

# HOT WEATHER RIDING TIPS

## Clothing

Once the temperature outside exceeds that of body temperature you need to wrap up rather than undress. Why? 1) To reduce water loss from evaporation 2) create a cooler microclimate around your body 3) prevent serious sunburn.

You may not want to invest in new purpose designed lightweight riding gear, so what are the alternatives? Here's how we ride in the hottest conditions:

- Light coloured, full face helmet. It might sound unbelievable but when it gets really hot its cooler to ride with a closed visor.
- Sunglasses and light cotton scarf (don't forget heavy duty sun block for exposed skin!)
- Loose cotton shirt with long sleeves (cooler than a T-shirt) worn under a protector vest. For the top layer wear anything in a light colour – or nothing at all and look like a Ninja turtle (but see note below about sunburn).
- Light coloured zip-off trousers with shin and knee protectors over the top.
- Mountain bike gloves and high boots

If you don't fancy the exo-skeleton look, denim or heavyweight cotton worn over body armour is a good option. Armour sewn or slotted into garments is probably cooler than strapping it directly to your body but if the garments are too loose, there is the added danger of the armour moving out of position in the event of a get off!

**WATER COOLING** the rider. Riding in wet clothes is much cooler. Wet your scarf and hair, and in very hot conditions soak everything if possible and do it every hour or so.

**PREVENT Fatigue.** Stop frequently to rest, stretch, move around, drink water and cool down. Research shows that accident rates are reduced by regular short rest breaks.

**Prevent SUNBURN.** Remember that you can burn through many lightweight fabrics (a good reason to go for denim/heavy cotton outer garments). Slap on total sun block with highest SPF (Sun Protection Factor) for those exposed bits of flesh. Pay special attention to the 'danger' areas – between sleeve and gloves, back of the neck, throat and 'V-neck' if jacket is undone, and nose. Don't forget to keep re-applying it too.

## **DEHYDRATION:**

Signs are less frequent urination (urine passed will be less in volume and darker in colour), fatigue, headache, dizziness and cramps.

Dehydration can be very very serious but it is preventable.

Drink lots of water. This is probably the most important thing about riding in hot weather. Consider using drinking bottles which allow you to drink while on the move. If not, stop often and make sure you carry a good supply of water.

We use Platypus soft drinking 'bottles' hanging on the handlebars with a hose clipped on the tank bag – we can drink simply by picking up the hose. You could cover the bag in a thick cloth (e.g. towel) and hang it in the riding wind. Keep it wet and the riding wind will cool the water. We also carry a 5 litre water container from which we fill up the bottles along the road.

Remember that salt is lost through sweat and in extreme circumstances you may need to keep up levels with salt tablets or ORS powders (Oral Rehydration Salts) dissolved in drinking water. Avoid taking too much salt too quickly.

## **ON THE MOVE**

- Start riding early in the day (at daybreak in extremely hot climates). Stopping by midday and having an extended siesta makes good sense.
- When riding at dusk or dawn watch out for animals on the road
- Where there is a choice of routes, take the road at higher altitude. It will be cooler and may be more fun
- Keep your water bottles full
- Keep moving or turn your engine off. Riding flat out can also lead to engine overheating. Never throw cold water on a hot engine – it could crack
- Use the correct engine oil & check level often. If the oil gets too hot it may be too thin to lubricate effectively.
- Do the usual motorcycle checks – tires, chain, water, etc – but more often
- Cover your black vinyl seat with a lighter colour to prevent butt burns!

And finally, REMEMBER to carry warm clothes and waterproofs. Many hot climates can also get very cold and wet.