

## Proper Motorcycle Attire

A good place to start with proper dressing is the head. Helmets are considered optional equipment; they should be mandatory. Statistics have shown repeatedly that helmets save lives. However, if you insist on not wearing one please take a moment and fill out an Organ Donor card, available at chapter meetings.



While we are on the subject of the head, it might be a good idea to carry some lip balm and sunscreen. Apply when necessary. The Florida sun can be hazardous to unprotected skin and lips.

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*Stylish yes, but for riding a motorcycle this is next to riding naked.*

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Let's take a look at the lady and see what else is wrong with her riding apparel and how to correct it.

Her arms are exposed only slightly less than wearing a T-shirt. Granted, in the Florida heat a T-shirt may be the coolest thing to wear but protection against a fall really should take precedence. A lightweight cotton long sleeved shirt actually helps to keep you cool by doing two things. First, it keeps the sun and wind off your arms so you don't burn. (As a side benefit, it also keeps the dirt off when you are on the road all day.) Secondly, it helps slow the rate of dehydration.

The body cools itself by sweating. (Sorry, horse's sweat, men perspire and women merely get fragrant.) The areas that lose the most heat are the same ones that are most exposed when riding a motorcycle, namely the head and neck, armpits and groin. Wearing a long sleeved shirt offers some protection against a fall and slows fluid loss so you feel more refreshed at the end of a long ride. No fooling, it really does work.

Her dainty hands are next on the list. Riding gloves are necessary. They provide a positive contact with the grips as well as offering protection in a fall. (You instinctively put your hands out to break a fall.) Not all gloves have to be uncomfortable. Some gloves come with fabric between the upper and lower leather surfaces on the fingers. There are also perforated gloves to aid in cooling. There are many styles available so look around and find a pair that you feel comfortable with.

Nice legs, and I'll bet she would like to keep them that way. Wearing shorts while riding is not the proper approach. Aside from the safety aspect long pants provide they also keep the sun off your thighs. I rode in shorts one time and received a nasty sunburn. I won't mention the various bugs splattered on my shins, or how funny my legs looked only half cooked. Never again.

Last, but not least, her feet. What do high heels, loafers, sneakers and sandals have in common? None should be worn on a motorcycle. There are simply too many bones in the human foot to trust to anything that isn't providing over the ankle coverage. Cowboy boots with all their fancy stitching will still keep your feet cool. (Ask anyone who has ridden on a cold winter's night just how much the stitching keeps out the wind.) Not satisfied with boots? You can buy athletic shoes that cover the ankle if your feet need more cooling.

Sharp readers will notice a common thread running through all this. You dress for the "fall" and not the season. I am not going to blow smoke and tell you that you will be unscathed in an accident if you wear all this safety equipment. Unless your shirt and pants are made of ballistic nylon or kevlar, they are going to start shredding the moment you hit the highway. Glance down by your foot peg the next time you are riding to see just how fast that belt sander of asphalt pavement really appears. (At the average crash speed of 22 mph you are traveling 30 feet per second.) Full coverage gear will hopefully keep a few pounds of gravel and grass from imbedding itself in your body. If you are prone to crash a lot, you should invest in a full set of leathers. You have the choice of what to wear and when to wear it. Don't let the illusion of comfort rule over safety.

Ride Safe,