

# Getting Ready to Ride

If you're a motorcycle enthusiast you're probably itching to get on the bike and RIDE!! You may have spent the last 5 months looking at your bike in the garage, charging the battery once a month, starting her up and just listening to the sound of the engine for some "winter therapy."

Now that riding season is almost here, all you want is to jump on your bike and hit the open roads and enjoy the incredible beauty of riding. So, here's what the pros are advising about going into a new riding season:

**A spring tune-up is a MUST**, whether you do it yourself or have a knowledgeable bike mechanic do the tune-up for you. Important details of the spring tune-up include making sure the tires have good pressure and there are no cracks; the battery is charged and working; the primary drive train and belts are properly adjusted; all the lights work; all fluids (oil, transmission, brake) are good and all cables are in good working order. Making sure that your bike is in good shape is important at all times, but even more important after your bike has been sitting all winter.

Motorcycle Mechanics, noted that in these tough economic times, many riders may forgo having their bikes gone over prior to getting on the road and cautions that the cost of assuring that your bike is in top shape is a small price compared to riding with worn brake cables or bad tires. Remember that we're dealing with life and death here and safety ALWAYS comes first. You should also get your bike ready early – don't wait till the day before you're planning your first ride to take your bike in for it's spring fender-to-fender tune-up!

**Take it EASY the first time out!** Remember that you haven't been on your bike for probably 5 months and need to take it slow the first time out to shake off that winter rust. Even riders with over 40 years of riding experiencing still take it slow the first time out in spring. If its possible take the time to go to a parking lot and practice some of the basic skills of riding before hitting the road

Another important item to remember is that our 4-tired friends haven't seen bikes on the roads all winter and they just aren't used to keeping their eyes trained to look out for us bikers. "It's hard enough in the middle of the summer making sure that you're visible and cars know you're there what with everyone on their cell phones in the spring, drivers just aren't tuned in yet to bikes on the road; There are more bike accidents in the spring simply because us bikers forget that drivers aren't used to seeing us."

**Be realistic about the condition of the roads!!** Now that the temperature is going up to 50+ degrees you have to think about the condition of the roads around your riding area. "How bad are the pot holes and is there a lot of sand and salt still on the. I'm not saying don't get out on your bike, but just be really aware of the road conditions. If there has not been any rain that will have clear off a lot of the sand and salt. Be careful when taking a corner that still has a lot of sand on the road you can end up in a really bad crash when the back tire loses contact with the road."