

ASK THE RIDING COACH

with Rapid Training Coach Dave Hewson

‘Why do I seem to lean over more than others?’

Q I’VE NOTICED THAT when I’m following one of my mates, he has noticeably less lean angle than me mid-corner, yet he’s going the same speed on a similar bike.

How is this possible? He is unable to explain what he’s doing differently to me.

Mike Ashby, email

A AS I GUESS you are aware, by carrying less lean angle your mate has a greater safety margin for a set speed, which is always a good thing – so you’re right to be curious.

Without watching him, it’s impossible to be sure to know what he’s doing. But by far the most likely explanation

is that he’s steering a lot faster than you.

Basically, the faster you want to ride, the faster you have to steer. The logic is that if you go from upright to the lean angle you need in a short space of time, that lean angle will be less than if you spend longer on the steering process because there’s less delay getting the bike on to its line. If you take longer (ie, turn slower), the bike will run wide and you’ll then need more lean angle to compensate.

This is one of the reasons I see intermediate track riders carrying massive lean angles, yet I’m behind them doing the same speed and my knee is nowhere near the deck.

What I’m doing in that scenario is going into a corner nearly upright, steering very, very quickly on to my line, hitting the apex then standing the bike up and driving off the corner.

This translates nicely to the road – with far greater safety margins, obviously – because you don’t want to spend a load of time on the side of the tyre where the risk is greatest. I’m guessing your mate mysteriously pulls away from you out of corners too, because he’s able to get on the throttle earlier.

Armed with this knowledge, it’s time to practise. From a speed-of-learning and safety perspective, the best place to do this is on the track – Rapid runs track courses teaching the technique – but you can experiment on the road. Just be careful, and progress in small steps.



Rapid Training coach Dave Hewson is a hugely experienced road rider, talented motorcycle engineer and accomplished TT racer

To steer fast, we’re going to need to countersteer – and the best way to do this is to push the inside bar. But before you push, make sure you’re ready. Your core needs to be tensed and your legs locked in place – if your core is floppy or you’re shuffling your backside to the inside as you push, it won’t work as well. Get all your movement done before turning.

The steering push on the inside bar needs to be firm and quick without being jerky. You’re aiming to briskly set the bike on its new course, then relax – after that initial push you can let the bike track round the corner with no further input. The faster you’re travelling, the more physical you have to be to turn quickly.

Some riders are fearful that a fast change of direction will cause the front tyre to lose grip but that is extremely rare. The input might feel aggressive, but it doesn’t translate to the tyre – you’re making it roll on to its side fast, not skid sideways. Also, your effort occurs when the bike is almost bolt upright and the front is loaded by braking and/or engine braking – it’s got loads of grip.

Give it a go, Mike – with a bit of practice you’ll soon have as much safety margin as your mate. **R**



▲ Leaning less for the same corner speed can be the result of faster steering



The Rapid team includes TT racers, a BSB squad, and police and surveillance riders. They are the most highly qualified professionals in the business and their unique, no-nonsense courses are designed to help riders be the best they can be. **More info at www.rapidtraining.co.uk**