

Rider Training, isn't that what you do when you don't know anything about riding?

Many people can perpetuate bad riding habits learnt when they first started riding and not even know that they're bad habits. Ask Donald Rumsfeld, former Secretary of State for the USA.

He's quoted as saying "*Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns -- the ones we don't know we don't know.*"

Whilst not trying to confuse the issue any further, with regard to riding, we sometimes don't know that we don't know we haven't developed the right skills.

If you ask some road safety 'experts' about the role of training in keeping people from harm on the roads, they will point to research which shows where *driver* training has been examined and found wanting when compared to other methods of reducing road trauma.

But driver training is a good thing (*imagine letting people loose without any*) and rider training is even more essential.

For most of us, the training *ends* when we have our licence and everything after that is put down to 'experience.' How often do you hear people joking that they wonder how they got through those early years, because of all the risks and mistakes?

Experiences teaching Police and Paramedics during the NSW Police Solo Cycle Training Course have lead Paul Riley; Director of **Skill Master Motorcycle Services**, to believe that training is about attitude, vision and practice.

Training for these organisations is not about performing great feats or skills at high speeds. Surviving on the roads and responding to emergencies requires a thorough grounding in *basic* skills which become so much a part of your riding that you rely on them automatically when something goes wrong.

A good example of this is the rider who gets his or her licence and begins to ride with minimal instruction. One day, they are entering a corner which tightens up on them and they find themselves running wide. On a left hand corner this will take you straight into the path of an oncoming vehicle and the rest doesn't bear mentioning.

In this same scenario, the application of the correct skills can mean the difference between life and death. Skills learnt at low speeds will give you confidence at all speeds and enable you to *react* in such a way that you won't just freeze up when things go wrong.

Probably a more everyday example would be the simple U turn. This is often not performed well by motorcyclists as it isn't too often practiced and it becomes easier to simply 'walk' a bike around in a tight spot. But having the skills to control a bike in a low speed turn enables confidence in traffic, and also when manoeuvring around the many obstacles that face motorcyclists daily. This also, follows through when moving at more pleasant speeds and gives not only confidence but an ability to control the bike at all times rather than the bike controlling you to some extent.

It is for these reasons that much of the training for Police/Paramedics is performed at low speed. Manoeuvring through traffic cones is not everyone's idea of developing skills which will improve their riding on the road but it is the control developed doing this that makes all the difference.

As with any skill, it is only as good as the amount of practice applied to it once learnt. The Police and Paramedic training has a distinct advantage in that the course is one month long meaning participants are subject to application of what is being taught so often the techniques are literally made habits. Many people say it takes three weeks to develop a habit, good or bad, and it is through this repetitive application that results from the Police and Paramedic training has been shown to be such a benefit.

Whilst not having this long available to attend a course, the basic skills can be learnt quickly and then it is up to individuals to practice them. A refreshing of these skills is often needed to make sure you still 'have it.'

In order to provide the best possible method of helping people to begin applying skills, courses conducted through **Skill Master Motorcycle Services** include a practical session on one day with a guided ride on a day soon after to provide tips and methods for applying skills to the road environment.

Skill Master Motorcycle Services was begun to pass on the ongoing skills development methods used to train Police and Paramedics in a real world situation. The road environment is about survival as much as anything else these days.

Courses can be arranged on a one-on-one basis, a bunch of riding mates or girlfriends. Even pillion passengers can be accommodated by being part of the training courses (*Call for details on how*). Scooter riders can be provided for and are welcomed.

Other services provided by **Skill Master Motorcycle Services** are pre-purchase inspection of motorcycles (*which includes a PDF of the condition of the bike and a REVS Check*) and maintenance courses for those who wish to learn more than putting petrol in the bike, but don't want to be mechanics.

A lot of people seek a little more knowledge perhaps because riding is such a tactile experience and we want to know a bit more about how things work, and how to check that our ride remains in top condition.



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Skill Master Motorcycle Services has been established with the aim of *providing motorcycle services that can practically assist motorcyclists to improve their skills, knowledge and awareness to enjoy safe riding.*

Flexibility in providing this service is what **Skill Master Motorcycle Services** specialise in too so if you have special requirements for length of course or want to split it over a couple of days we will attempt to help you out.

For all enquiries regarding courses go to: www.skillmaster.com.au , email info@skillmaster.com.au or call 0414 974 815.