

# *EMERGENCY BRAKING*

*September / October*

I was asked recently by an individual who just purchased his first bike, what is the most important safety tip you can give me? I thought for a second and answered, learning how to use your brakes. He looked at me as if I were kidding him. "What's to it", he said, "ya just stomp and squeeze to stop".

That's the problem I said. Too many riders believe that, and coincidentally, bikers crash way too often. You've all heard the story about the guy who had to "lay er down" because somebody pulled out in front of him. What that actually means, is he panicked, locked the rear tire and the bike slid on the ground and stopped when it hit the vehicle or just before it hit the vehicle. In either case, the rider crashed in an attempt to avoid a crash. Ninety percent of the time, if the rider had braked properly in that situation, he or she would never have struck the vehicle.

So, the question is, how do I minimize my chances of crashing into something? The answer is simple. Practice emergency, maximum braking. But, first there are a couple of things you need to know.

Number 1: The front brake is 70% of your braking force. Due to that fact, you must put more pressure on the front brake than the rear brake. If you happen to lock the front tire, you must release it immediately then reapply it. Squeeze the front brake, don't grab it. If you lock the rear tire, don't release it. If you do, there's a good chance you will high side. With a motorcycle, you can still steer when the rear tire is locked and sliding. You must also remember that the motorcycle must be straight up when performing maximum braking. This is not to say that you can't brake with the bike leaned over in a turn, you can lightly brake with both brakes in that situation, but maximum braking must be done with the bike straight up.

The point is, you must learn to modulate your brakes to keep from locking them and the only way to do that is to practice. Keep repeating to yourself, front brake, front brake. That will assist you in putting more pressure on the front brake than the rear brake.

You should practice maximum braking from whatever speed you normally ride. I guarantee your bike will react differently when braking hard at 80mph than at 30mph. If you practice, then in an emergency situation, you will revert to your training, rather than dumb luck. The only other alternative is to buy a bike with anti-lock brakes, just remember, even with anti-lock brakes, the bike still has to be straight up to performing maximum braking.