

5

Low Speed Riding



Building Confidence

Some new riders are overconfident and give themselves an unrealistically high rating on their riding skills. Others are underconfident and think their skills are weaker than they really are. Both riders may be putting themselves in danger. To be safe on your bike, you need to be realistic about your riding skills.

Go back over the **How Are You Doing?** sections in Sessions 1 to 4.

- How did you rate yourself? How did your supervisor rate you? How much difference was there between the two ratings?
- Compare your riding skills now with your skills in Session 1. How much do you think you have improved in:
 - maintaining balance a lot a little
 - controlling the motorcycle a lot a little
 - using skills automatically a lot a little
- How has your confidence level changed as your skill level has improved?

Spend a few minutes discussing your confidence level with your supervisor:

- Is it realistic?
- How could it be improved?

With your supervisor, write down the exercises that you need to review from the earlier sessions to increase your balance, control and ability to perform automatically. Set aside time to practise them.

Exercises I need to practise: _____

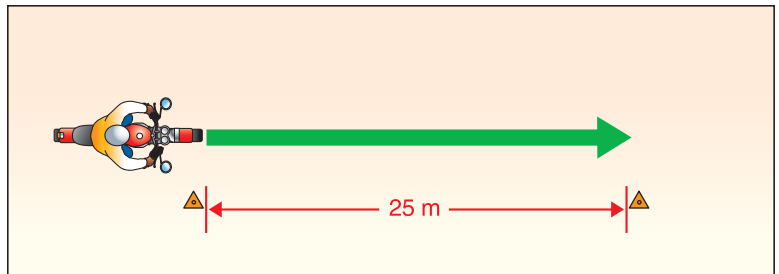


Low Speed Exercises

Many riders think they are showing their skill when they ride at high speeds. But the truth is, riding at low speeds can be more difficult. The challenge of riding at very low speeds (under 5 km/h) is to keep your balance. You do this by using clutch-throttle control, by looking in the direction you want to go and by keeping your knees in and maintaining a relaxed upper-body posture. These techniques will help you maintain balance and steering control in slow, heavy traffic.

From now on, when you are doing low speed exercises, practise covering the rear brake – keep your foot just above the brake pedal so that you are ready to apply it to control your speed.

The low speed straight ride



Set marker 25 metres from the starting point.

5 - 1

- Release the clutch lever gently until you reach the friction zone and begin to move.
- Roll the throttle on slightly.
 - Continue moving forward, maintaining a slow, steady walking speed. Your supervisor can help you keep this speed by walking beside you.
- Roll the throttle off and squeeze the clutch lever until you are just out of the friction zone.
- If you want to slow down, gently apply the rear brake.
- As you lose speed, you may start to lose balance – roll on the throttle and release the clutch slightly. This will take you back into the friction zone.
- Use clutch-throttle control until you reach the end marker and come to a stop.

Reminders –

- Keep your eyes up and keep looking in the direction of travel.
- Avoid using the front brake.
- Avoid rigid steering by allowing your arms and shoulders to remain relaxed.

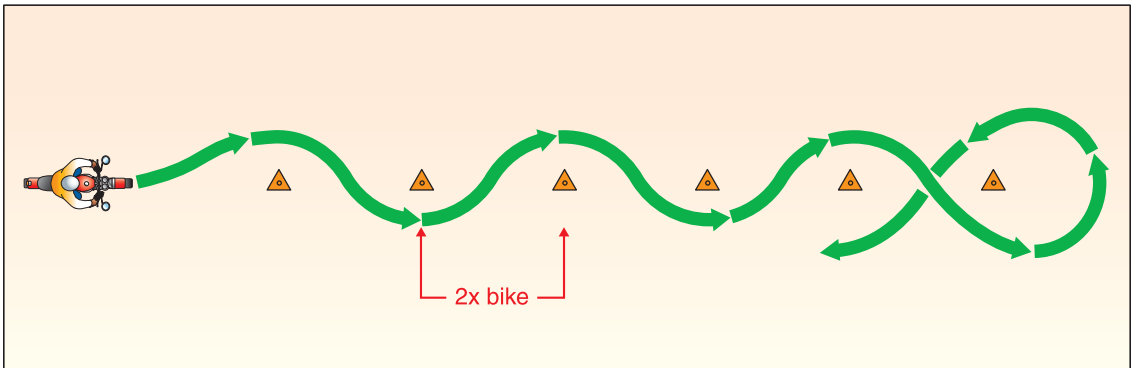


Coaching Tips

- The rider should start at a moderate speed (about 10 km/h), then slow down progressively to speeds that require using the clutch in the friction zone.
- Challenge the rider to use the clutch and go as slowly as possible without simply idling the engine.
- Check that the rider's knees are in and the upper body is relaxed.

Slalom with turn

In this exercise you will combine clutch-throttle control with steering to ride through a slalom, make a turn and go back through the slalom course again. Your goal should be to ride the entire path without touching a marker, losing balance or stalling.



5 - 2

Set up markers as shown. To start, the distance between them should be 2 times the motorcycle length. The markers can be moved closer together (to about 1.5 times the motorcycle length) once the rider has gained more confidence.

- Start about five metres from the first marker, in line with the markers.
- Always keep your front wheel half a metre to one metre away from the markers.
- Use the clutch friction zone and throttle to deliver power smoothly.
- Steer so that your front wheel crosses between the markers at the halfway point.
- As you turn, look ahead to the next midpoint between the markers.
- Use the rear brake only to slow down, and don't use the front brake.
- Continue past the last marker.
- Turn around. (Don't forget to look through the turn.)
- Return through the slalom markers.

Reminders –

- Keep your knees in so that your weight doesn't shift.
- Don't stare at the markers. Always look in the direction you want to go.
- Cover the clutch.

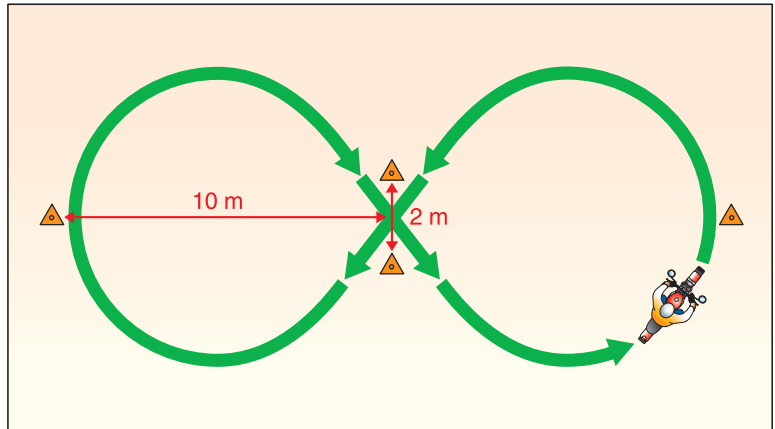
Figure 8

Keep a low speed, using the clutch friction zone and throttle control as you do a figure 8.

To set up the markers, measure the turning circle of the bike. Turn the handlebars as far as possible in either direction, then push the motorcycle in a half-circle. The track made by the front wheel is the turning circle.

In this exercise you may need to balance the motorcycle as it leans by keeping your body upright. This is called **counterbalancing**. Your eyes should be level with the horizon.

Start with 10-metre circles, then gradually move the markers until the circles are 1.5 metres larger than the turning circle of your bike.



5 - 3

- From a starting position, enter between the two middle markers, looking well ahead.
- Turn your head 90 degrees to look across the circle.
- Turn the handlebars in the direction you want to go.
- Steer your motorcycle around the circle, inside the markers.
- Enter the midpoint between the circles once more.
- Once you are just past the midpoint, turn your head to look across the second circle, and turn the handlebars in the direction of the new circle.

Reminder – If you need to slow down to maintain control, use the rear brake only.



Coaching Tips

- Before the rider tries this manoeuvre, it's a good idea to demonstrate it. Emphasize turning the head to look across each circle.
- Start with larger circles and reduce the size as the rider gains skill.

Starting on a hill

This manoeuvre is just like the beginning of the low speed straight ride, except that you will need to let the clutch out

more slowly and use a bit more throttle to counteract gravity.

Start the exercise using a gentle incline and progress to a steeper one.

- Position yourself on the incline with the rear brake applied.
- Look in the direction you want to go (up the hill).
- Roll the throttle on slightly and slowly release the clutch until you reach the friction point.
- Release the rear brake, and then release the clutch very slowly.
- Gradually increase the throttle as you continue to release the clutch.
- Lift your left foot to the footpeg as you move off.



How Are You Doing?

Rate your skills, then compare your ratings with your supervisor's.

Rating scale:

1 — needs work 2 — getting closer 3 — competent

Low speed straight ride

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| • Uses good clutch-throttle control. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| • Maintains a slow, steady speed without stalling. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| • Maintains balance and steering. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Slalom

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| • Weaves through the markers without touching any. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| • Maintains steady speed control. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| • Maintains balance — keeps feet on the pegs. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| • Keeps eyes up. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Figure 8

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| • Maintains an accurate steering path. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| • Maintains steady speed control. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Off Street Practice

- Maintains balance — keeps feet on the pegs. 1 2 3

- Keeps head turned to look in the direction of travel. 1 2 3

- Keeps eyes up. 1 2 3

Hill start

- Moves off smoothly. 1 2 3

- Doesn't roll backward. 1 2 3
