

It's all about the (motor) bike

There's something undeniably appealing about motorbikes: they have attitude, they have power, and they seem to offer the freedom of the open road and the joy of experiencing the great outdoors up close and personal to those that are lucky enough to open their bike's throttle and beat the traffic.



Image: www.freedigitalphotos.net

Imperial Auto believes there are great joys to be had from owning a motorbike, but there are also great pieces of advice that first-time bike owners should consider, to will help them get the most out of their first motorcycling experience.

ATGATT

This acronym doesn't refer to anything mechanical. It means All The Gear, All The Time - which is what any motorcyclist should be wearing whenever they venture out, whether it's onto the open road for a journey chasing the horizon, or around the corner to visit a friend. All The Gear includes a helmet, a decent leather jacket with shoulder, elbow and back protection, and riding pants with hip and knee protection. Boots should extend beyond the ankle, providing full protection. If you're the guy that thinks that so much protection is overkill, you'll be grateful when that gear has protected you from becoming roadkill...

Go back to school

You've been driving a car for years (or not at all, if your motorbike is your first vehicle) and you're wondering just how hard can it be to ride a motorbike. It's just a bicycle with an engine, isn't it? Think again. There are different physics that come into play when you're riding a bike, with even more tips and tricks to learn if you're going to be riding off road. Ask your Imperial Auto motorbike dealership for details about local clubs you can join, or for advice on who to speak to for a few lessons to up your biking skills.

Don't punch (or ride) above your weight

If you're buying a motorbike for the first time, rather don't get anything larger than a 500cc. Even if you outgrow it fairly quickly, there will always be other new riders to take it off your hands, and it's important that you build your confidence on a less intimidating bike. Focus on honing your skills in traffic and in different weather conditions, and learn how to do basic maintenance on your new best friend. Great starter bikes to look at include the Honda Enduro.

Pick your style

There are more types of bikes out there than there are places to go on breakfast runs, so research the different styles out there before you choose one. There are sport bikes, sport tourers, off-road bikes, super-bikes and... standard motor bikes. And a whole lot more. Sticking to the don't-punch-above-your-weight rule, take different types of bikes for test rides (or ask to be taken on one!) so that you can get a feeling for the style that you're most comfortable with in terms of seating position, power, handling and overall performance.

Think differently. Think bike

If you're used to driving a car, remember that there's a lot that's different about riding a bike. A motorbike has less contact with the road than a car does, which makes it more vulnerable to slips and slides in wet conditions, or when there is sand or leaves on the road. Bumps and potholes that wouldn't make you bat an eyelid in a car are likely to be significant obstacles when you're on two wheels. Wind is going to be more of a challenge too - if you're out in windy conditions, move to the side of the lane that the wind is coming from to avoid being pushed into oncoming traffic by gusts.

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