



How To Survive on a Motorcycle

Welcome to my "How To Survive on a Motorcycle" page. The old saying goes... there are two kinds of riders... those who have already crashed... and those who will. Unfortunately, it seems to be true. Let me say up front that the tips you are about to read are NOT the end-all or be-all of safety information, but rather an accumulation of proven tips contributed by a vast group of experienced and seasoned riders from all over the globe. Some of the tips you'll already know... some not. In this sport... knowledge and a sharp mind are prerequisites to staying alive. My hope is that after perusing these tips, at the very least, you'll be a safer... more informed rider. When all's said and done, we all know that deep down the hobby that brings us together is godawful dangerous no matter how good we are... or how lucky we are.



Thanks to all my riding brethren for the wonderful and even insightful contributions... With that said.... enjoy. Lastly.. if you want to contribute something new, send your tip to pirate@acelink.net Please.. Feel free to print this list out and share with as many people as you wish...

1. Always wear a helmet even if you are just going around the block.
2. Never cross railroad tracks at an angle. They are slick! If possible, cross straight on.
3. When you are following semi-trailers (or cars) on the interstate... always follow directly behind their wheels. Reason: If they straddle the dead animal, brick o block, etc.. in the road, you will not have enough reaction time to change directions if you are following directly "centered" behind them. I usually do the same with cars.
4. Fast food places. Be careful when you pull up to the drive through window!! This area is always covered with oil from idling cars. Watch your footing. Be forewarned. also...Toll Booths! Oil drippings mixed with AC condensation makes it impossibly slippery exactly where you want to put your foot down to pay the toll. *Contributed by Sir Mike in Shakopee, MN*
5. DO NOT RIDE IN FORMATION!! (Side by Side) To many things can go wrong and in formation.. if you screw up, you can take your partner down with you.
6. Always... always... always... expect the car, truck, van etc.. to pull out in front of you. Always believe that they DO NOT SEE YOU. Even if they are looking directly into your eyes. *Watch the tires of the vehicle not the eyes of the driver. The drivers eyes might be looking one way and telling you he is stopped but if that car moves you will see it while looking at the tires. *Contributed by Michael S. Vecchione / Virginia

7. Car phones!! If you see someone talking on a car phone... be afraid. He is your enemy!! He is not paying attention to you or the road. Statistically causes as many accidents as a drunk.
8. Braking!!! Until integrated braking is released on our beloved K12's our front brake is 80% of your braking power. Get used to braking with ONLY your front brake. Go to a large parking lot and practice until it's first nature.
9. Counter Steering. Learning this technique will save your life! All racers use this method. In a nutshell... pull on the right handlebar and you go left or pull on the left handlebar and you go right or..the method I use is the exact reverse.... push lightly on your left handlebar and you'll go left.. or push right... go right. Learn the physics..Learn it until it's second nature because many times in an emergency situation, you have only reaction time... not thinking time.
10. One simple rule for me has been eliminating the blind spot to zero. Knowing whose around you at all times without having to turn your head all the time is one way to stay alive. Adding little blind spot mirrors on the bike can do that.
11. Braking Part 2. Always complete your braking BEFORE you enter a curve. Example: On any approaching curve.. do all your braking before you start to lean into the curve. In the curve you have the choice of either coasting through it or accelerating through it.
12. Always wear gloves. In the summer..at the very LEAST.. wear fingerless gloves. WHEN you do go down.. your hands will take most of the impact. We're talking serious road-rash here.
13. Check the tire pressure often. Proper air pressure is more important than they are on a car.
14. Stay focused! This is not the time or place to be worrying about your upcoming divorce, your dead-end job, or your receding hairline. Relax, take in the sights, sounds, and smells.
15. If you ever hydro-plane... do not hit your brakes. Ride it out and keep it straight. Sometimes it helps to tighten the anal muscles during this maneuver.
16. Always wear some eye protection. A gnat in the eye at 55mph feels like a 22 caliber hollow-point! Lets not even talk about locust season. Geez.
17. Re-read # 6
18. Proper lane positioning. I'm always letting other people know I'm there by how I position myself in various circumstances..Stay out of blind spots. Tim S./ Ohio
19. If it's early morning, or late evening, and the sun is positioned such that you can see YOUR OWN SHADOW in front of you, that means your pretty invisible to oncoming traffic...kinda like a Japanese Zero diving out of the sun, eh ??
20. Never drive your big road bike (street tires) on wet grass, muddy roads, roads covered with fall leaves, or anything wet with a rut in it.
21. Don't allow yourself to get cold on a bike. Hypothermia can impair your judgement /abilities as much as alcohol or drugs.
22. In hot weather, stay hydrated, you dessicate quickly on a bike. Drink plenty of fluids.
23. Ride like your invisible. Assume that nobody sees you (except the highway patrol).
24. There's gravel/sand lurking on every unknown curve, and it is waiting for you.
25. Power-Wheelies happen easily with a passenger. Additionally, don't accelerate unexpectedly with a passenger or you'll lose her/him.
26. Never get confrontational (or angry) on a bike. The car is bigger, and you will lose.
27. There's no such thing as a "fender-bender" on a bike.
28. If your face shield gets too bug splattered, stop and clean it.
29. Only ride in the rain if there's no other way. When in the rain, on multilane highways, don't let a passing semi get too close, it will suck you in (and terminally mess you up).
30. If you do go down, try to ride out the slide; DO NOT try to get up while you are sliding. K-Man
31. I am also a firm believer in being highly conspicuous: lights, reflective wear, horns, and body language should always be a part of your repertoire. C.D. Perry/ N.Y.
32. Avoid deer like Ebola. They will hurt you and make your beautiful bike real ugly real fast. Be particularly aware of them when the light is changing; Dusk and Dawn
33. When it just starts to rain.. Stop .. have a cup of coffee or a soda and wait for the rain to clean the slime from the road. David F.

34. Don't drive in slow lane while on the interstate...ever...especially by off ramps.. there's always the idiot who almost missed his exit and sweeps 4 lanes to get to it.
35. Don't pass on the right. You'll be between the car on your left and the sacred parking spot or obscure turn-off on your right that its looking for.
36. Never drive at the same speed as traffic... i.e. never be static in anyone's peripheral view.
37. Where possible, enter intersections with a vehicle on your right, otherwise down the middle.
38. Wear bright colors and reflect from all angles... lest you become a no-see'um.
39. Traffic control devices won't save you. Scan all compass points prior to entering all intersections. Green can also mean go directly to the morgue.
40. The safest place in traffic is in front of it.
- 41.If you're an all year rider read up on weather riding and practice! I can't stress practice enough. Remember that cone course exercise you did back in MSF school? Go to an open (vacant) parking lot and practice those things on your bike. Yes the almighty undisputed heavyweight champion K. Try practicing when the lot is wet and practice easy riding on the street before pressuring yourself to ride to work in the rain. You might drop it, you say? Hmmm... maybe you should sell your K and go down and get the latest sedan w/ the aqua-treds. Remember, you don't have to ride. You don't have to subject yourself to these critical life situations that riding puts you in. I'm just saying, be prepared for whatever kind of riding you want to do.
42. Learn from your past experiences/mistakes and hopefully others as well.
- 43.Keep your mount clean. If not for vanity's sake It'll be easier to maintain because you'll be able to i.e.spot the source of that fluid leak more readily or see that bolt missing from the front of you're otherwise road grime encrusted engine case. Isn't it interesting how the bike seems to have more power after a good detailing :)
44. If you find yourself rushing to get out the door for work it might not be a good idea to take the bike. Don't ride when you're mind is racing in a mad dash to get to wherever. It's not good for your health.
45. Pre-ride inspection. I hope everyone does this before every-ride. It's just one of those cursory things that only takes a minute (once you get the process down) to perform and can literally make the difference between life and death. You wouldn't want a tire to fail in mid sweeper at 100 on Hwy 1 would you? Or the engine seizing up because it happened to drink an excessive amount of oil since last you checked? It's awfully hard to eyeball rear tire pressure when she's on the center stand Of course the list goes on and on. It's just the little things folks. Did you ever see that Billy Bob Thornton movie Sling Blade? Remember the part where that man is forever trying to start his lawnmower and finally decides to take it down to the shop because he's had it? Remember what the first thing the mechanic did upon hearing the owners report, he checked the gas tank. Basic, basic, basic ;)
46. Know where you're BMW motorcycle shops are located in the areas you'll be riding . It's a time/headache saver especially on long trips. 'Nuff said.
47. Learn how to maintain and service you're own bike. I can't stress how much of a plus and a lifesaver this skill is to possess. Common sense has it that if you know how you're bike is put together and how things are supposed to operate you'll be more articulate in performing your pre-ride inspections and if break-downs ever occur on the road or you drop the bike(for some godforsaken reason) you'll be better prepared to handle the situation.
48. Leathers are great but it's a blessing either to have a rainsuit handy or a set of some sort of synthetic riding suit available for riding when the weather is uncertain. This applies especially if you're a 365day/year rider like me whom commutes everyday. I believe the top quality synthetic suite offer comparable protection from road rash if not better weather protection for sure in a touring riding situation.
49. If you tend to breathe heavy (like me) or if it's going to be cool/cold on your ride applying some sort of anti fog coating to your glasses and/or face shield will work wonders in letting your eyeballs do their job unhindered. I find that the Fog City Fog Shield is an ingenious product which is basically a condensation proof sheet of plastic which is applied inside the face shield. All that stuff they teach you in MSF school like covering the brakes to lessen your braking response time and therefore stopping distance... well, it helps to be able to see every little nuance of detail of the road you're about to ride over and a few seconds of faceshield clouding when you're canyon scratching or riding in traffic can make all the difference when self preservation becomes a factor. Figure out what method works for you and use it!
50. Nutrition: If you're going to go on that epic sporty ride or starting that epic trip the next day make sure you get a proper meal and appropriate amount of shut-eye the night before. You'll feel much more stoked for the ride when you get up in the morning because you're body/mind will be ready for whatever. Also, don't eat heavy meals during break stops on the ride. Try to eat a snack or light meal such as a salad w/ a bit of chicken or soup and a roll or half that sandwich. You want as much blood as possible to stay in your brain and not be digesting food(because that doesn't involve CPU time ;)Besides, did you ever notice that after a grand meal you feel like taking a grand nap?

51. If you do end up taking your mount to get dealer serviced you'll want to go over it thoroughly before riding off. Hey, are you willing to bet your life that that young kid mechanic or even old salt mechanic didn't overlook the fact that the break fluid reservoir cap was not properly tightened or that the bike was even properly filled w/oil before putting the fairing back on or that the tires are appropriately inflated after having been renewed? Don't laugh, it happens more than you know.

52. Look where you want to go, not where you don't want to go. I think it is a reasonable argument to say that everything else we do to control a bike is secondary to this. Some situations can be avoided by slowing down (no way!), driving defensively, being more visible and so forth. But these only help prevent a bad situation, they don't fix it after it has occurred. And once in a bad situation, while there are many different ways to move a bike to help get out of that situation (weight transfer, sliding tires, handlebar control, throttle control, etc), the bike does not know instinctively where it should go - it has to be told. Before it can be told, however, the driver must make the decision of where he/she wants it to go. That means looking to that spot. Target fixation is real! *G.D. Ball, PHD / Mn.*

53. When riding in mountains you really need to understand how your direction of travel is linked with the Sun; you'll be comin' round the mt. rubbernecking or whatever and then BLAMMM sun in face. Wind, the wind generally follows the Sun. The thermals cause wind to "rise" with the Sun and set with the Sun".Ridge lines are usually swept clean with high winds cutting a right angle to the road. Moisture, Sun and wind play a great role on surface moisture. There are places in the mnts. that after summer will not be hit by Mr. Sun until next year. Combine this with natural springs, condensation, or people pissing in the road and there can be a big puddle right around the bend. *Brian S./ Va.*

54. Whenever stopped in traffic, NEVER put the bike in neutral. Keep the tranny in 1st gear and get used to holding in the clutch lever. As much as most of us hate to do this, it allows the rider to simply release the clutch and go if you need to move out of the way of danger. A motor officer in South Florida was killed because it took him too long for him to clutch, engage 1st gear, release the clutch and begin to roll - even though he had enough time and space to escape the approaching car. Remember..."Neutral Kills!" *Mark P/ Florida Atlantic University Police Department*

55.As you approach a stoplight or stop sign, angle the bike slightly so the mirror of choice has a clear view directly behind you. It's no secret that you can't realistically glance in the mirror and see what's approaching from directly behind you without contorting your body. So just before rolling to stop turn the bike slightly until the view to the rear is clear. Now you'll be able to see the 103 year old blue-hair in the Dodge Dart that still hasn't seen you between her and the school bus. *Mark P / Florida Atlantic University Police Department.*

56. A second reason for #55... Now that you are aware that the approaching car isn't going to stop, the angle of the bike points it between the two cars in front of you allowing rule #1 to come into play and allow you to quickly roll forward to the "safer" place between the cars up ahead. *Mark P / Florida Atlantic University Police Department.*

57. Emergency gear to carry in your pockets at all times: A cell phone (but don't be surprised if it doesn't work from rural roadside locations); a whistle, so you can attract the attention of a rescuer from the bottom of the canyon after you're too weak to yell; a pencil and piece of paper to take phone numbers, street or trail names, or instructions from an emergency operator. If you carry a cell phone while you ride, make sure you have it on your person, not in your tank or saddle bag. If you crash, and your bike ends up on the other side of the road from you, and you can't crawl or otherwise get to it, you'll be unable to call for help. You should also have the number of your phone taped to the phone somewhere it can be easily read, since someone may be using the phone on your behalf, and therefor won't know the number, and the emergency operator would really like to be able to call them back. *Scot M./ Dublin, Ca.*

58. ALWAYS be extremely paranoid when riding alongside parallel parked cars, or even worse, stopped traffic lines. When the idiot who's in a parallel spot, or in line, pulls out, or even worse, does a U TURN (!!) out of their parking spot, you'll be flying over their car onto the pavement. *C Santos / Ann Arbor, MI*

59. On the highway, if you're on the leftmost lane, and cars abruptly stop ahead of you, PULL OFF QUICKLY AND CAREFULLY ONTO THE SHOULDER. Let the moron behind you who isn't paying attention rear-end the car in front, not sandwich you between his car and the car ahead. *C Santos / Ann Arbor, MI*

Appendage from Pirate: While # 59 has actually saved MY life.. Here is a slightly different perspective of this same tip.. and a valid one.

59: Part 2 / The natural reaction to suddenly seeing the car in front of you stopped is to swerve & tromp on the brakes. The only place to swerve in this situation is to the left onto the shoulders. I've seen more people go onto & sometimes over the shoulder avoiding the car in front than ever rear end the car in front. I would suggest that when you find yourself in this situation, either go to the right, between the cars stopped in front of you or drive down the shoulder 3 or 4 car lengths. My Brother-in-law went to the left & stopped next to the drivers door of the car in front of him & the following car ran him over as he avoided the stopped car by driving down the same shoulder. *Contributed by J.D. in Mariposa, California*

60. When its wet, watch out for man-hole covers in turns and intersections. They're always in the worst spot for motorcycles. Also, painted lines at crosswalks and those great big painted arrows at intersections are really slippery when they're wet. *Kevin Harvey / Idaho*

61. Always carry a camera, even a disposable camera works great. As they say, a picture says a thousand words. And in the case of an accident, you might need photos of skid marks, highway signs and markings, where vehicles ended up, initial damage to any and all vehicles, (damage might mysteriously increase after leaving the scene...hummm.) injuries, dead animals, witnesses, road and weather conditions. *Ken Bowen / Dallas Texas*

62. When trying to rack up lots of miles on a bike, you can help keep your body on even keel by eating small, mini-meals at each gas stop - as opposed to one or two heavy fast food meals during the day. Fruit slices, unsalted nuts, and water works great for me at each gas stop. These mini-meals help keep blood sugar at normal levels although I am neither hypoglycemic nor diabetic. *Tosh Konya / Troy OH.*

63. Contrary to the view taken in tip# 3, riding behind the wheels of an eighteen wheeler can also be hazardous to your health. The tread tire is a way of life for truckers. We all know what happens when a tread separates from a tire. The shock and noise numb your brain just long enough to get you killed. The tread usually "bangs" against some part of the under side of the truck, then it comes off (Hopefully in small pieces). The failing tire can also cause a vehicle to swerve into you or your path. Flying tire treads can be deadly. The tread can be very heavy and take on very unusual flight characteristics. The impact from a tread (especially a large section) can kill you. My advice, if you are given a choice, don't ride behind any large, heavy, vehicle un-less you are going slower than twenty five! *Wade Davis / Ocala,Fl.*

64. Bikes can slow down awfully quick without using brakes, so when decelerating by engine compression alone tap on the brakes to warn the driver behind you and let them know you are slowing down. *John Ahearne / San Francisco, CA*

65. Heavy rain: It's begun to rain so torrentially that you need shelter fast. There's a bridge underpass up ahead. If you stop, stop at the far end of the underpass. If you stop at the near end, or even the middle, you may be run over by a car or truck that decides it needs to stop beneath the underpass, too. It may be raining so hard that the driver doesn't see you until it's too late. *Mark Hammond / San Francisco CA*

66. Strong wind: If you find yourself struggling against a strong crosswind on the open road, focus on muscling your knee and thigh against the fuel tank for counterbalance. With a little practice, it's remarkable how effective the knee/thigh pressure on the bike can be in riding safely and comfortably in a strong crosswind. *Mark Hammond / San Francisco CA*

67. Quitting time! Be incredibly alert around quitting time, people are tired and hot to get home and come sailing right straight out of those parking lots straight for the left lane. Friday afternoon ahead of 4th of July, they're also towing a trailer and coming at you twice as fast! *Jack Connolly / Post Falls K12GT 04*

68. Late Apex! I just keep repeating that as I ride the twisties and it keeps my line where it should be. As any rider with experience knows if you ride early apex's it's just a matter of time before you hit something in the road or hit a curve that is a reducing radius and you find yourself in the wrong lane ! *Joe McCarthy / Andover, Ma*

69. An appendage to Tip # 3.. another reason to always follow directly behind car or truck wheels... The center of the road has all the grease and drippings from cars and trucks. Riding behind the tire lane of a car gives you a more traction area of the road. *MW / San Jose, CA*

70. Start fresh, Stay fresh. Save that nice refreshing shower or bath for the last thing you do before starting your trip. Get the scoot loaded and pre-flighted, etc. (I have found it much easier to check the tire PSI's before you load your 300 lb grill!). Take a few (2 or 3) extra minutes at each fuel stop and wash up a tad. Hands, face and neck, underarms, and crotch. Back before the PC days us Army dudes called this a "Whore's Bath". *Drew Bland /Evansville, IN*

71. A quick check of all the potential anchors and UFO's you have bunjied and tied on to your scoot before you leave each fuel and rest-area stop might be appreciated by your fellow travelers too. Shit flying off your scoot at 80 mph is "UFO's to your fellow travelers ! Bet you can figure out what the "anchors" are .. *Drew Bland / Evansville, IN*

72. Go on extra HIGH Alert anywhere in the vicinity of Farm equipment and related vehicles, most especially those big Drop Deck heavy haulers with the Big Cats, etc on board. All kinds of shit can come flying off the trailer deck, from between the dualies, etc.. right at YOU with little or no warning !! This will occur more often when something makes the vehicle Bounce. ex: RR Tracks, bridges, chuck-holes,etc. Also strong gust of winds will cause more UFO activity too from both these vehicles as well as terra firma. A tumbleweed blowing cross-ways of you when your running 80 mph or more will give you a pucker check ! *Drew Bland /Evansville, IN*

73. Here's a trick I've figured out to help with tailgaters. One good trick is to increase your following distance, sure, but that doesn't help if something else (see UFOs in tips 71 and 72) makes you brake quickly. I've found a little gentle swerving in my lane helps keep the cell-phone wielding commuters off my tail. I think it just reminds some people I'm there, and makes others think I'm just a bit crazy, but after a few weaves, I usually get at least two seconds' distance behind me. *Jeff Pettross / Seattle, Wa*

74. As a New England alternative to tip # 69...in the spring, the potholes on the freeway always appear in the tire tracks. Particularly on the edges of overpasses. Some of these are big enough to eat your front tire. At night, you may not see them until it's too late. The second place they appear is between the driving lanes, and though generally not deep, they can be long, and they can trap your front tire. On New England freeways, in spite of the oil on the road, it's often safer to ride in the center of the lane. *Rick Ramsey / MA.*

75. A clean bike is a safe bike. Wash Wax and detail your bike on a weekly basis. Not only does it attract dollies :-), but it gives you "Face time" to see loose fasteners, bulged rubber, cracked hardware etc etc. *Danno Campbell / New York, NY*

76. When approaching a cross road at high speed on a highway-----try to stay behind something large (like a car or truck)-----and then the idiot who is attempting to get on the highway (in rush hour traffic)----will see the big vehicle---and NOT---- pull out in front of YOU! At least if he does----he'll get T-boned by the car or truck----and not you!

(Giving you time to slow down, turn, or stop-----before the T-bone event!) *Richard Craig / Napa, California*

77. I agree with all of these points, except for #36. Yes, you want to stay out of anyone's blind spot. But what you want to maximize is your separation from other traffic. Usually traffic travels in "packs", and the best way to do this is to spend as much time as possible between "packs", which means travelling mostly at the same speed as the rest of the traffic. Every time you pass someone or someone passes you, the risks are increased. Of course each of us is the best driver on the road, so the risk is increased mostly when we are being passed. *Brian / Culpeper, VA*

78. Tailgaters part 1: To stop folks from tailgating me, I have placed the following sign on the back fender of my ride: Tailgating KILLS! Please don't! Guess what? you get 3 seconds of in-trail spacing (most of the time)... And I live in California! *Jeff Frost /Sacramento, California*

79. Tailgaters part 2: If you are as sandwiched in as everyone else around you (and they have not read your sign), but there is no where to go, follow this procedure: Downshift at least one or two gears, let off the gas, and simultaneously turn around and point directly at the offending driver, making eye contact if possible. Hold this for a drop of about 5 mph maximum, just enough to force the offending driver to take the smallest amount of action and then take off. This will open the lane ahead of you for a momentary escape and will also bring the actions of this idiot driver to the attention of everyone else. Do it in front of a cop (correctly) and you get a bonus: the guy gets pulled over! Needless to say, you have to be totally aware of your surroundings. If you are not, only ride in the middle of the night. *Jeff Frost /Sacramento, California*

80. Tailgaters part 3 (the LAST resort): Upon further soulful deliberation.. this tip has been deleted..

81. Many riders crash out when they are learning or are novice. One of the main contributing factors to this is over confidence and peer pressure. If you are new to motorcycling and are riding with a group of experienced riders don't feel you have to keep up, ride at your own pace and well within your own ability. For those experienced riders that have a novice rider with them be considerate, don't all blast off and leave him/her for dead, some one hang back and offer helpful hints and constructive criticism. *Laurie (Lozz) Burrows / Western Australia*

82. Road rule # 1 should be, never drive anything while intoxicated. If you are going to participate in poker runs, or attend motorcycle rallies, drink only non- alcoholic beverages. I know too many of my fellow motorcyclist friends who have been seriously hurt, some killed, from drinking and driving motorcycles. *Tom / Albany, Ill.*

83. The safest place for idiot drivers is in front of you (you can keep track of them if you can see them). *Michael Lyman / Fremont, CA*

84. Park your ego and vanity at home. Both will get you dead (if your wheels are still turning) in any confrontational situation. Better to let the idiots achieve a steady-state. Someone else will judge them later. *Michael Lyman / Fremont, CA*

85. When setting at light, as car approaches from rear, pump brake lever couple of times quickly and then hold. This way you stick out. *Don "Old Man" Smith / Co-founder VMOA #2*

86. Keep other riders informed by pointing out if there is upcoming debris on the road. *Randall T. Mahuy / Fullerton, CA*

87. Keep an eye out for loose gear or parts falling off another riders bike. *Randall T. Mahuy / Fullerton, CA*

88. When approaching a stopped vehicle that is looking to turn into my lane (typically the dreaded left turn without seeing you), I try to quickly determine if the driver has made eye contact with me. At the same time, I am concentrating on the wheels of the vehicle. If they turn or move even the slightest amount, I immediately execute my planned evasive maneuver (that I planned long before approaching the vehicle in question). *Michael Lyman / Fremont, CA*

89. If the rider or driver in front of you is slowing down, be damn sure you know why before you pass them. They may have hit the brakes for (1) the squad car looking for speeders (2) the idiot in front of them who is about to make a U-turn in front of you or (3) the steer in the ditch that is getting ready to cross the road. *Hank Barta / Beautiful Sunny Winfield, Illinois*

90. Be very careful behind open top dump trucks and other haulers. The things they haul have a tendency to want to escape. I had to dodge an old tire at 60mph when it decided to fly out of the top of a truck. *Lt.Col John Reschar / Colorado Springs, Colorado*

91. When you are about to pull out to overtake the vehicle in front of you, check your mirror again. The car in the lane you are moving into may be going much faster than you expect and you cannot see this from a single mirror check. Saved me the other day when the car was doing about 120mph *Graham Dockrill / UK*

92. HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK ALONE! As many of us are over 40, there is always the chance of having a heart attack while riding or driving.

Pay Attention: You are riding along and suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home; unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far. WHAT CAN YOU DO? Pull over? or try to make it to the hospital? A tough call if on a motorcycle. Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint,

has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest, and a cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds without let up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital. *F. Daniel Rochman MD / Contributed by Frank Ganger / Lake Bluff, IL*

Note from Pirate: I have had a few dozen doctors check in with me on this tip. Some say that this tip is not only wrong but could cause more harm than good.. then the other 50% check in thanking me for listing the tip. I'll assume all these doctors learn similar knowledge at similar med schools but this seems to be a polarizing issue so take it at face value and judge for yourself.. Also Snopes says it's not true... Personally.. I chose to believe it works but I'm no doctor. I don't give a shit what Snopes says.. This was contributed by a doctor/motorcyclist who said this method saved his life... and thats good enough for me..

93. What's the most unused button on your bike? Other than the emergency flasher.. your horn. Many of us can ride for days or weeks without hitting the horn. This is NOT good in an emergency situation as you could very easily find yourself fumbling for the horn button while that 28,000lb SUV is merging on you. My suggestion is.. Before you leave your driveway after your bike is warmed up... Re-familiarize yourself with the horn button. Hit the horn a few times. Feel the horn button while not looking. In an emergency situation one or 2 seconds fumbling for the button can mean the difference of being safe and being in a pine box. *Pirate / Asheville, NC*

94. If you do find yourself down, outside of the line of traffic, don't move until you've checked out the function of all your parts by touch and minimovements. If you have ANY neck (or back) pain or ANY numbness or weakness anywhere, stay down, stay still, and please don't let anyone take off your helmet until hospital based professional evaluation is complete. .. and carry ID in or on your helmet and person, and the EMT's have all been trained to look for an ICE (In Case of Emergency) # in your cell phone. Use it. *Contributed by David Hunt .. Neurosurgeon / Hoboken, NJ*

95. When approaching an intersection, honk and wave at the cross traffic. They'll think that you're crazy, but they'll be looking at you and less likely to run you over. *Jim Clabby / Marietta, GA*

96. Always check rear view mirrors and tire position before passing a car. *Contributed by Nick Zarras, Captain, USAF / Las Vegas, Nevada*

97. In windy conditions up the revolutions per minute to maximum torque of the engine. It stabilizes the motorcycle. *Contributed by Nick Zarras, Captain, USAF / Las Vegas, Nevada*

98. Place body or high vis reflectors on the front and back of the motorcycle. It makes a world of difference in a parking lot, or at the stop light at night. They stop 20 feet behind me. *Contributed by Nick Zarras, Captain, USAF / Las Vegas, Nevada*

99. Always look at driver patterns in front of you, and then open up your spacing if anything looks out of the ordinary. It saved my life when a woman started to fall asleep, got scared as she started to weave into a side support and over corrected going 90 degrees to the road and airborne in front of me. I had plenty of room see her fly away into the ditch, then stop normally to call for help. *Contributed by Nick Zarras, Captain, USAF / Las Vegas, Nevada*

100. Don't be afraid to ride slow. *Contributed by Pappy Hoel, founder of the Sturgis motorcycle rally / Bismarck, ND*

101. When you have your cell phone (hopefully on your person) & involved in an accident where you become disabled or hurt to the point you are unconscious, have your cell phone programmed with at least 2 ICE (In Case of Emergency) numbers. Ambulance drivers and attendants will usually ck the cell phone for emergency numbers to contact someone who knows you to let them know where you are and how to get hold of you. Make these numbers family, close friends, or someone who will know how to get hold of the necessary people for you. Make sure you inform the ICE people you choose what will be necessary for them to do if contacted. *Contributed by Butch Greene / Malvern, Arkansas*

102. If you're riding directly into the sun you might notice it's hard to see vehicles in front of you, so imagine what a car driving behind you might not see. If stopping in this situation split between any cars in front of you or least stop to the side if you're first in queue. *Contributed by James van der Moezel in Western Australia*

103. Use hand signals. No, not that one. ALL the fingers. Say you've got a tailgator. Hold your left hand held out downward, palm open. Notice the response? 99% of drivers will immediately give you more space. Give 'em a big OK (thumb and forefinger together, fingers wide) and they STAY back! Much nicer. Hand turn signals are just as effective. And people actually LET YOU IN to change lanes, or change lanes themselves if you're slowing to turn. Use your blinkers too, of course. Just in case there's a cellphone involved. I have no idea why this works for bikes but not cages, but it does. Try it. *Contributed by Revill Dunn Austin (Center of the Universe) Texas*

104. While traveling behind another vehicle and when you see an oncoming vehicle wanting to cross your lane from your left-like when they are making a left turn, get as far to the left side of your lane as possible. When you see someone trying to enter your lane from the right- like from a driveway or side street, get as far over to the right side of your lane as possible. This will make you more visible from behind the vehicle you are following. Moving to the extreme left or right side of the lane makes you more visible to the drivers waiting for a gap in traffic. If they can't see you, the space you are

occupying looks like a gap they can pull out into. If you follow too close, all they can see is a GAP between the vehicle you are following and the vehicle behind you. This may make them think they have enough time/space to get across the line of traffic. *Contributed by Ken Farley, SCRC Albany NY*

105. Carry a first aid kit in your saddle bags. Have such items as advil, bandages, gauze, tape, benadryl (in case of bee stings), tums, antiseptic spray, pair of rubber gloves, CPR mouth guard (hopefully you will never need it, but better to be safe than sorry). Most of these items come in individual packages so your kit won't be too big. *Contributed by Jen in Erie PA*

106. Watch out for cars with spinning hubcaps. I think those things should be illegal. I once had to take evasive action when I thought a car was pulling out in front of me when it was actually stopped. felt like a fool but at least I learned from it. *Contributed by Ernest Kudron Lochbuie, Colorado*

107. Be wary of the hiss of the Tar Ssssnake. When traveling over the tar poured into the cracks of the road, you will hear a Hissing noise instead of the usual road noise. If you hear the hiss you maybe about to be bit, select a track that takes you as far away from the Tar Snakes as your path safely allow you to. *Contributed by John Burkhauser, Willow Grove Pa*

108. Paramedics will turn to a victim's cell phone for clues to that person's identity. You can make their job much easier with a simple idea that they are trying to get everyone to adopt: ICE. ICE stands for In Case of Emergency. If you add an entry in the contacts list in your cell phone under ICE, with the name and phone number of the person that the emergency services should call on your behalf, you can save them a lot of time and have your loved ones contacted quickly. It only takes a few moments of your time to do. Paramedics know what ICE means and they look for it immediately. ICE your cell phone NOW! *Contributed by Sir Steve Carlton, San Ramon, Ca.*

109. When approaching a car waiting at a cross street, I flick my bright lights on and off to get the driver's attention. I also use my bright lights in the day time for the same reason. *Contributed by Jim Homan, Richland, WA*

110. When riding in a hilly area (like Vermont) with a lot of blind hills, always approach the crest of the hill in the rightmost part of your lane. You never know when some pickup truck full of punks is going to come sailing over that hill mostly in your lane. *Contributed by Reg Bowley, Essex Jct, VT*

111. I realize a P-EPIRB Personal-Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon is not for everyone but I wanted to provide this 'tip' just in case. Maybe knowing they exist might save someone's life. I do a lot of riding by myself and this normally means in very remote areas where cell phone service is totally unavailable. To help in this situation I have purchased a P-EPRIB. If something happens and I'm still conscious and can push a button, Emergency Rescue personal the will know my exact location, within 3 minutes and within 30 meters anywhere on the North American continent. The units are small enough to carry on your person, not uncomfortable, and simple to operate and the batteries last 10 years. *Contributed by Robert Rehkopf / Bartlett, TN*

112. I followed a semi at about a 100 meters distance, coming out of a turn on a Motorway junction (we call it leaf clover-junctions). Suddenly, I saw a car coming from the other way on my right spin around. It rear-ended the armco barriers, where it stood still. I switched on the emergency flashers, and slowed down to check if the occupants were ok, when I suddenly heard a car in the right lane (I was in the second) brake and slide very hard. I realized immediately that he would either hit the standing car, or pull out and hit me. So, I accelerated the hell out of there, just to see the sliding car pull out just behind me. If I had kept driving slowly, he would have run over me, and most likely killed me. So, here's my advice: If an accident occurs in another lane, don't slow down, but accelerate the hell away. Cars may change lanes to avoid the other car, and take you with them. *Contributed by Noel V. Lochristi / Belgium*

113. "Use your sense of smell." I have avoided vehicles that were about to "blow" a tire {smell of burning rubber} or cars with e-brakes on {burning brakes} and vehicles with that sweet smell of anti-freeze leaking {soon to burst a hose or pull over or even stop immediately!} Once, I got away from a truck with a trailer as the tire seemed to wobble, as I pulled over, the tire blew and the trailer flipped. The tire hit the vehicle behind me. *Contributed by Larry Egerton / Wilmington NC*

114. Watch out for the lack of grip near farm entrances and gas stations. Manure and diesel are very slippery indeed, especially when wet. Use your sense of smell - the rain brings out the odor too. Also wet diesel causes rainbow patterns on the road. Any corner near a gas station is especially risky as trucks often spill with full tanks when rounding bends. *Contributed by Sir Ian Finlay / London UK*

115. If another biker pulls a wheelie or otherwise shows off, leave him to it and hang back. If he comes to a sticky end you won't be caught up in the debris. *Contributed by Sir Ian Finlay / London UK*

116. Lane Splitting: In the UK, lane splitting (filtering) is legal, and practiced commonly by riders and Police. Here are two tips about that and general issues from my years of riding in London. If you come to the end or a line of traffic and decide to overtake the line of stationary or slow moving vehicles, watch out for the last 10 or so cars. Very often one will decide that the line is too long/slow and try a U turn to take another route. They never look for bikes. *Contributed by Sir Ian Finlay / London UK*

Note from Pirate: I know that many wacky Europeans and zany Californians practice lane splitting, but I am 100% against it no matter what my horoscope says or how adept at it the rider may claim to be. There are just too many things that can go horribly wrong in the blink of an eye. However..who am I to dictate riding practices? Therefore..the lane splitting tips are included in the hope that it may make those riders who are intent on this dangerous practice safer...

117. Lane Splitting: If a gap between traffic lines is too small to get through, don't try to bully your way past. Wait patiently, and drivers will sometimes move aside to let you past. Always thank them with a wave (if safe) or nod. I've sometimes knocked on their window and shouted "excuse me please" and they're so surprised they move aside!

Contributed by Sir Ian Finlay / London UK

118. If you are riding at night in rain or fog and the oncoming headlights blind you (which they will on a rural road), look down to the right side of the road and just relax (because you cannot see anything). At least the headlights will not blind you. This works also if some fool has his headlights on high beam at night and fails to respond to a flicking up and down of your own headlight. *Contributed by Bill Whit / Ontario, Canada*

119. If temperature is questionable, dress for colder weather, rather than warmer weather. In my opinion, a human can accommodate a little bit of sweating a lot better than a little bit of freezing. If you get cold, your brain stops working well. If you get hot, you start sweating, to offset the heat. *Contributed by Brian Mehosky / Cleveland, Ohio*

120. A good opportunity to actually *practice* avoidance maneuvers is when you change lanes on expressways. I practice "avoiding" the white lines when I change lanes. It teaches me to look to where I want to go (the unpainted section of the road) while observing the white lines. I'm hopeful that this has helped on those occasions I've had to maneuver out of harm's way. *Contributed by Brian Mehosky / Cleveland, Ohio*

121. When touring, let the sun's position factor into the route plan. If you have to go southeast in the morning, head south first (when the sun is low in the sky) and the sun will be off your left shoulder. Later in the morning (when the sun is higher in the sky), turn east. You won't have to fight the sun as much. *Contributed by Brian Mehosky / Cleveland, Ohio*

122. If traveling at night on country/unlit roads oncoming vehicles may not dip their headlights or take a while to react - close one eye before the vehicles lights reach you. That way you only get 50% of your night vision affected. *Contributed by Anthony Collin / UK*

123. If there is debris in your path and no time to avoid it take the weight off your bum by standing slightly on the foot pegs so transferring the centre of gravity a bit lower. *Contributed by Anthony Collin / UK*

124. When traveling for long periods in wet weather applying the brakes slightly every so often will reduce wet lag in an emergency. *Contributed by Anthony Collin / UK*

125. In tip #4 you discuss that terrible toll both problem with grease but also you can't forget the driver not paying attention! This one saved my life once as a car plowed into the toll both right after I drove through...If you can in "your" state get EZ-PASS or the equivalent. If you don't have to stop for the toll you don't have to worry about getting hit and stay to the left or right to avoid the grease. On the East Coast the entire coast supports EZ-Pass. *Contributed by Matt Pinto / Sparta, NJ*

126. I'll add one small comment to Tip #105 on first aid kits. Most small first aid kits sold in department stores are a bit useless. Handy for the kids with a scrape or splinter, but not meant for a major injury. Look at backpacking and mountaineering stores, then add some really big bandages and compresses ('big' in the sense they cover large wounds, not in packaged size or weight). We called them 'battle dressings' in the military. A little cut or scrape will wait until your home. An arterial bleed from an open fracture needs a large compress bandage and pressure - FAST! A nice clean dressing beats the heck out of that rag you use to wipe up the spilled gas. For an example of what I'm talking about check out Adventure Medical Kits and their [Sportsman Field/Trauma kit](#) *Contributed by Link Shadley - old Army Corpsman and revived biker.*

127. When I recently hit a deer I still had time to react even though it was only a second. I chose to brake as hard as possible, direct the impact energy to the tailing section, and then release the front brake directly at impact springing the front forks and frame upwards. The deer was seen flying upside down and backwards landing completely off the road and the bike and I were fine. *Contributed by Mountain Mike in the Trinity Alps CA.*

128. When in doubt, DON'T. It doesn't matter what the topic is. Your rational mind is slower than you would want to believe. So even if you don't know WHY you are uneasy about a situation, or have some vague nagging "feeling", your peripheral vision or subconscious probably has picked up on something you do not recognize consciously. It is time to stop or slow down immediately to assess the environment. *Contributed by Tracy Bradford -Port Clinton, Ohio*

129. "Live alone, die in a crowd". That is - GIVE following distance ahead, and manage your situation to GET following distance behind. The old standard "two seconds back" assumes no adverse conditions. You are RIDING an adverse condition, so make it three seconds in back and in front AT A MINIMUM. Other adverse conditions, rain, darkness, Friday or Saturday Night - add one second for each adverse condition you can dream up. Same rule applies to riding with a group, riding in traffic, etc. *Contributed by Tracy Bradford - Port Clinton, Ohio*

130. It takes a football field and both end zones to stop a loaded truck or bus even in a panic stop! DO NOT LET A TRUCK OR BUS FOLLOW YOU CLOSELY. Just because the driver of the heavy is being paid, does not make him/her a professional. *Contributed by Tracy Bradford - Port Clinton, Ohio*

131. A wave or an approving nod goes a long way in relating to our caged cousins. Let em know when they've done something Right! Like when they don't cut you off when they could have... Ride like they don't see you, but recognize their good deed when they do. *Contributed by Mark K Doylestown Pa*

132. For California Riders Only: When traffic is dead stopped or crawling on the Interstate and you feel the urge to drive up the middle, watch for open spaces where a car would have an opening to change lanes. Drivers will abruptly swerve to the left or right lane and never look to see what's coming from behind because it's impossible for vehicles to come up from behind in this situation, right? WRONG - the two wheeled kind are pressing on through traffic just fine. This is my old adage "as far as the other driver is concerned I don't exist". The other day I was lane splitting at 15 mph when I noticed an open space on the left, two cars up. Suddenly the big black diesel 4x4 swerved into that space. Because I had tapped the brakes to watch his movements I avoided being in the swerve path. *Contributed by Gil Davis, Buena Park, CA*

133. Further to point #127, my father told me that whenever you're going down the road (either driving or riding) and you see an animal like a horse, cow, deer, kangaroo, etc... always try to brake in a straight line and if possible aim for their back legs as most animals will run forward when startled. I'm pretty sure that someone screaming into their helmet while braking as hard as they can will usually startle any animals I've ever seen. If you've got the presence of mind to also hit the horn then I'm sure that wouldn't hurt either. :) *Contributed by Dan Bamford, Canberra, Australia*

134. The three unique challenges that face bikes are stability, visibility - other drivers seeing you, and visibility - you seeing other drivers and hazards. The ideal driving posture is the one that eliminates all three challenges (i.e. you have the best stability, other cars can see you and you can see everything else), then two of the challenges (you are very stable and every one see you, or you see everyone and they see you). Look for the grim reaper to appear if you only have one. *Contributed by Peter Warren, Orange County, CA.*

135. Ride to your the bike's strenght and not the weakness. Your strenght - A bike can out accelerate and decelerate a car. It is narrower than a car and can avoid an accident by going thru the smallest gap. Your weakness - Survivability in a crash. In a tight moment be prepared to drive to the bikes strenghts to avoid the bikes weakness. *Contributed by Peter Warren, Orange County, CA.*

136. I recommend that all bikers read the Hurt Report (full title is "Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures"). Its easy to find when you Google Hurt Report. The Hurt Report summarizes accident findings related to motorcycle crashes. The summary is very short 2 page report that lists 55 separate factors involved in motorcycle accidents. I think the best way to learn how to avoid having a crash is to learn from others that have crashed. *Contributed by Peter Warren, Orange County, CA.*

137. This may seem like a no-brainer, but don't ride under the influence of drugs or alcohol. No matter how experienced you are, you do not have a bumper. "Loose drunks" in auto accidents, sometimes, walk away without a scratch. "Loose drunks" in motorcycle accidents die! *Contributed by Mike Wilson.*

138. Never travel behind any vehicle that has something tied or secured to it. Anything that is not a permanent fixture on a vehicle has a greater possibility of coming off. *Contributed by Jamie Bush / Washington, DC*

139. When downshifting I always try to remember to slightly tap my brakes so that vehicles following can hopefully see that I am decelerating. *Contributed by Jamie Bush / Washington, DC*

That's it, gang. Good luck and be safe. Remember ...try to project a positive image.....you are representing ALL motorcyclists to the non-riding mortals who move among us. Enjoy!