should ask a friend with mechanical knowledge to look over it and you should always try to get a guarantee where possible. Make use of the internet to check the running costs, fuel efficiency and reliability of the model of bike.

Make sure you check the type of licence and what you can ride using our guide on page 5. If you're over 24 and you've passed your direct access test there is no restriction on the size of bike you can ride (as long as you've taken your test on a manual bike.)



TYPES OF BIKE

There's an enormous range of styles of motorcycle on the market, and each has different features and benefits. Try to decide what you're after before you start looking, as narrowing down your choice will make the buying process simpler.

Read on and see which one is right for you:

- **MOPEDS:** extremely popular and ideal for those starting out or looking for something practical and comfortable for commuting. Mopeds have an engine capacity no larger than 50cc.
- **COMMUTER:** this type was made for people looking for a bike to get them from A to B. Affordable, comfortable and ideal for the commuter.
- **SCOOTERS:** step-through scooters are the ideal commuting machine. Usually with automatic 'twist and go' gearing they're comfortable and efficient in town, plus cheap to run and insure.
- **POWER SCOOTERS:** scooters on steroids, with a similar step-through (or near) design, but with large engines (up to 850cc). Commuter-friendly creature comforts and numerous storage compartments are common.
- **ADVENTURE/TOURING:** extremely popular, with a comfortable upright seating position. Developed from specialist off-road motorcycles.
- **CRUISERS:** the bikes that dreams are made of. Featuring raked forks and a feet-forward riding position, these are stylish, if not quite so practical on twisting British roads. The low seat height is ideal for shorter people and the low-down weight makes them easy to handle.
- **NAKED:** machines with no fairings, often with flat rather than drop bars, so more comfortable for riding in town. Well worth a look for your first bike.
- **SPORT/HYPER SPORTS:** designed purely for performance and often developed from competition bikes. With a forward-leaning riding position, powerful engines and great handling, these are best for leisure riding.

WHERE TO BUY

When buying your first bike it is important to take your time to look around and research, research, research! Don't just buy the first two-wheeled beauty you see without reading reviews, getting an insurance quote and checking it's in good working order. It's also a good idea to look around at a variety of bikes. Outlined below are some key things to consider when buying a new bike:

FRANCHISED DEALERSHIPS

Have an agreement with a manufacturer to sell their motorcycles. You should be able to part exchange your old bike (if you have one), get a decent test ride, and of course get top quality service. Some of the bigger manufacturers run 'approved used' schemes that offer bikes with a full service history, that are guaranteed and often have low mileages. You may not get a brand new number plate, but it's a low-risk route to bike buying, and a more affordable way of getting your first motorbike.

INDEPENDENT DEALERSHIPS

Some dealers specialise in certain makes or types of motorcycle, while others have a huge stock of anything and everything. Buying from an independent dealer gives you more protection than if you buy privately thanks to the Sale and Supply of Goods Act.

PRIVATE SALES

Buying privately can work out cheaper than going to a dealer, but you have less legal protection if things go wrong. A private seller has not got to do any of the checks that a dealer has to make by law. It's great when you've found your perfect bike, but there are a few checks you need to do: is the paperwork in order, including a watermarked V5 registration form? Do the engine and frame numbers match the bike? Does it have an MOT certificate and a full service history stamped by the garage?

Always meet a potential seller at their home address, and check the bike thoroughly using the same questions as a private sale.

RESEARCH

The key to making a decision on a new bike is research. Speak to people with knowledge of bikes, read bike reviews and do some research online. Owner reviews are a reliable source of information as they are unbiased and written by people who ride the bike. Compare make/model, price, maintenance – it's better to have too much information than too little. Remember not to take every review too literally as you're bound to find at least one negative comment on every bike out there.



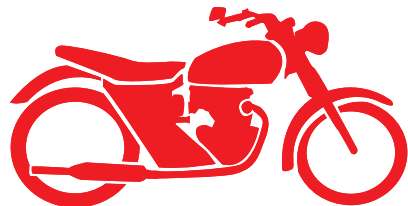
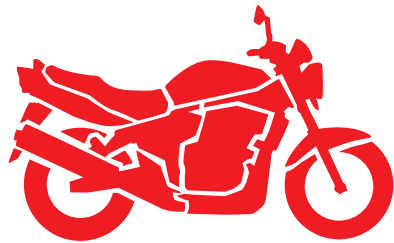
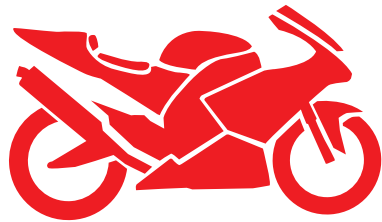
ANNUAL COSTS

There's no doubt that your first motorbike is an exciting investment. Before you get carried away with the smell of leather, the noise of the engine and the feeling of freedom on the open road, take some time to think about the annual considerations. Like anything else, owning a bike

does require on-going investment to make sure it performs optimally. Between annual considerations such as tax, MOT and insurance and with on-going maintenance costs, it's easy to feel a little overwhelmed. Outlined below are the main things to consider for riders buying their first bike.

TAX

Renew your motorcycle tax by completing a V11 renewal, or online with your V5C registration certificate. You no longer need to display a tax disc, but you will still receive a renewal reminder when your tax is due. Motorbike taxes range from £17 to £86 per year, depending on your engine size, and some bikes, like classic and electric bikes, are exempt.



MOT

The MOT test is a mandatory vehicle test that confirms your motorbike meets road safety and environmental standards. The test looks at important mechanical areas of your bike to ensure they meet key legal requirements. If your bike is over three years old it will need an MOT every year. There are almost 20,000 test centres nationwide that carry out MOT testing, identifiable by the three triangles blue logo.



INSURANCE

In the UK insuring your vehicle is a mandatory requirement. Whether you go for third party or comprehensive insurance is entirely up to you but it is worthwhile

considering additional insurance such as legal cover, personal accident, breakdown and helmet & leathers cover. Read more about Bikesure's insurance on [Pages 6-7]

FINANCE OPTIONS

If you don't have enough money to buy your two wheels outright then there are finance options. They will take your credit rating into account, so if you're a young rider with no credit history this might not be an option. Although convenient, dealership finance can prove an expensive option when financing your bike. Another option

for buyers is a manufacturer-sponsored option. Most major manufacturers have internal credit programmes that can be used to purchase a motorbike. Availability tends to be limited but manufacturer-sponsored credit tends to offer lower interest rates to buyers.

MAINTENANCE

Maintaining your bike can be tedious for some, but ultimately it may save your life. Motorcycles require significantly more maintenance than a car. Frequent services are a must, as are regular checks on tyres, air filter, chains, wheels and oil. The cost and frequency of this all depends on

the type of bike you ride and how often you ride it. For example, a recreational bike will require less frequent checks than a commuter bike. Costs vary majorly from bike to bike but it is important to be aware of any additional costs incurred in owning a motorbike before you take the plunge.

MOST FUEL-EFFICIENT MOTORBIKES

When starting out on a motorbike it's understandable that you want to save as much money as possible. Fuel economy may well play a part in your decision-making process when deciding on a bike. However, it's important to note that despite quoting the mileage per gallon (mpg), it's not always what you ride – it's also how and where you ride it. A lot depends on the use, for example start-stop city riding will use more fuel compared to a long gentle country ride.

Here at Bikesure we've compiled a list of fuel-efficient motorbikes to help you when choosing your first set of wheels.

HONDA CB125F

It's good looking, it's affordable – it's an obvious choice for a beginner's commuter bike. Combined with cheap insurance, and the fact you can ride the CB on L-plates, it is a very tempting option. The CB's 124.7cc four-speed fuel injected single is squarely aimed at delivering fuel economy rather than thrills. Honda is quoting a pocket-friendly 134mpg, although it depends on how and where you're riding it. You can pick one up new for £2800, or used for between £1400 and £2500.

ROYAL ENFIELD BULLET 500 B5

Say "Royal Enfield" to any keen biker and watch their eyes light up. Unfortunately Royal Enfield have stopped manufacturing the 500 B5 road bikes, but you can still find them second hand online. The Bullet 500 combines Royal Enfield's most iconic model with its robust and reliable new UCE engine to create a modern bike that brings simple pleasures back to motorcycling. It's not just about looks though, this bike can get as much as 85mpg fuel economy. What's not to love?

KAWASAKI Z300

At £4,349, the six-speed transmission Kawasaki Z300 is a great choice for a beginner bike. The 300cc liquid-cooled, four-stroke, DOHC engine provides a maximum power of 29kW, allowing the bike to reach an estimated 100mph. The Z300 is perfect for longer journeys, with a comfortable seat, wide bars for good control and the ability to do 70 miles per gallon, which is equivalent to 4 litres per 100km. You will need an A2 licence to ride the Z300.

SUZUKI TU250X

The TU is a successful small-displacement version of the Universal Japanese Motorcycle design that became popular in the '60s. This dream starter bike gets nearly 80mpg, and can also pack a punch in the speed department – up to 75mph on the road. It's classic, stylish and suitable for city cruising or rural rides.

VESPA LX125

A modern and stylish take on the classic small-frame Vespas, the LX125 produces some impressive economy stats. The main aim of this model was to maximise fuel economy, but the improvement in efficiency has also resulted in a seven per cent power increase, while CO2 emissions are down by an impressive 30%. Fuel economy is quoted at 155mpg at 30mph, although in town you're more likely to see 110mpg, which is still very good for your bank balance. With the top speed of 60mph you won't be going anywhere too fast, but it's perfect for new riders who want to zip around the city.



CHEAPEST BIKES TO INSURE

When browsing for a bike it's important to consider the price of insurance. Although Bikesure offers cheap policies for young and new riders your insurance will be more expensive if you buy a brand new, expensive bike with a huge engine. Below is a guide to the five cheapest bikes to insure. These quotes are based on a 22-year-old who has just passed their test, living in the PE30 area, with no convictions and no NCB (no claims bonus).

1988 HONDA CBR400RR

This sporty number, valued at about £800, was developed mostly for younger Japanese riders, making it perfect for the motorbike newbie. Its 400cc engine boasts enough power to drive the bike up to a speed-limited 110mph, providing thrills and cheap insurance – Just £295.49 for a year Third Party, Fire and Theft.

2004 HONDA CB 600 F

If you're after a roadster then this Honda, valued at £2,000, certainly looks the part. It's also powerful and reliable, with sweet handling. A high level exhaust, USD forks and wide rear tyre add a dash of pizzazz. Third Party, Fire and Theft insurance comes in at an affordable £262.11

1996 KAWASAKI ER-5

This commuter bike, with a value of £500, is easy to ride. Perfect for getting you from A to B with no frills, it's also frugal on fuel and cheap to insure at £176.61 for Third Party, Fire and Theft.

2004 ENFIELD BULLET 500

Not only did this classic make our list of most fuel-efficient bikes, it's also very good value to insure. A 2004 model worth £1,500 comes in at £181.66 for a Third Party, Fire and Theft policy.

2001 KTM 250 EXC

If your dream bike is dual-purpose, for on-road and recreational off-road thrills, then look no further than the KTM 250. A model valued at £1,995 costs just £298.17 for Third Party, Fire and Theft insurance.

ESSENTIAL BIKE KIT

Although you may not have a huge amount of storage space on your bike, there are some essential pieces of kit you should have, and you'll thank yourself for packing them if something goes wrong!

It's advisable to get a detailed owners manual or shop manual for your bike and see what types of tools are recommended for your model. If the bike comes with a tool kit, examine it and determine if you need more tools. At any rate, always take the toolkit with you on the bike.

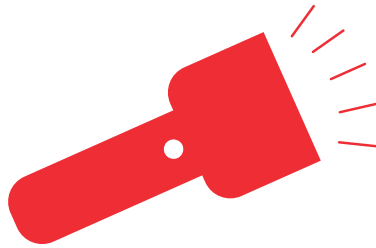
- Mobile phone – it's standard practice to never leave your phone at home, and make sure it's charged up.
- Flat Tyre Kit
- First Aid Kit
- Water Bottle – it's important to stay hydrated on hot days.
- Hi-Vis Vest – this will help other motorists to see you.
- Earplugs – many riders develop hearing problems, especially if they ride with no windshield and a minimal helmet. Earplugs are cheap, easy to use, and will save your hearing.
- Screwdrivers – you'll need assorted screwdrivers in case anything goes wrong



- Pliers – regular pliers, small ViseGrip pliers, and needlenose pliers.
- Wrenches – get Allen, Torx, sparkplug, open-end, adjustable, and combination in sizes needed for your model.

continued 

- Loctite – keeps fasteners from loosening or falling off.
- Kickstand Plate – don't put your side stand down in hot asphalt or grass. Use a thin metal plate, beer can, or other plate for protection.
- Bike Cover – there are some small covers that fit the windshield and pull over the bike to cover the seat.
- Tyre Gauge – don't ride without checking the pressure in your tyres.
- Paddock Stand – very helpful in performing any kind of maintenance, from lubricating chains to changing wheels
- Chain Lubricant
- Swiss Army Knife
- Small Flashlight
- Duct Tape
- Electrical Tape
- Rags



A GUIDE TO PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

It's true that riding a motorcycle is a fashionable activity, but your biking outfit is about more than just looking good. The right clothing, including helmet, boots, gloves, jacket and trousers, can provide all-important protection in the event of a crash.

HELMETS

Your helmet is an extremely important piece of motorcycling kit. Quite simply, they save lives – in fact helmets are estimated to prevent 37% of crash deaths among motorcycle riders. They are also a legal requirement. You must wear a safety helmet that meets British safety standards when riding a motorcycle or moped on the road.

All helmets worn on UK roads must either:

- Meet British Standard BS 6658:1985 and carry the BSI Kitemark
- Meet UNECE Regulation 22.05
- Meet a European Economic Area member standard offering at least the same safety and protection as BS 6658:1985, and carry a mark equivalent to the BSI Kitemark

BUYING A HELMET

This is one part of equipment that you should never buy online without trying on. You should also never buy a second-hand helmet or use a helmet used by anyone else as there could be damage to the protective material inside the helmet. Below are some tips on purchasing a safety helmet:

FIT

It may sound simple but you should always try on a helmet before you buy as sizes can vary. A full-face helmet should feel snug around your cheeks, but not uncomfortable. It should also hug your head, without moving when you move. If it's too big it won't offer enough protection in a crash. The decision about your helmet could be a life-changer in the future, so don't rush into your purchase.



continued 

COMFORT

Although the helmet should be snug there should be no tight spots or pressure points. Wear the helmet for several minutes in the shop before you make a purchase as you won't be able to take it back afterwards.

SAFETY

Make sure you check out the SHARP safety rating of the helmets and choose from the highest scoring models that fit you properly. This rating system provides a 1–5 star safety rating as an indication of how much protection a helmet offers in impact. It's a good idea to opt for light, bright colours as it means other road users can see you.

ADJUSTMENT

Secure the helmet properly using the chin-strap and check the adjustment before every trip. It may sound pedantic but even a helmet that fits well could come off in a crash if it's not properly strapped on. More simply, a strap that is too long could cause irritation and affect your concentration so make sure it's right before each journey.

STORAGE

It's important to store your helmet somewhere it cannot fall or be knocked, ideally in a helmet bag. Aim to keep it out of direct sunlight and heat, as these factors can affect the components of the helmet.

VISORS AND GOGGLES

If you ride with a visor or goggles they must either:

- Meet a British Standard and display a BSI Kitemark
- Meet a European standard offering at least the same safety and protection as the British Standard and carry a mark equivalent to the BSI Kitemark (UNECE Regulation 22.05)

During daylight hours a tint of up to 50% is okay - legal tinted visors will be marked "For daylight use only". Before setting off, make sure your visor is clean and free of smudges, scratches or marks that could affect your vision or distract you, especially on a sunny day.

GLOVES

The first thing riders instinctively do in a crash is put their hands out to protect themselves. This is why specialist motorcycle gloves with a strong protective layer are essential to protect the skin on fragile fingers and wrists.

You should buy a pair of gloves for both summer and winter. Summer gloves can be lightweight but need to provide good abrasion resistance. In winter, gloves must keep your hands warm and dry as cold hands can distract you from your riding. Gortex, Cordura and other similar materials have good thermal properties as well as water-resistance.

FIT

Gloves should never be so thick and cumbersome that they prevent you moving your hands and fingers easily. Try them on your bike or a machine in the showroom to check you can operate the controls properly. Make sure seams don't chafe against your hand, especially on the palm and between the fingers. Any discomfort could affect your concentration on a long journey. Winter gloves particularly should have cuffs that extend over the end of your sleeves, to prevent wind and rain getting up your arms.

QUALITY

Good quality stitching is important. Make sure that they carry stitching across the palms and there is good layering on the upper glove. Check for straps, fixings or adjustments around the wrist. If a pair of gloves can be pulled off easily without undoing a fixing or strap, they'll probably come off just as easily in a crash.

BOOTS

Footwear is another important aspect of biker gear. The boots you wear need to be sturdy and above ankle-height to provide support and protection for the ankle area in case of a crash. Ideally they should be made from good quality leather (at least 2.5mm thick) and be waterproof too.

FIT

It may sound obvious, but make sure the boots you buy fit properly. If they're too tight they will make your feet numb; too loose and you will find it difficult to maintain control over the gear lever and brake.

continued 

If possible, before buying boots, try wearing them while sitting on your bike in your normal riding position to make sure you can easily operate the foot controls.

FLEXIBILITY

Boots will get softer and more comfortable with use, but if a boot is too rigid it may lead to discomfort. Test their flexibility in the store, as well as trying them on.

ZIPS

Where boots are zipped up, ensure there is a large enough flap under the zip and one over it. This ensures the zip won't let in water or rub directly on the ankle.

COLOURS

Try to make sure the leather is colour-fast, otherwise you will find socks and feet are dyed the colour of your boots in wet weather – not something you want!

THINGS TO AVOID

- Avoid work boots with metal plates or toe caps. These can protect your feet in certain circumstances but are also capable of cutting through your toes.

- When you try the boots on, wear a pair of socks you would normally wear on the bike. Do not wear two pairs of socks in a boot as a double layer of socks will create movement of your foot within the boot, leading to rubbing and blisters.

JACKET AND TROUSERS

Whether you ride a 50cc moped or a 1200cc superbike, riding in your everyday clothes puts you at real risk of serious injury. Finding clothing to shield you from both impact and abrasion – the most common causes of injury – is extremely important and could be life saving.

A GOOD FIT

The leathers should feel comfortable and fit well, without being tight. Make sure the arms are long enough and the shoulders in particular allow you to move within the jacket.

SAFE ZIPS

Zips should never lie directly against the skin. There should be an overlapping piece of leather. A zip against the skin will transmit heat from friction if you have a slide and a serious burn could result.

INTEGRATED BODY ARMOUR

This will often be included and should enhance protection at the elbows, back, shoulders, hips and knees. This should carry the CE label.

DOUBLE STITCHING

Stitching should be double or triple and should be sealed as well, either with a leather overlap or a plastic coating.

THICK WATERPROOF LEATHER

Leather should be at least 1.2mm thick. However, if it's too thick it will be uncomfortable and will restrict your movement. Kangaroo leather is about the toughest you'll find. Good leather will be treated to make it as waterproof as possible, but you may need to treat it from time-to-time to maintain this quality.

NON-LEATHER OPTIONS

If leather's not your thing then you should consider a highly waterproof material such as Cordura. Non-leather clothing often includes CE-approved body armour and removable thermal linings, so they can be used all year round. These types of suits tend to be more 'adjustable' with velcro belts and fitted cuffs forming waterproof seals at the neck and arms.

BASE LAYERS

COMFORT

In the winter consider buying a good quality base layer, such as a lightweight thermal. Inner gloves and thermal socks are also a good idea to keep you warm and comfortable.

SAFETY

Back protectors are highly advised as they absorb energy from an impact. This helps prevent damage to the spine and ribs, as well as to internal organs such as the kidneys, liver and spleen, which can all be harmed by a heavy external blow.

It is vital a back protector is the correct size for you. If it is too small, it won't protect the vulnerable lumbar region of the lower back and if it is too big, it won't fit comfortably under your riding gear. Label sizes will refer to torso length and this can be confusing. If you are not completely confident in taking your own measurements, the best advice is to visit a reputable dealer and ask them to measure and fit a back protector for you.

RIDING TIPS

Even once you've passed your test and demonstrated your riding ability, it's important to never stop developing your skills on two wheels – always taking on-board tips and tricks to make you a safer rider.

The best advice in all conditions and locations is to ride defensively; anticipating the actions of others, making sure you are alert and observant, and positioning yourself in the safest place to maximise your visibility of potential hazards. However, there are skills and techniques necessary for riding in the city, rural areas, at night-time, and in adverse weather conditions.

Below are Bikesure's tips for adapting the way you ride to suit the environment and weather conditions.

CITY RIDING

AWARENESS

The freedom of twisting the throttle and exploring a big city on your bike is a real treat. However, riding a motorbike in traffic can be a real test for riders at the best of times, particularly those starting out on the road. One wrong move can result in a nasty accident, so maintaining awareness at all times is vital.

Constantly observe the environment around you - from your left to right, blind spot to mirrors, and always take a quick glance over your shoulder before moving to take in your rear view and blind spots. Watching the movements of drivers is a great way to anticipate quick movements and give yourself the best chance of avoiding an accident.

ON THE ROAD

Ride in a gear lower than normal as the high revs make other drivers aware of your presence and it gives your bike the capability of jumping forward if required. The constant stopping and starting in traffic means quick reactions are often required, so make sure you're alert. To minimise reaction time, keep a finger on the brake lever and your right toe close to the rear brake. This ensures you are ready to react to any situation that occurs.

CLOTHING

It's not just your riding style that needs to adapt to your city environment, it's also your clothing. Make sure that other drivers and pedestrians can see you clearly, so wear brightly coloured clothing, in particular your helmet and jacket. Hi-Vis clothing makes you more visible to other road users, helping you stay safe on the road.

RURAL RIDING

There's no better way to embrace motorcycling than a trip through the countryside, escaping normal day-to-day life by following the open road. Many bikers cite this as their favourite type of riding, but it's important to remain alert while taking in the scenery. Without the right preparation, long distances in secluded areas can be a recipe for disaster.

MAINTENANCE

Check your vehicle is in tip-top shape before you take to the road. You could be stranded without phone signal in a rural area if something goes wrong. Minimise risks on your trip by checking tyres, fuel, brakes and oil before taking to the road.

GEAR

Long trips in rural areas generally mean extended exposure to the elements. Dress in layers to avoid hyperthermia and heat exhaustion, adding or removing layers to maintain an ideal body temperature. Don't forget your gloves, boots and helmet. Although there is less traffic in rural areas, motorists may not be expecting to see a biker so it is still advisable to wear bright colours and/or Hi-Vis.



BENDS

Riding on a country road is different to riding in the city, and bends tend to be inconsistent depending on the area. Some are smooth and open, others can be sharp and difficult to gauge. Problems arise if you take a bend at too much speed. Carefully follow any clues that may tell you about the line of the bend such as the direction of the hedge. If unsure reduce your speed – better safe than sorry.

ENVIRONMENT

Rural areas are home to many animals, so be wary of wildlife as you ride, and respect their habitat. It's easy to forget when taking in beautiful surroundings but keep your eyes peeled for road signs such as those indicating changes in the speed limit or hazards such as falling rocks, sharp bends or hump back bridges.

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NIGHT RIDING

Riding a bike at night is completely different to riding during the day, so you need to take a different approach to safety. The risk of accident increases with night-time riding so it's vital to be responsible for your actions on the road.

When the nights pull in over winter it's especially likely that you will be driving in the dark so it's good to be prepared.

MAINTENANCE

There are some important checks you can make prior to riding. First ensure that your bike is clean and in good working order. Check the basics – tyres, fuel, oil and lights - replace or top up anything that needs it. Clean the lights, windshield, reflectors and any shiny surfaces to enhance your chances of being seen.

It's not just your bike that needs a check: it's important to make sure that your eyesight is in full working order too. If you wear glasses, consider custom made eyewear to make your night vision as clear as possible.

GEAR

Wearing the right gear is one of the most important aspects of night-time riding. Keep dark clothing to a minimum and wear bright colours and a reflector vest so that other motorists can see you.

Check your helmet and eyewear fit properly to avoid them slipping off unexpectedly. Clean your visor or goggles to get rid of any dirt and scratches that may distort your view.



ON THE ROAD

When you're on the road give other motorists plenty of space. Never tailgate – allow yourself every opportunity to stop suddenly with plenty of room. Dim your headlights when you come in contact with other motorists, as full lights can be blinding at night. If you're driving on unfamiliar roads, plan your route so you're aware of any steep descents or sharp corners that may be harder to see in the dark.

PILLION PASSENGERS

For any new rider, taking pillion passengers for the first time is a daunting experience. The bike will be heavier, particularly at the rear, so don't open the throttle too quickly, especially on higher performance bikes.

As it's heavier, the bike is more difficult to slow down, so when braking, make sure you leave plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front. A sharp brake will cause you both to clash helmets.

A good tip to give an inexperienced pillion passenger is, when cornering, that they should look over their shoulder on the side you've turned into (e.g. right turn, right shoulder). This will bring their body more in line with yours and make it easier to corner.

It's always best to have some kind of communication system with your passenger. It's vital for you to know if they need to stop or take a break so you can act accordingly.

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

It's fair to assume that riding a motorbike in the UK means that you're going to come into contact with adverse weather conditions, especially rain. Slippery conditions reduce your margin for error. A motorcycle has less contact with the road surface than a car, meaning your bike can slide unexpectedly on sand, wet leaves, or pebbles.

continued 

GEAR

Wear a waterproof suit to protect your clothes from the rain and a visor to maintain clear vision.

RAIN

Rain not only cuts your visibility but also reduces your grip on the road, which can make cornering tricky. If you need to ride in the rain, remember that the most dangerous time is right after precipitation begins, as the water can cause oil residue to rise to the road surface. Be especially gentle with the brakes, throttle and steering to avoid sliding. Be careful of slippery surfaces particularly in areas that are likely to have fuel or oil spills, such as the stretch before traffic lights, which can be lethal in wet conditions.

STRONG WIND

When riding in strong side winds, try to anticipate the potential push from the side by moving to the side of the lane the wind is coming from – this way, even if you are buffeted by the wind, you'll stay in your own lane rather than moving into the path of other motorists.

MIST AND FOG

Misty conditions require you to check your mirrors and surroundings even more than usual. It is worth considering a pair of yellow sunglasses when driving in mist as yellow shades allow you to see more than not wearing glasses. In fog, slow down and keep a large distance between you and other motorists. Use low beam lights and tap your brakes frequently to ensure motorists behind are aware of your presence.

WINTER RIDING

If your bike isn't going into storage for winter then you'll need to be prepared for dropping temperatures and dark nights. Like driving a car, you'll need a bit more time to prepare your bike, and need to stay alert for extra risks. It's also worth remembering the tips from the Adverse Weather section as winter riding is often coupled with wind, rain or snow.

GEAR

Wearing warm gear may sound obvious but you'll be amazed how many newbies ride without the right kit. Layer up, get a neck warmer, wear some good winter gloves and make sure any exposed skin is covered up. Being cold takes all the fun out of biking and causes a lack of concentration, which can lead to a crash.

LIGHTS

Lights are especially important when the nights start drawing in. Spend a few minutes with your screwdrivers to make sure your headlight beam is correct. It shouldn't be dipped close to your front wheel, but also shouldn't be so bright that it dazzles oncoming motorists. Your handbook should give you information about the correct distance for a headlight beam. Pack some spare bulbs on your bike in case one blows, and make sure you know how to change it.

VISOR

Those scratches on your visor might be annoying in the daytime, but at night they could leave you looking through the biking equivalent of a kaleidoscope. If your visor's scratched then quite simply, you need to buy a new one. Scratched visors confusing riders are one of the biggest risks of riding at night, and for less than £50 you'll be seeing clearly again.

TYRES

Tyre technology and heat-up time has improved hugely in the last ten years, but tyres still need some care. To grip properly, tyres require heat and the colder the road surface, the longer it takes for them to start gripping properly. The golden rule is take your time and don't go rushing into bends

until you're sure they're warm. In autumn and winter, at least five miles under your belt is a rough timeframe to get them warmed up.

RISKS

Dark evenings mean a greater risk of animals running across your path on back roads as they get confused by car and bike lights. Foxes and badgers are normally solitary, but if you see a deer run out, slow down rapidly and be prepared for a few more to follow.

SNOW

It may seem like a fun novelty, but riding in snow is not advisable in any circumstance. Only take your bike out if it's absolutely necessary and you feel completely confident. Wear a visor to minimize the effect of snow on your vision. Riding on fresh snow is not impossible but be sensible: don't brake on corners, don't enter turns by pushing your steer and always shift your weight when making a turn.



FURTHER TRAINING COURSES

Even once you pass your test, it is still a good idea to consider further training courses. There are many different motorbike training packages to suit every type of rider. Even if you feel completely comfortable on the road there's always something new to learn, a skill to refresh or a bad riding habit to break.

BIKESAFE

Delivered by police riders, a BikeSafe workshop involves an observed ride with feedback to help you identify your riding strengths and weaknesses. They aim to reduce the number of bikers being hurt on the road through improving knowledge, skills and hazard awareness. Some courses also include a classroom element in their workshops, covering motorcycle control, hazard perception, junctions, cornering, overtaking and group riding.

BikeSafe is a great place to begin developing your riding skills and a good introduction to advanced riding. After completing an observed ride, BikeSafe recommend you do further training with one of the organisations below.

DURATION:

The workshop usually takes a day to complete.

COST:

Cost varies across the forces.

ENHANCED RIDER SCHEME (ERS)

The Enhanced Rider Scheme is a bespoke riding course aimed at all levels of riders - from newly qualified to those returning to biking. The scheme offers tailor-made training to help you build on your strengths and hone your skills on the road and begins with an on-road assessment. If you already meet the standard for ERS you'll be awarded a Certificate of Competence. Alternatively, your instructor will work with you to identify your goals and create a tailored training plan to help you achieve these.

You can also get discounts on motorcycle insurance once you've successfully completed the scheme.

DURATION:

Varies by rider. Can be completed in one day if there are no areas of concern or over a few days if the rider needs more tuition.

COST:

Varies from one instructor to another and your riding ability. Contact your nearest instructor to discuss further.

IAM (INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS)

The IAM offer a number of different training routes:

ADVANCED RIDER COURSE

One of the most involved and highly respected courses out there, and coming in at £149, the IAM advanced course takes riders between three and six months to complete, but leaves them as some of the best-qualified riders on the road.

Split into many two-hour sessions, completed with other riders from your local area, the course covers every advanced technique that you should need on the road, and is available to bikers of any skill level.

RIDER ASSESSMENT

This short £45 course is a great way for riders to get an idea of what IAM training is all about without taking an advanced test, or for those who want to take the first steps towards safer advanced riding. An IAM instructor will review your riding style and ability, identifying any bad habits you have, and what you do well. The approach is friendly, and designed to give you some insightful feedback on your general riding performance.

SKILLS DAYS

This exciting course offers stimulating riding experiences at prominent racing circuits around the UK. You'll receive six separate on-track sessions focusing on anticipation, cornering, planning, smoothness and understanding how your bike performs in different situations. There are two levels: beginners (who may not have ever taken part in a track day before) and intermediate (those who are taking part on their second or third track day).

ROSPA (ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS)

ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING TEST

The RoSPA Advanced Motorcycling Test is regarded as the most comprehensive and challenging available to the public. It is an on-road riding test covering as many different road types and traffic conditions as possible, from rural lanes to fast multi-lane roads or motorways. Riders are awarded a bronze, silver or gold rating after the test.

Any motorcyclist with a full licence is able to take the test, however riders are encouraged to do a BikeSafe assessment or some post-test training before taking the RoSPA Advanced Motorcycling Test.

ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING COURSE

Ideal for people who ride for work or need to take the RoSPA Advanced Test quickly, this course, taken over four consecutive days, includes a half-day classroom session and on-road riding. The Advanced Test takes place at the end and is included in the course fee.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

As you're new to riding a motorcycle we expect you hear lots of concerned relatives and friends warning you about road safety and, while riding is great fun, it can also be very dangerous. Motorcyclists make up just 1% of total road traffic, but 19% of all road user deaths. Statistics like this should make you realise that the road can be a dangerous place, and you should adapt your riding style to stay as safe as possible.

It's important to drive safely, and also legally. You may already know this from your theory test, but it's good to be doubly sure about the rules of the road. Get yourself a copy of the Highway Code For Motorcyclists and keep it handy.

AVOIDING ACCIDENTS

ANTILOCK BRAKES

When searching for a motorbike, consider getting one with antilock brakes, a proven lifesaver.

The reason is simple: locking up the brakes in a panic stop robs the rider of any steering control, leading to a skid and potential crash, which can result in serious injury. ABS helps you retain steering control during an emergency stop, and it can be especially valuable in slippery conditions. This extra feature can bring down the cost of your insurance. Either way, we think it's a worthwhile investment in your safety.

RIDE DEFENSIVELY

Riding as if every vehicle is out to get you sounds extremely paranoid, but it's a good starting point for avoiding an accident. Riding a motorbike can be dangerous, but being aware of potential problems helps minimise accidents that may occur. Keep an eye out for cars suddenly changing lanes or pulling out from side streets. Collisions can happen at any type of junction and are often the result of a motorist not seeing you.

Don't tailgate; keeping a safe following distance is critical, to ensure you have enough stopping distance, and so you have time to react to obstacles in the road. Riding too close to the vehicle in front of you or the vehicle behind you being too close can cause shunts. To prevent this leave sufficient room between you and the vehicle in front of you and always stop in a space that is clear to do so.

OVERTAKING

Overtaking requires knowing your bike's acceleration and judging speed and distance accordingly. Always overtake with care, no one can pre-empt how a driver will react to your overtaking them. Avoid overtaking on bends, junctions, pedestrian crossings and on hills.

ROAD SURFACE

Carefully observe the surrounding environment, taking in changes in road surface and potential hazards. Loss of control can be a result of poor weather conditions, potholes, oil spills and manhole covers. Allow yourself plenty of space and time to react, and remember the safest response will come from a combination of circumstances around the hazard and your skill as a rider.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

As a bike owner it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the workings of individual parts, their functions and what you can do to maintain your bike's performance. Failure to do so could pose potential danger or result in an accident, so talk to fellow bikers and consult your handbook for all the information you need. The primary components requiring regular maintenance to ensure your bike is in tip-top shape include tyres, chains, engine and battery.

TYRES

Check your tyres for punctures, damage and general wear and tear that could lead to pressure loss or a potential blowout. Bulging or cracking is likely to occur in old tyres so be sure to check the entire wheel thoroughly. A visual inspection before every ride is a great habit to get into - this along with frequent tyre pressure checks ensures optimum performance from your bike. Check the air pressure using a tyre gauge, ideally while your tyres are cold. After checking, inflate them until they reach the pressure recommended by the manufacturer.

CHAINS

In order to get the most out of your engine's power and to minimise the risk of a serious accident, the chains on your motorbike should be inspected every 500 miles. Ensure the chain fits perfectly by pulling it up and down - if it moves more than half an inch either side, adjust it. Remember to clean the chain and follow with some lubricant, rolling the bike back and forth to make sure you coat the entire length of the chain.

ENGINE

Check the oil level regularly but especially before a long journey. The engine should be cold and you'll need to make sure the motorbike is standing upright on a level area. Look at your motorbike handbook to find out how to check the oil level and how to top it up if necessary. It should also tell you what type of oil to use. Using the wrong type of oil can increase fuel consumption, damage the engine and could void the bike's warranty.

Many motorbikes are liquid cooled using a mixture of anti-freeze and water, which stops the engine from overheating. You should check the coolant level frequently, and especially before a long journey. Look at your motorbike handbook to find out how to check the engine coolant and how to top it up if necessary. In cold weather, you'll need to keep the strength of the anti-freeze at the correct level.

BATTERY

Make sure that the terminals on the motorbike battery are secure, clean and greased. Most modern batteries are maintenance-free and sealed for life. However, if the battery has a filler cap, you'll need to check the fluid level to make sure that the plates in each cell are covered. Top up the battery with distilled water if necessary, but be careful not to overfill it. Your bike manual will have information about this.

WINDSHIELD

Keep your windshield, if you have one, as clean as possible so you can take in panoramic views and stay alert for any risks. Cover the windshield with a clean, damp cloth for 10 minutes to help loosen dirt and grime then scrub with mild soap and warm water. Dry with a clean cloth and ease scratches with a scratch-removing product.

CHECKS TO MAKE BEFORE A LONG JOURNEY

Before a long trip it's important to make sure your bike is in full working order. The important parts to check are:

- Lights
- Horn
- Indicators
- Chain, belt, or shaft
- Brakes
- Tyres
- Engine

It's pretty straightforward to check these parts of your bike but it's also highly important. Make sure you've got your phone, the correct clothing for weather conditions and you are confident in your route.

FUEL

On a long journey fuel is obviously an important aspect. While you're riding, keep an eye on how much fuel you have left. Some motorbikes have fuel gauges and warning lights that show when the fuel is getting low; others may have a gauge that tells you how many miles you'll be able to ride on

the remaining fuel (called a range indicator). Don't rely on this too closely: the distance you can ride will depend on how you're riding and in what traffic conditions. Only use the range indicator to give you an idea of how far you'll be able to ride, and refuel in good time.

If your motorbike doesn't have a fuel gauge, you'll need to remove the filler cap to see how much fuel you have.

BREAKING DOWN

Breaking down and crashing are the two biggest fears of riders, especially when you're new to the motorbike scene. It is a worrying time but there are a few bits of kit you can carry with you to feel more prepared in the event of something bad happening. Below is our list of useful things for a breakdown:

- Fully charged mobile phone
- Hi-Vis jacket
- Warm clothes
- Water
- Food
- First Aid Kit
- Torch
- Maps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BREAK DOWN

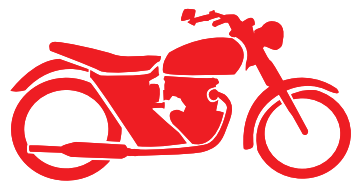
If you feel something is wrong with your bike you must react quickly to get to the side of the road, a lay-by, or the hard shoulder, depending on what type of road you are on. Getting there, pick your gaps in traffic carefully, move aggressively and clearly communicate the urgency of your situation to other drivers.

Once you reach safety, put your hazard lights on to warn other motorists. At this point you should ring for assistance from a friend, garage or Roadside Assistance, unless you feel confident that you can fix the problem yourself. There are emergency phones located along the sides of motorways, and you should always use a phone on your side of the road. If you're not on a motorway, and can't use your mobile phone, try flagging down other motorists for help.

It's important to get yourself as far away from the road as possible once you have stopped, especially at night.. Drivers can have trouble judging where the edges of dark roads lie, and will get less warning of your presence. Wear a Hi-Vis jacket to make sure you are seen, and stay away from the road until assistance arrives.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

In the event of a breakdown it is reassuring to know you have a Plan B. For just £56 a year, Bikesure Rescue can provide gold-standard cover for your motorbike. In the event that your two-wheeled transport suffers a failure, you are safe in the knowledge that you are only a phone call away from help and recovery. Our rescue plan includes UK and European Roadside Assistance and Recovery, puncture repair, transport to your destination, back home, or to a garage, and emergency accommodation costs. We can even provide you with a similar hire bike to get you on the road again as quickly as possible.



BIKE SECURITY

Adding additional security devices to your bike will give you better peace of mind and, most importantly, help to prevent theft – in turn lowering the risk of an insurance claim. There are many types of security options to consider, the two most common being electronic and mechanical. Below is some information about security measures to consider:

ELECTRONIC

Get a combined alarm and immobiliser professionally fitted as these devices really put off would-be thieves. If someone tampers with your bike, the alarm will go off and the engine won't turn over so thieves cannot ride it away. Alternatively, you can buy a basic alarm or immobiliser. Although some do-it-yourself systems are available, they are not recommended, as for any discounts on your insurance cover your alarm or immobiliser must be professionally fitted by a trained dealer or installer.

Electronic security will positively impact your insurance cost as Bikesure considers the risk of theft to be lower with the installation of electronic devices. Features to look for when choosing an alarm or immobiliser are 'low current drain' (to avoid flattening your battery) and 'comprehensive warranty support'.

MECHANICAL

Mechanical locks incorporate anything you physically put onto your bike to minimize the risk of theft. Common items include good quality chains, disc locks, U bolts and padlocks. It is important to secure these devices to an immovable object such as a lamppost or parking anchor to minimise theft by directly lifting the bike into the back of a van. Always secure the security device through the frame of the bike, as thieves will have no hesitation in taking individual parts.

MARKINGS

Mark individual parts of your motorbike with your vehicle registration, VIN (vehicle identification number) and postcode. Stolen bikes are difficult to trace as typically they are broken down and used for parts. Marking as many different parts of your bikes as possible makes it more difficult for thieves to sell.

AT HOME

Ensure your garage is a safe place to store your bike. Bulk up on security and add quality locks to the doors. Extending the house alarm to the garage may be something to consider and is relatively cheap. Refrain from leaving tools around the garage as typically a thief will use your tools to dismantle any locks on the bike.



