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IAMC 2011 Challenge Update

By Craig O. Olsen



The IAMC 2011 Challenge was first announced to our club at our annual meeting last January. In March of this year it was further explained and promoted from our club website (<http://motoidaho.org>) with these words, "We have created a list of 45 dual-sport destinations either in or very near to Idaho. Your challenge is to visit as many of them as you can this year.... Your pictures at each site should be uploaded to the forum...that corresponds to the name of that site prior to December 31, 2010." Following the 2011 Challenge kick off event at Discovery Park, this past April, we were off and running—well at least the 77 members who opted-in for this challenge—to visit as many of these sites as possible. Multiple riders visiting these 45 sites in Idaho, Oregon and Nevada spent many hours and miles in the saddle this year. One of the early major club rides, but not necessarily the first, was held in mid May – Sam’s Memorial Prairie Poker Run to

Prairie, Idaho. This ride took in Castle Rocks and Mayfield (sites # 9 & 10 respectively). Among one of the last group rides posted on our website in October was the Club Picnic ride beginning at Carl’s Cycles and ending at Municipal Park. Placerville and a water crossing (sites # 2 & 38) were accomplished on this ride. In between these numerous other rides were posted to various challenge sites. Some of these rides were simple day trips while others were multiday camping expeditions. Some were small group or even solo rides that took place but were never posted. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to add up all the accumulative miles and hours spent on this endeavor. It would be equally impossible to quantify the collective enjoyment and adventure had by all who participated.

Of the 77 members of our club who opted-in on the 2011 Challenge, only 58 have posted visits to any of the 45 sites with 7 making the bronze level (10-19 sites visited), 10 reaching the silver level (20-29 sites visited), and 7 obtaining the gold level (30-44 sites visited). Five riders achieved the platinum level (visited all 45 sites). Their individual efforts are summarized below.

Challenge 2010 Progress Report

(link to Google Spreadsheet)

Challenge 2010 Progress Report : Summary		
Note: This spreadsheet is updated about once per week.		
Last Updated:	11/28/2010 7PM	
Challenger	Visited	Prize Level
HBToni	45	Platinum
JimE	45	Platinum
LegIron	45	Platinum
ryanwilliamcantrell	45	Platinum
thaneeddington	45	Platinum
oldnut	35	Gold
av_mech	34	Gold
Gary	31	Gold
rwhopp	31	Gold
Special Ed	31	Gold
RSchinnerer	30	Gold
tlcarleton	30	Gold
BoiseMike	23	Silver
deansplc	22	Silver
dwilliams	22	Silver
Gary Kayser	22	Silver
nohvccbob	22	Silver
ScottB	21	Silver
silverspurs	21	Silver
Blackjack	20	Silver
idahoscout	20	Silver
steelhead	20	Silver
EWood	18	Bronze
capt.ed	17	Bronze
IDXR600	16	Bronze
s-skulls	16	Bronze
GRTWHT	15	Bronze
zekec80	14	Bronze
coolsen	10	Bronze



It is now December with Christmas and New Year's Eve just around the corner. The temperatures are colder than usual, and there is snow on the ground. Many have put their bikes up for the winter, but I suspect there are still a few diehards left who keep on riding through the winter. Don't give up now; there is still time left to visit some of the sites, especially those at lower elevations. We have until December 31st to accumulate more 2010 Challenge sites. Keep checking the IAMC Challenge 2010 under the forum tab on the club website to follow the progress between now and the December 31st deadline. Remember, there will be a drawing for prizes (and some of them are substantial) at our next club meeting in January 2011 for those achieving the various levels.

Building you're riding skills and staying with your limits OR Riding with faster people without killing yourself

By Phil Sauter

I've been involved with off road riding now for only 4 seasons... first year or so on a Suzuki V-Strom 650 and the last couple of years on a DRZ 400. During that skill building time, I've been very fortunate to ride with a partner who is much better than I will ever be. Why he wanted to train such a complete NooB as me, is the subject for another article. However, I was faced with the task of keeping up and building my skills without employing the most common advice I heard which was "Twist The Throttle you BABY!!" After a number of get offs including one high side, twisted saddle bags, two fires and a bike that looks like I should just throw it away, I have some hard earned advice that will transform your skills.

1) Relax!! Yes, you are slow. It's O.K!!! I was so worried about slowing everybody down,

I was riding beyond my capability. The combination of fear and worry zapped all the fun out of it. Hey, they all know you are not as experienced. They knew that when you signed up for the ride. So what if they are taking a break waiting and talking bikes. That's half the fun of the ride. Enjoy your learning curve, and remember everybody was new at some point.

- 2) The comfort zone. If you ride ONLY on the terrain you are most comfortable, how will you improve? Then again jumping directly into a level 4 ride that feels like a "Trail of Death" is not the answer either. Believe me! I've found that riding just a tad past your comfort zone helps a lot. That way slowing down a bit, if things get a bit dicey, puts you back in your safety zone. Riding at speeds or conditions that are right at the top of your limits gives you the gain without a lot of pain. I once saw a YouTube interview with Indy car driver **Danica Patrick** where **she described that same method when she first started to race. It works.**
- 3) Relax your grip on the handlebars. Most of these bikes are much more steerable with a very light grip on the handlebars, and they steer best by shifting your weight... meaning steer with your butt. Weight shifts and very light steering inputs are much easier on you and your bike.
- 4) Look up ahead. No, further... a little more!! Most people starting out look at the trail about 10-20 feet ahead of their bike. Got to look for those rocks, right?? Then everything that happens is a big surprise, and you feel out of control quickly. Look up!! Look all the way to the next curve. When you are looking 100 feet ahead, you



have much more time to judge the line and obstacles. Your peripheral vision will take care of things closer. Besides that rock 100 feet ahead you see and steer around, while its way up there, is no longer an obstacle when you get 20 feet away from it. Those curves don't jump out at you either. Suddenly, you will find those turns are not so tight because you picked the line and saw the end of the turn before you ever got there. This adds a ton of comfort, and you will notice your pace getting quicker. Which brings me to SPEED

- 5) As a fan of watching road racing on TV, there is a common phrase that applies to any type of riding. "More haste...Less Speed," meaning the faster you TRY to go, the more tense you are, the harder the grip on the bike. You pay less attention to body position, your line and looking up ahead. As a result, you feel more out of control, and you go SLOWER, or you crash. Wow, not a lot of fun huh?? That's when you have to forget the speed with trying to keep up with the group and concentrate on the skills, making sure you are doing all the right things with grip, body position and looking ahead. Then presto, in about 10 min you will look down and notice you are doing 10mph faster than normal with a ton more comfort.
- 6) Standing up!!! Yep, standing up lowers the bike's center of gravity and gives you more balance and better traction. The problem is, when you suddenly need to stand, you realize you've never done it. A steep rocky climb with the bike sliding to and fro is not the time for training. Start by standing up and steering of level ground. Then increase the difficulty. In the mean time, if you need

to weight the pegs in rough terrain, raise your butt an inch off the seat. This will weight the pegs and put your weight a bit forward, helping with control.

- 7) Pace yourself. Be Patient!! Building skills takes time. Enjoy the ride. If you are an avid day rider but have not done many overnights, don't sign up for that 8-day 230 miles a day death march. Stamina needs to be built up over time. Start with a two-nighter doing 100 miles each day. Then work up. Before you know it, you will have discovered a ton of new trails to ride and be ready for the ICT (Idaho Centennial Trail). Keep yourself hydrated and your energy level up. Every time you stop, you should be drinking water or Gatorade and eating something. If you wait till your energy is gone, you may find yourself 80 miles from nowhere and zapped. Keep your energy up, stay patient and take the ride as it comes.
- 8) Train!!! Learn and Train!! Every time I ride, I'm practicing skills. I always know what I need to work on, and I practice those skills. But even more important, I will plan a day ride to work on a specific skill. Two DVD's that should be in everybody's collection are "Dual Sport Riding Techniques" and "Advanced Dual Sport Riding Techniques." Both explain how and why bikes handle in dirt the way they do, and they have drills you can use to build your skills. Learn from the experts, I say, and add in your own experiences. I have found it's much better to spend some money on proper technique than new bike parts after the crash. See <http://www.dualsportriding.com> for more information on these videos.



9) Be prepared! Know how to change your tubes in a flat, and have the proper equipment. Have some tools and knowledge how to get your bike running again. Everybody will be glad to lend a hand as well.

10) Don't compare yourself! Don't worry about your skill level compared to other riders. Everybody's physical condition, age and learning rates are different. If you are like me, and decided to START riding off-road at age 51, when most people have given it up, give yourself a break. Don't compare your riding level with that new 28 year-old riding at light speed. Remember when YOU were 28?? Ride within your own level, and train to the level you at which you want to be. You may never ride as hard or as fast as that kid, but who cares. Build your skills, and you can share the ride with him with confidence. Let them have all that youthful exuberance and get their own battle scars.

Dual Sport riding is a lot of fun in Idaho. We are blessed with the best riding terrain around. But folks just are not comfortable posting a ride or signing up for one. Do a little practice and learning, and then jump on those rides. It's a great sport that everybody loves to share.

So what about your Chain...?

By Craig O. Olsen

... And no I am not talking about the one others pull to get your attention. I am talking about the one that makes the rear wheel on your bike go around. Without it you aren't going anywhere. Neglect it long enough, and it can really bite you bad by suddenly failing

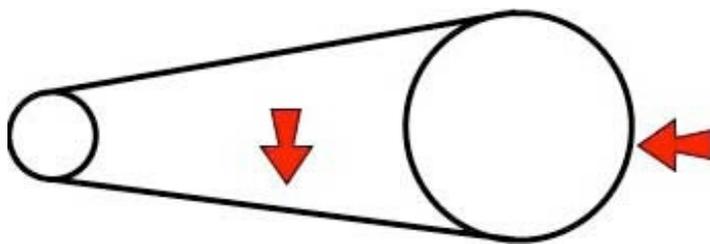
(breaking) that leaves you stranded in a remote inaccessible area, causes your rear wheel to lock up resulting in a nasty crash, or does considerable damage to your engine when it balls up around the countershaft and front sprocket.

One reason why we may neglect our chains is that they are so reliable. They take tremendous abuse and consistently function well for thousands of miles. The links of all chains are connected together by a repeating series of pins inside of rollers cushioned by bushings, and these pins and rollers with bushings are subjected to continual pivoting as they pass the sprockets (countershaft front and rear wheel drive). This pivoting as the links pass a sprocket causes an eccentric wear on the inside of each pin and the outside of each roller bushing. Abrasive particles of dirt, mud and sand that get between the pins and roller bushings accelerate this wear. A sealed chain has small rubber rings (O-ring, X-ring, Z-ring ...) at each pivot point that act to prevent abrasives from entering the pivoting joint and help hold chain lubricant within the joint. A well-maintained sealed chain provides less drag, requires less maintenance and lasts much longer than a non-sealed chain. It also costs more than a non-sealed chain.

Regardless of what type of chain you have on your bike, regular maintenance will make it perform better and last longer. Under normal conditions (riding on-road), a chain should be lubed about every 500 miles. If you ride off-road, lubricate your chain more frequently (at least every 200 miles). It makes sense to lubricate you chain when it is heated up (i.e. at the end of the ride rather than the beginning) so that the lubricant penetrates into the chain between the pin and roller plates and more quickly evaporates the solvent used in the lubricant. Leaving the lube on overnight or longer also helps it stick properly to the chain. This is recommended for sealed as well as non-sealed chains.



Put your bike on a stand and turn the wheel by hand while spraying the lube into the bottom chain run where it feeds onto the rear sprocket (*vertical downward pointing red arrow below*). Let it dry for a bit, then wipe off any excess with a cloth. Applying the lubricant on the inside of the chain helps prevent fling and will force it into the chain when you are riding. Also, apply lubricant directly onto the O-rings. The best way to do this is at the rear sprocket, spinning the wheel as you go (*horizontal leftward pointing red arrow below*). It is safer to do this the hard way, with the motor off and the bike in neutral.

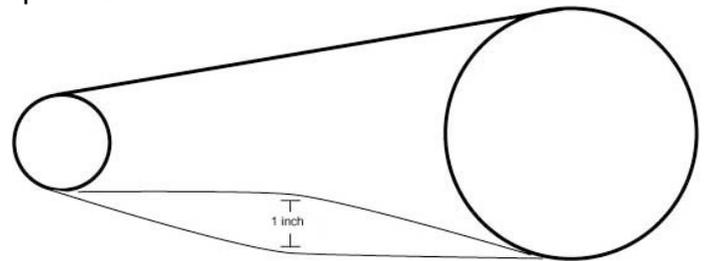


A smaller amount of lubricant applied often is the key to good chain lubing, and proper application reduces fling off and waste. If too much is applied, it splatters everywhere: rear brakes, tire and fender. Put a rag on the other side of the chain to catch any overspray.

To properly lubricate your chain, it should be cleaned first. Apply a solvent (kerosene or a commercial chain cleaner spray) to the chain that is compatible with the rings of a sealed chain, let it stand for several minutes, and then wash off with water (garden hose or a wet rag). Avoid high-pressure sprayers at close range that might force water into the hinge point displacing the lubricant on a sealed chain. Often scrubbing the chain links with a coarse-bristled brush with the bike on a stand while turning the back wheel by hand is necessary prior to washing clean with water.

In addition to regular cleaning and lubrication, your chain also needs to be adjusted properly. While your owner's manual will have exact requirements for your bike, the rule of thumb is about 1 to 1.5 inches of slack (moves freely up and down) at a point halfway between the two

sprockets.



Chain slack is necessary because, as your swing arm moves up to compress for a bump, the chain gets tighter. When a chain is too tight, it will bind on the sprockets, causing quicker wear of both chain and sprockets. Over time a tight chain will also ruin the countershaft and countershaft seal (the seal around the shaft that carries the front sprocket). Also, a tight chain is more likely to develop tight spots (caused by differential chain lengthening with binding between the links). A chain that is too loose may fly off the sprockets or slop in the driveline (lurching of the bike as the chain snaps tight following a short delay after twisting the throttle). Chain adjustments are very important, even though it may not be something you need to do very often.

With time and use your chain will exceed the manufacturer's wear limit and need to be replaced. This will be evident as the chain lengthens beyond a certain point. Remember, as the pins and roller bushings eccentrically wear (see second paragraph above), more clearance occurs in the hinge point that results in lengthening of the chain. A new chain will have a clearance of .0005 inches (1/6 the width of a human hair) between the pin and roller bushing. Most chain manufacturers limit chain wear to approximately .006 inches per link. For example, the standard chain pitch for a full-sized dirt bike is 5/8" (center-to-center distance between chain pins). Thus, if you multiply .006 inches by 100 links, the accumulated clearance is close to one full pitch (5/8 inches). Under these conditions, 99 links (or intervals) fit in the distance that 100 links were supposed to measure, and your chain is no longer good.



You can assess this wear by periodically measuring your chain. The easiest method is to stick a wrench between your chain and rear sprocket and rotating the rear wheel by hand until the top of the chain, along the top of the swing arm, is tight. Count 24 intervals between chain pins (It takes 25 pins to make 24 intervals.), and measure the distance center-to-center between the first and last pin. On a new chain this measurement will be exactly 15 inches. If you measure more than 15-3/32 inches, it is time to get a new chain. Carefully inspect your sprockets when replacing your chain. A worn sprocket will only wear your new chain out quicker. For this reason, it is generally wise to replace your sprockets when purchasing a new chain.

Following are some Internet sources about chain maintenance and chain cleaners and lubricants that are worth reviewing.

Canyon Chaser Motor Sport Touring,
Chain Maintenance,
<http://www.canyonchasers.net/shop/generic/chain.php>

This article contains a good review of the basics of chain maintenance.

Motor Cyclist Magazine, **Chain Lube 101 What's the Deal?**
http://www.motorcyclistonline.com/howto/1220506_motorcycle_chain_lube/index.html

This article briefly reviews the basics of lubricating your chain.

Web Bike World, **2010 Motorcycle Chain Lube Comparison,**
<http://www.webbikeworld.com/t2/motorcycle-chain-lube/chain-lubes-2010.htm>

This article reviews 7 different types of chain lubricant from a practical and subjective standpoint.

Web Bike World, **Motorcycle Chain Cleaners Redux: How to Clean a Motorcycle Chain,**
<http://www.webbikeworld.com/r3/motorcycle-chain-cleaner/>

This article reviews some of commercial chain cleaning products along with an excellent discussion of some of the finer points of chain cleaning.

Dirt Tricks, **Measuring Chain Wear,**
<http://www.dirttricks.com/Chain-Wear.htm>

This article contains an excellent discussion on chain wear and how to assess it.

Cycle Connections Online Motorcycle Magazine, Tech Tips, **Chain Maintenance,**
<http://www.cycleconnections.com/articledetail.asp?TypeID=23&ID=117>

This is a good overview on chain maintenance, as well as index to multiple other motorcycle related maintenances issues.

Quality-Cycle.com, **The truth about Motorcycle Chains!**
http://www.quality-cycle.com/truth_about_motorcycle_chains.htm

This is a thorough review of the various types of chains (sealed versus non-sealed) with a fairly good discussion (albeit somewhat opinionated) of the pros and cons of various types of sealed chains. A review of this article may save you significant money when you go to replace your OEM chain.

Thumper Talk,
How to Properly Adjust Your Chain,
<http://www.thumpertalk.com/forum/showthread.php?t=406650>

This is a good review of how to adjust your chain tension properly.

Motorcycle Consumer News, September 2001,
MCN Rates Chain Lubes,
http://www.mcnews.com/mcn/article_index.asp

This article has a very exhaustive study of chain lubes rating them on initial rolling resistance, post rolling resistance, sling off, corrosion resistance, grit resistance and value. Close examination of the study will allow you to choose the lube that will best meet what you need from a chain lube.



Riding All Winter Long

By Katy Smutz

The approach of winter does not mean the end of riding until spring. With the proper clothing and equipment, it can still be enjoyable to ride with temperatures well below freezing. My husband, Alan, and I enjoy riding too much to quit riding just because the weather is cooler. We would like to share some of what we have learned about winter riding.

First and foremost, I don't enjoy being cold. I want to be warm and comfortable. After a little trial and error, I have learned you can be warm and comfortable while riding during the winter months. Proper selection and use of clothing and equipment is essential for an enjoyable winter riding experience. Starting out from scratch may be overwhelming and expensive as well. We started out with basics we already owned such as wool socks, thermal underwear, winter gloves, old style PVC rain suits, and plastic bags over our socks. Utilizing these items allowed us to enjoy cooler weather riding in reasonable comfort, while slowly adding equipment as our budget allowed.

One of the first things we purchase for a new bike is grip heaters. Grip heaters can cost as little as \$20 for under the grip styles to over \$100 for grips with the integrated heat elements and fancier controls. We run grip heaters on all of our bikes, even our off road KTMs have the low-priced under the grip heaters. Grip heaters are relatively easy to install and don't use many watts of power. Another advantage is that once installed, they are always there and available in the event they are needed. Cold weather equipment and gear does no good if left at home because the weather was warm when the ride started (...I have been there more times than I would like to admit.).

A second and related piece of equipment to grip heaters is hand guards that provide wind protection. I am an advocate of hand guards, not so much to protect my hands from hitting trees or other objects, but the protection they provide levers and expensive master cylinders in the event of a crash. Getting hand guards with large plastic shields or adding plastic shields also

provides a certain amount of wind protection for your hands. That combined with grip heaters can do wonders for your hands in cold weather.



Selecting Heated Grips: (By cruiser rider)

<http://www.heatedgrips.org/>

MCgMotorcycles:

<http://www.mcgmotorcycles.com/motorcycle-parts/heated-motorcycle-grips/584/>



Good cold weather clothing is necessary for cold weather riding. Most of us have our own personal preferences concerning clothing. Properly layering clothing transfers moisture away from our skin, provides warmth, and protects from wind and rain. We have been amazed how much warmer our legs are when we wear rain pants for wind protection and warmth when it isn't raining. Gore-Tex socks keep our feet dry. A good wind and waterproof coat with adequate insulation is now basic for our cold weather riding.

Good warm clothing and grip heaters can only do so much. Since we have become avid cold weather riders, we realized we needed additional warmth beyond what our own bodies can produce. Heated gear opened up a whole new world for cold weather riding for us. We use heated jacket liners and heated socks. My heated jacket liner is 65 watts as opposed to many jacket liners that use close to 100 watts. We chose 65-watt jacket liners to



save total wattage, so we could also enjoy heated socks that use 25 watts. We use our heated gear on our V-Stroms, and our dual sports. Our dual sports tend to have less available watts to run extra electrical loads. Heated pants and gloves are available if the bike has the power to run that much wattage.



webBikeWorld clothing review:

<http://www.webbikeworld.com/Motorcycle-clothing/Motorcycle-clothing.htm>

The combination of good clothing, heated grips, and heated gear (jacket and socks) has allowed us to ride in comfort even when the temperatures have been well below freezing. Our V-Stroms have a relatively good electrical load, and we have no problem running our heated gear and grips for hours at a time. However, our dual sports (like most dual sports) have a limited amount of spare wattage available, and this is where

power management is essential. Experience has shown that running heated grips and heated gear for extended periods of time can result in a low or dead battery. To save power we have installed switches to shut off our headlights. When running off-road or places we don't feel our headlights are necessary, we shut off the headlight thereby saving enough watts to run our heated gear, and still maintain an adequate charge in the battery. When we come to a road where we feel we need our headlights (paved roads), we turn them back on. The engine is running fast enough that it will usually put out sufficient power to keep up with the load. A voltage meter is handy (Alan's bike has one) for keeping track of the power load and battery charge.

If you enjoy riding as much as we do, you will find heated grips and heated gear is just what you need to allow you to continue to ride even when the thermometer dips below freezing. Hopefully, these tips



will encourage you to get out and enjoy winter riding. Take care and keep the rubber side down. Katy



By Craig O. Olsen, M.D.

While this article is written primarily with the senior (age 40 and older) motorcyclist in mind, our younger and more vigorous cohorts should still pay close attention because, like it or not, we are your future and you can still learn a thing or two from us. Have you noticed that the average age of motorcyclists is advancing? I do, perhaps because I am one...an older motorcyclist that is. This is particularly reflected in the composition of our club, the Idaho Adventure Motorcycle Club. Since 1985, the average age of motorcycle owners in this country has increased from 27.1 to 47 years in 2010, indicating that the current population of motorcycle buyers is aging. Also, each year since 2001, about 22% of all new motorcycle purchases have gone to first time motorcycle owners [1]. Who makes up this group of first time motorcycle owners? An in-depth study of new motorcycle buyers shows that 61% of these new bike owners are age 41 and older with 8% being 61 years of age and older, and 10% of these purchasers are female [2]. Despite an overall decline in motorcycle sales during the last three years, probably as a result of the significant downturn in our economy, the decline in the dual-sport and off-road motorcycle portion of this market has been much less pronounced than other segments (street bikes, sport bikes, touring bikes, scooters, etc) [2,3].

An untoward consequence of the aging motorcycle ridership is summed up in the following statement that appeared in Science Daily earlier this year. *"Motorcycle riders across the country are growing older, and the impact of this trend is evident in emergency rooms daily. Doctors are finding that these aging road warriors are more likely to be injured or die as a result of a motorcycle mishap compared to their younger counterparts [4]."*

In a comprehensive study of motorcycle accidents published this year by Mark Gestrung, M.D., director of the University of Rochester Medical Center Trauma Program, and colleagues reviewed injuries in motorcyclists ranging from 17 to 89 years of age in the National Trauma Databank from 1996 to 2005. They assessed the age trends and injury patterns over time and compared injury severity score, length of hospital stay, intensive care unit use, comorbidities, complications, mortality, and injury patterns for subjects 40 years and older versus those younger than 40 years of age. There were 61,689 subjects in their study. Over the study period they noted the proportion of subjects 40 years of age or older increased from 27.9 to 48.3%. The injury severity score, length of hospital stay, intensive care unit use, and mortality rates were all higher in the older age group (statistically significant). Rates of readmission to the intensive care unit, pre-existing comorbidities, and complications were also higher in the older age group. This group of researchers concluded that the average age of the injured motorcyclist is increasing and that older riders' injuries appear to be more serious with their hospital course being more likely challenged by comorbidities and complications that result in poorer outcomes compared to the younger injured motorcyclist [5]. From the University of Southern California in Los Angeles comes another study published this year in the Journal of Trauma. The

authors studied all admissions from motorcycle crashes to the thirteen Los Angeles countrywide trauma centers between January 2005 and December 2007. Of the 6,530 admissions, 7.5% of them were aged 18 years or younger, 86% were aged 19 years to 55 years, and 6.5% were older than 55 years. The incidence of severe injury increased significantly with age, and the risk of sustaining severe head or chest injuries was significantly more likely in the population older than 55 years. Mortality was twofold higher in the 19-55 year old group and threefold higher in the older than 55 years group compared with the 18 years or younger age group [6]. These findings are not unique to the United States alone. Similar observations have been made in other countries including Great Britain [7], Australia [8], and India [9], to name a few.

As a thoracic surgeon, I often marvel at the resiliency of the human body to heal itself and bounce back from trauma, be it induced by an accident or from surgery. This phenomenon is more evident in younger patients. The above studies (and many more like them) demonstrate that this phenomenon of bouncing back from trauma is inversely proportional to age. A mentor during my years of surgical training referred to this as the "bouncing ball theory." He maintained that the older you get, the less bounce (resiliency and reserve) you have to recover from trauma (or from any other illness for that matter) until finally you don't have enough bounce to recover at all, and then you go SPLAT. The aging motorcyclist needs to be aware of this phenomenon and take an extra measure of caution when riding to minimize the risk of trauma from a motorcycle accident.

There are some obvious reasons why older riders may be at greater risk for being involved in a motorcycle accident. There is no doubt that, as we age, we progressively lose both physical and mental function. Everyone ages a little differently. For most this decline is incrementally gradual, while for others it may be more precipitous. Age related impairment in vision, delay in reaction times, alterations in balance, and decline in physical strength and stamina (e.g. fatiguing more easily), to name a few, can contribute to crashes or mishaps among older motorcyclists. This is consistent with the above research findings that older riders crashed more often as a result of loss of control than their younger counterparts [5-7].

Not all is doom and gloom for the older rider. After all, I maintain that aging still beats the alternative (e.g. going splat). I am reminded of one of my senior riding buddy's adage that the older he gets, the better he was. Despite his age of 70 plus years, he still outperforms the majority of riders less than half his age, both in the technical single track on a dirt bike and in the twisties on a dual sport. How does he do it? He does it the same way many seniors do – by staying active both mentally and physically. There is a lot to be said for the sage advice to either use it or lose it. Our physical and mental capacities will deteriorate more rapidly if we do not continually use them (e.g. exercise) as we age. In an article on aging from Proficient Motorcycling, Ken Condon comments that only 10% of Americans exercise regularly and that those over 50 are most likely to be sedentary. Even simple activities, such as stretching, brisk walking, swimming, playing catch or riding a



bicycle help maintain important neuromuscular function and help to avoid other age related cardiovascular conditions such as hypertension and coronary artery disease. Regular exercise also helps to maintain both muscle mass and response time [10].

For the aging rider, knowing and accounting for your age related physical and mental deficits by alterations in your riding style will significantly lessen your risk of riding and make it more enjoyable as well. If physical endurance and mental concentration are at issue, plan shorter riding days with more frequent stops. For age related visual changes, avoid riding after sun set. If your reaction times are slowing, don't ride as fast as you use to and insure extra following distance commensurate with your braking ability. These seem like simple common sense solutions, and they are. You do not want your mind writing checks that your body cannot cash – always ride within you current ability.

We do not have to give up riding as we get older, but we do need to be aware of age related changes in our riding ability and adjust accordingly. Currently in my 7th decade of life, I hope to enjoy motorcycling for many years to come. I enjoy being physically and mentally engaged, and I do not want to become a couch potato in my "golden years." Perhaps you want the same. Another of my senior riding buddies has this saying attributed to George Carlin attached after his e-mail signature: *"Life's journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, shouting '...holy sh*t...what a ride!'"* May your aging journey's ride be full of wonder and joy, but please keep the rubber side down.

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