

Safety Tips #13

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Ways to Steer Your Bike

In a previous article, Safety Tips #3, we discussed *countersteering*, or the method of changing direction on your bike using down-and-forward pressure on the handlegrip on the side of the bike to which you want to turn. Countersteering is the most efficient way to turn your bike, and is the primary method that must be employed. But there are other methods to effect changes in direction of a bike.

In the interest of full disclosure, you may want to know that the choice of this article's topic "coincides" rather neatly with the unveiling of a new course from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation called Advanced RiderCourse – Sportbike Techniques; and this course will soon be available from ABATE of Colorado's Rider Education Division. It's about techniques employed by riders of sport bikes, which are almost all usable by riders of any type of bike. And even if you are not a high-performance rider, it is good to have an understanding of the dynamics involved in these techniques.

Another method of helping your bike change direction is using the throttle. Opening the throttle tends to make the bike stand up from a lean and go in a straighter line. (Of course, this has the effect of making the bike go faster... and it also demands more traction from the tires, which is limited by the fact that the bike is leaning, so use caution.) And conversely, closing the throttle while in a lean tends to make the bike lean even more. (This utilizes engine braking, and demands traction as well.)

Another method of helping your bike change direction is by applying pressure to the gas tank with your leg that's on the side of the bike which is on the outside of the turn.

And the last method for consideration in this article is changing the weight distribution on your two footpegs. Applying more weight to the footpeg on the inside of the turn, and less weight to the footpeg on the outside of the turn will help the bike change direction.

Any or all three of these methods should be used in conjunction with countersteering.

Intrigued? Want more information? Take the new course, and read the excellent book, *Sport Riding Techniques* by Nick Ienatsch.