

## **When will Riding Season ever get here? Am I ready for it when it does? Part 2 (Mental Fitness)**

I started last month's article with, "It is 42 degrees and raining . . ." I should have counted my blessings, because today the weather is 36 degrees and snowy. Funny it sure doesn't feel like riding season is getting any closer, but a quick look at the calendar confirms that it really is.

As you recall from last month's article, I discussed the value of "Fitness in Body" so you can enjoy those long rides and come home safe. As part of that discussion, I provided you with some motorcycle specific exercises to help you maintain your safety while riding. This month, I will be concentrating on Fitness in Mind and the things you can do to make your rides safer and more enjoyable.

### **First Step to Mental Fitness - - - Be rested before you get on the Bike**

I know it sounds simple, but sleep deprivation is one of the major concerns for medical and safety agencies like. People are getting less and less sleep and it is affecting health and safety. It's easy to understand how people can get sleep deprived; after all, we are surrounded by 24 hour a day access to media. By the way, definition of the proper amount of sleep according to the National Sleep Foundation is seven to eight hours of sleep on a regular basis.

While studies show there are long-term health risks associated with sleep deprivation, I would like to concentrate on the safety issues that affect you and me while we are riding:

- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- Decreased ability to pay attention, react to signals or remember new information
- Exacerbates those with pre-existing health problems like diabetes and heart problems.

The message here is to get enough sleep before the ride, I am sure everyone you are with will appreciate it. If you are rested you will make better decisions and will make it good day for everyone.

### **Second Step to Mental Fitness - - -Commit to Live Safely in Every Ride.**

As you know, safety is a big part of GWRRA and the levels program encourages safe riding, but did you know by simply agreeing to be a participant in the levels program actually increases your safety while riding? By signing up, you create a mental commitment to safer riding, which creates a positive motivation to be safer. So if you aren't in the levels program, why don't you and your co-rider think about participating? It will be good for you and good for those around you. I will provide some information about the levels program at our next meeting, but if you are interested in learning about them in advance, please check out the GWRRA Safety website by pasting the following URL into your browser <http://www.gwrroa.org/regional/ridered/index.html>.

### **Third Step to Mental Fitness - -Continue to Learn about Motorcycling.**

To get better in any endeavor, it is important to keep learning. For us motorcyclists it means spending a little time researching our sport by doing some reading, attending programs, speaking with experts at your local dealer or simply by taking the time to read GWRRA safety articles. Knowing the chapter the way I do, I think we are good keeping up to date. If you want further information, please check out what we have in the library and videos on the website for places to start at <http://www.gwrra-wae.org/EducatorsCorner.html>.

Next month, I will talk a little bit about making sure your bikes are fit to ride; the importance of regular maintenance, and your pre-ride checks.

Ride safe and ride well.

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