

## BASIC TURNING

Like riding a bicycle, a motorcycle requires you to balance it. Steering a motorcycle involves proper use of the handlebars. Because a motorcycle is heavier and more powerful than a bicycle, it is important to learn precise steering control.

Whether called a turn, corner, or curve, changing direction requires special attention. When riding a motorcycle at very low speed (like walking speed), change direction by leaning the motorcycle and turning the handlebars in the direction you want to go. At higher speeds, you initiate a change of direction by first pressing (forward or down) the handgrip on the same side of the intended turn. This is called countersteering because the handlebars are initially moved opposite the direction of the turn.

As you learn the skills needed to change direction, you want to consider: (1) speed, (2) where to scan, (3) handlebar movement, and (4) throttle use. Think about it in this order: Slow, Look, Press, and Roll. Although in reality these may not always be distinct steps, they make a good starting point when learning the basics of turning.

**Slow:** Reduce speed if needed before entering a turn by rolling off the throttle and using the brakes as needed.

Sometimes downshifting to a lower gear is necessary, and this should be done before the turn begins. You want to set up for the turn by having a safe entry speed. A safe entry speed is the speed at the beginning of the turn that allows you to maintain or increase speed while in the turn.

**Look:** As you approach a curve, evaluate its features ahead of time: sharpness or radius, length, surface conditions, etc. As you near the entry point, continue to search by keeping your head up and eyes moving throughout the turn. Turning your head in the direction of the turn helps you keep a good visual picture. Continuously scan far and near as well as to the sides. Notice where the turn ends and what is after the turn.

**Press:** To initiate motorcycle lean, first press forward on the handgrip in the direction of the turn. Press left handgrip, lean left, go left. Press right handgrip, lean right, go right. Then adjust your steering to maintain the path of travel.

**Roll:** Use the throttle to maintain or slightly increase speed. Avoid quick or sudden throttle roll-on or roll-off that would affect smoothness as this influences the suspension and tire grip.

A good overall cornering strategy to use is Search-Setup-Smooth. Search: while approaching and going through a curve, scan for key information. Setup: adjust speed and lane position as necessary before entering. Smooth: operate the controls so there are no jerky movements.

For normal street speeds, you and the motorcycle should lean together. However, for slow, tight turns like a U-turn in a parking lot, you can lean independently from the motorcycle (counterweighting). This permits more motorcycle lean for a sharper turning radius. Putting more pressure on the outside footrest can also help.

