

TIPS for a Long-Distance Ride!

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This may be too late for those who are traveling to Sturgis, but for those of you who are planning other long-distance rides, this information may help you to be prepared!

What is a long-distance ride? For some it may be 2-3 days with 200-300 miles each day. Someone else may feel it was long-distance until you reach the 3-4 thousand miles for the trip. But, if you're going to be leaving your 'usual' travel patterns, use the following suggestions and...be prepared! (From [Tips for Long-Distance Motorcycle Trips \(aarpforemost.com\)](https://www.aarpforemost.com))

Check your Insurance! Know if your insurance has towing coverage, rental, and check the coverage amounts to be sure that they will cover any challenges that you may encounter.

Prepare Your Bike. Completely inspect your motorcycle and give it a thorough tune-up.

- Change the oil and filter
- Check the air and fuel filters
- Check all fluid levels
- Adjust throttle and brake cables
- Adjust and lube the drive chain (if applicable)
- Check tire pressure and tread
- Check all gauges, lights, horn and signals
- Visually inspect the entire bike for any broken or worn parts
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For more in-depth maintenance information, refer to your owner's manual.

If you're not comfortable preparing your bike yourself, bring it to a qualified motorcycle technician before your trip.

Remember Your Tool Kit. Make sure you have what you need to make quick adjustments or repairs on the road. Bring a flat repair kit too.

Do Testing. Test all new accessories and gear before your trip, not during.

Pack Light and Bring Only What You Need. Distribute the weight evenly. Keep heavy items low to ensure the motorcycle maintains a low center of gravity. Plan for a way to secure your belongings at stops. Bring your cell phone too.

Dress Safely. You and your passenger need to wear proper safety gear: helmet; eye protection; a protective jacket; long, thick pants; boots and gloves. Help other motorists see you by wearing brightly colored outer layers and helmet.

Prepare for Weather Conditions. Bring along extra clothing layers or an electric vest for warmth. Remember your rain gear and put it on before it starts raining.

Know Your Limits. Stop often to get off of your bike and stretch. Plan for an adequate number of stops, especially if you don't have much experience with long rides.

Take it Easy. As much as possible, try to stay off of the brakes and avoid any extremes with the throttle. This allows for a less-tiring, more relaxed ride.

Stop if You Feel Tired. Don't rely on caffeine to keep you awake. Operating a motorcycle when your senses are less than sharp is extremely hazardous. And of course, never drink and ride.

Eat Right. Eat well and often enough to keep up your energy. Be sure to bring water and energy bars or trail mix. Eat and drink before you feel hungry or thirsty.

Get Gas Before You Need It. In rural areas, you may travel several hundred miles without passing a gas station. Don't wait until you run low to fill up.

Plan Ahead. Each night, go over your plans for the next day. Get a feel for the route, how long you think you'll ride and places where you might want to stop.

Keep it Fun. Enjoy the scenery, welcome meeting new people and experience the freedom of the road!

ENHANCE YOUR ENDURANCE **(FROM DEB GILLE AND WAYNE KIRKPATRICK)**

Everyone has a different fitness level. Improvement in your lungs and heart health can be achieved by performing aerobic exercises. It will increase oxygenation of your body and help nutrients flow. Experts recommend doing aerobic training for at least 30 minutes three times per week

You can boost your endurance by doing simple exercises like walking or light running. Swimming and cycling are other activities that will help increase endurance. Before starting any cardiovascular program, consider consulting your physician if there are any health issues.

GLUTES STRENGTH

If you're thin and have a "weak butt," there is a higher probability of developing back, and hip pain during the ride. There are many simple workouts that will strengthen your glutes and back.

Your hips are the genetic muscle of your body, They accumulate fat and muscles, which you can reshape by working out. If you are super skinny, consider gaining pounds that will add up a layer of fat which serves as cushioning. If you already have it, do physical training like body weight and weightlifting exercises. I would recommend squats, planks and deadlifts.

ACQUIRING & MAINTAINING FLEXIBILITY

Performing stretching exercises on a daily basis is a highly effective method of improving and maintaining flexibility. You need high flexibility at your back, neck, thighs and hamstrings as well. Having flexibility in your body helps with maintaining proper posture.

Making your own stretching program starts with a warm-up session of 5-10 minutes, followed by aerobic activity, like cycling. While performing those stretching workouts, remember to adopt correct body posture. Not doing so can cause injury. Consistency and commitment plays a major role in achieving flexibility before you get on the road. It is not possible, naturally, to improve the flexibility over the course of two days before a motorcycle trip, so start several weeks in advance.

CORE STRENGTH

Your core consists of the muscles that you use the most while riding a motorcycle. Core muscles are located in your abdominal region and back and cover the spine. Most people relate it with body building.

Being a motorcyclist, it is essentially important to have strengthened back and abdominal muscles as they help with maintaining balance and stability. Yoga and pilates are the effective exercises to strengthen your body's core body strength. Moreover, it tones your abdominal muscles and improves your appearance.

BEFORE HITTING THE ROAD

Refrain from drinking alcohol before your trip, as it requires many hours for regaining muscle control and being completely sober. Moreover, consuming alcohol before a long motorcycle trip might lead to a disaster, as it drains the body's hydration and it will cause you to lose focus. Remember, we do not drink and ride. A beer with lunch is acceptable but, plan on parking the bikes before opening the bottle.

Around 60% of your body is composed of water, so it is highly suggested to avoid dehydration. Make sure you hydrate yourself properly before getting on your ride. Start doing it a few days before your trip.

SIMPLE TIPS TO MAKE THINGS EASY ALONG THE WAY!

1. Take along some of those dryer sheets that make clothes smell better. They work well when you pack a few in your luggage to keep things from smelling stale.
2. Carry some trash bags. They work well for carrying old clothes that you haven't been able to wash yet.

3. Space savers: Roll your clothes (shirts, pants, etc) instead of folding them. They take up less space rolled. Or use the storage bags that allows you to squeeze the air out of the bag..
4. Pack socks or any clothes in your stored boots or shoes. It saves space.
5. A few zip ties may come in handy. For what? You never know.
6. Pack with small, travel - size toiletries like toothpaste, shampoo, hairspray, etc. Use the ones that are in your hotel rooms!
7. Zip lock bags are great for storing used clothes, socks, etc.
8. Remember, fill out some USPS mailing labels so you can send old / new clothes and stuff home.
9. Look for laundry services along your way – or schedule an hour at a laundrymat.
10. Double check your first - aid kit to make sure that everything is up to date.
11. Remember, on any motorcycle trip, there is absolutely nothing that money can't fix. Carry current credit cards, travelers checks and a bit of cash for those items that you may have forgotten.
12. Never pack your saddle bags crammed full. Leave space for items you buy on the way out.
13. Riders remember that you might need an octane booster when we stop at gas stations that only have "Tractor" gas i.e. 85 - 89 octane.
14. Don't take your entire Snap-On tool box. Your bike's tool kit along with a road-side recovery membership, should solve any mechanical problem.
15. Pack ear plugs, sunglasses/eye protection, sunscreen (recommend 35 SPF or greater), night eye protection.
16. A neck scarf / bandanna / tube helps protect your neck from sunburn.
17. Keep the scarfs with cooling beads in your pack for those very hot days!
18. Just in case, bring an IPass / Easy Pass for toll roads.