

6 - OVERTAKING

Motorcycle Roadcraft, chapter 8, pages 125 - 144.

Particularly page 138, paragraph 3 (bulleted).

KEY POINT: - before attempting an overtake, ask yourself, what would happen if a high speed motorcyclist or perhaps a low sports car, hidden by a wall or hedgerow, was attempting the same manoeuvre from the opposite direction?

Work on your overtaking skills.

Try to anticipate when an overtake may be arriving, for example, over the brows of hills, coming out of bends, exiting road junctions or roundabouts, entering new roads, etc.

Then, providing you can see around/over the vehicle, close up to the overtake position – about a half second gap (approximately most people's thinking time, when concentrating).

At 30 mph, a ½ second gap is 22 feet (7 metres) - about a car and a half length.

At 45 mph, a ½ second gap is 33 feet (11 metres) - a little less than a coach length.

At 55 mph, a ½ second gap is 40 feet (13 metres) - the length of the trailer of a standard articulated lorry.

Make sure you are in the correct gear: -

LOW ENOUGH to give good acceleration.

HIGH ENOUGH so that a changeup is not required during the overtake.

A gear change during an overtake could be hazardous - the new gear may not engage, for example, leaving you with no drive, probably facing oncoming vehicles.

Even if the gear engaged correctly, during the gear change you have no acceleration (even if short-shifting or with a quick-shifter fitted) - thereby leaving you in the "exposed" position longer than necessary.

Have your rear observations done, then if the opportunity is there, GO.

•This technique is, usually referred to as, catch, match and dispatch.

Sometimes, one can go immediately from the following position into the actual overtake - as with most things - it is down to what you can SEE.

If the overtake does not develop drop back to the following position – the 2-second gap.

However, if the target vehicle is large - say, a medium/large van, bus, coach or box wagon, then closing up to the ½ second gap would almost certainly restrict your view too much. With any vehicle(s) that restrict your view you have to stay well back, at least, a coach length away and probably much more.

Use opportunities to take views down both the offside and nearside when advantageous.

•The alternative to the above is the "slingshot" technique, where the overtaking is planned from way back, well before you reach the "target" vehicle.

Using this technique, one is often slowing down, where necessary, before the "target" vehicle has actually been passed.

Note: - if overtaking on bends, pay particular attention to the effect of road camber.

It is, usually, beneficial on right hand bends (when using the offside of the road).

Also, you are taking a shorter route than the "target" vehicle.

However, on left hand bends the opposite is, usually, true the camber is working against your tyre grip (you are effectively riding on the edge of your tyre, if using the offside of the road).

The distance needed to complete the manoeuvre is much greater; you are on the outside of the circle and have to travel much further than the "target" vehicle.

Overtaking on left hand bends would, in many (most?) cases, be fraught with the potential danger of losing adhesion between tyres and road surface and would need a much longer time and distance to complete.

Try to find a circular route that you know of say 6 to 10 miles or more to practice overtaking.

If need be stop to allow one or more vehicle to be in front of you, then follow, and practice.

ENJOY

KEY POINT: - one of the "mantras" of Advanced Riding is to follow the 5 - S's Safety

System

Smoothness

Speed (though I prefer to talk about progress, 5 mph may be good progress whilst 55 mph may not be)

Sparkle (that almost indefinable "something" that separates the Advanced from the Good).

NOTE: - how low down in the order of importance that SPEED is!

If SPEED is what "floats your boat" - get out on "track days". The public (Queen's) highway is not the place to do it.

A few final thoughts: -

**Unless all actions are carried out "politely", can you really have earned the right to be called
ADVANCED?**

Advanced Riders are noticeable by their unobtrusiveness.

It has been said: -

"The true hallmark of being Advanced, is knowing when to reduce speed".

KEY POINT: - any fool can . . .

ride fast enough to be dangerous.

Additional reading: -

A Twist of the Wrist - Keith Code (ISBN 0-9650450-1-3) around £10.00.

Not The Blue Book (ISBN 0-9529747-0-3)

&

The Assessment of Advanced Motorcycling (ISBN 0-9529747-1-1)H

both by Dave Jones, about £5.00 each.

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WARNING: - reading either or both of these last two books could seriously undermine your estimation of your Advanced capabilities!!!