

The Best Way to Break-in a New Motorcycle

Most all motor cyclists have their own opinion of the best way to break in a new motor cycle engine. Some say run it like you would if it wasn't new. Break it in by riding it like you intend to always do. Others say "baby it" for at least 500 to 1,000 miles then "let er rip".

Today's motor cycle engines and other parts are precision made. The "fitting" of the pistons and rods to the cylinder and related parts are much more precise. What used to be the way to break in a new motorcylce is different today. Here's some tips that have been learned through videos and articles made and written by the experts.

The first thing one should do when breaking in a new bike is to get familiar with the bike. No matter how experienced a rider your are, all bikes are different in many respects. Handle bar angle, distance from the seat to the flow board/pedal, seat size, bike height from the seat to the ground, tire size, etc. vary by bike and physical characteristics of the rider. Every experienced rider is an inexperienced rider on a new bike, particularly if you are going from two wheels to three.

Second, run the bike for 5 minutes or so before you buy it. See if sounds and feels like you want.

Third, after you buy the bike and take it out of the dealers shop, find an open space with nothing to get in your way and distract you and do "figure 8's". Do this for 10 to 15 times. This will wear off the preservative coating that is on new tires and rough up the rubber a little so as to give a "bite" to the tires to help prevent "new tire slip".

Fourth, the engine and transmission. The key to proper breaking in an engine and transmission is ensuring the engine is seated properly. Heat is a new engine's enemy. "Seating" is when the pistons, rings, and rods, fit or wear in with the cylinder walls and gears. You ensure this is done

by running the engine at various speeds but at no more 3/4 throttle. You run the bike at speeds for no more than 15 minutes and let it cool down after 30-45 minute intervals. NEVER LUG the engine. This causes excessive heat buildup and can ruin an engine quickly. If the engine is not broke in properly you will experience oil leaks, loss of power, etc. because the engine has not seated well.

Fifth, all new engines will use a little oil during break in. Use standard mineral oil (10-40) for the first 500 miles. After that you change the oil and replace it with a high quality synthetic oil. Don't be alarmed if you see particles in the first couple of oil changes. This is material that is from the break in. Check all of your bikes fluids frequently, especially for the first 1,000 miles.

Use common sense when breaking in a new motor cycle. Keep in mind that the parts need a little time running together to "fit" with each other. Sort of like humans do. FYI, according to the American Motorcycle Marketing Assoc., the best time to buy a new bike is November.

Ride Safe,
Sam Clark, Safety Officer