

Curves- Steve Warmath

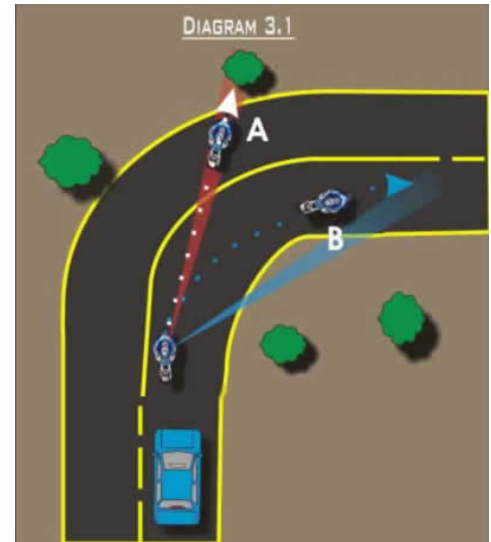


You are riding down a road and as you enter a turn you feel as if you are going too fast and are heading for the tree on the side of the road. What should you do? Get on the brakes? Roll off the throttle? Bail-out?

Believe it or not, this is where a good number of inexperienced riders will get into trouble. As a novice rider approaches a turn, most will instinctively look directly at a stationary object such as a tree, guard rail, etc. (target fixation). Staring at an object makes the rider feel as if

he/she is coming in too fast, in turn causing a panic situation.

In **Diagram 3.1** the rider target- fixates on the tree on the side of the road and automatically heads right for it (path A).



What most novice riders don't realize is that a motorcycle will head in the direction that he or she is looking, see the tree, hit the tree. If the rider turns his/ her head however, and looks through the curve then the bike will also go in that direction (path B). So to answer the question it's none of the above.

The one thing that you don't want to do when your bike is leaned over is dramatically change your speed. This will upset the balance of the motorcycle and could cause you to lose traction. Most motorcycles can accelerate, turn, and stop extremely well. They just don't like to do more than one of them at the same time.



Another thing that an inexperienced rider lacks is the understanding of how far a motorcycle will lean before it will fall over. If you have ever watched motorcycle racing you will have an idea. I must also say that how far a bike can be leaned over is also dependent on ground clearance and available traction. Obviously clean, dry pavement offers more traction than wet, painted or dusty surfaces.

Another mistake that novice riders tend to make is that they take

curves too tight. That is, they start their turn too early, which can have a few disadvantages.

By taking the turn too tight in **Diagram 3.2** the rider will be faced with a few challenges.

Most importantly the rider's view is obscured by the tree. He / she cannot see the puddle of oil, gravel, or other debris (A), or the car crossing over the center line (B). Another problem that our rider will have is by going into the turn so tight he/she will be forced to drift wide (close to the center line) on the exit.

Diagram 3.3 Shows a safer way to take a curve. Notice that the rider turns in later giving him/ her a more complete view of what is around the corner. The rider is then better prepared to handle any obstacles they encounter, because he/ she



will be able to see them sooner.

Be careful out there....it's a jungle.

Steve