

A member alerted me to the revised version of The Pace, a system for riding in groups very similar to our unwritten systems with the same general philosophies. You will be surprised at just how similar it is – and tries to deal with the same issues as we have.

Bear in mind it is written by an American for Americans who ride on the other side of the road, so when the author talks about right hand corners, think left – and vice versa.

This document is just cut and paste articles from the web. I have edited slightly – mainly grammatical errors that Microsoft Word picks up.

The Pace was written by journalist Nick Ienatsch back in 1986 and The Pace 2 (2013) is a commentary on the original The Pace.

Have a read. No pictures, just words, and intense.

Ben Warden, MSR Editor, 26/5/2022

The Pace

Separating street from track, riding from racing

By Nick Ienatsch

February 24, 2009

Racing involves speed, concentration, and commitment; the results of a mistake are usually catastrophic because there's little room for error riding at 100 percent. Performance street riding is less intense and further from the absolute limit, but because circumstances are less controlled, mistakes and over aggressiveness can be equally catastrophic. Plenty of roadracers have sworn off street riding. "Too dangerous, too many variables and too easy to get carried away with too much speed," track specialists claim. Adrenaline-addled racers find themselves treating the street like the track, and not surprisingly, they get burned by the police, the laws of physics and the cold, harsh realities of an environment not groomed for ten-tenths riding. But as many of us know, a swift ride down a favourite road may be the finest way to spend a few free hours with a bike we love. And these few hours are best enjoyed riding at The Pace.

A year after I joined Motorcyclist staff in 1984, Mitch Boehm was hired. Six months later, The Pace came into being, and we perfected it during the next few months of road testing and weekend fun rides. Now The Pace is part of my life - and a part of the Sunday morning riding group I frequent. The Pace is a street riding technique that not only keeps street riders alive, but thoroughly entertained as well.

THE PACE

The Pace focuses on bike control and de-emphasizes outright speed. Full-throttle acceleration and last-minute braking aren't part of the program, effectively eliminating the two most common single-bike accident scenarios in sport riding. Cornering momentum is the name of the game, stressing strong, forceful inputs at the handlebar to place the bike correctly at the entrance of the turn and get it flicked in with little wasted time and distance. Since the throttle wasn't slammed open at the exit of the last corner, the next corner doesn't require much, if any, braking. It isn't uncommon to ride with our group and not see a brake light flash all morning.

If the brakes are required, the front lever gets squeezed smoothly, quickly and with a good deal of force to set entrance speed in minimum time. Running in on the brakes is tantamount to running off the road, a confession that you're pushing too hard and not getting your entrance speed set early enough because you stayed on the gas too long. Running The Pace decreases your reliance on the throttle and brakes, the two easiest controls to abuse, and hones your ability to judge cornering speed, which is the most thrilling aspect of performance street riding.

YOUR LANE IS YOUR LIMIT

Crossing the centreline at any time except during a passing manoeuvre is intolerable, another sign that you're pushing too hard to keep up. Even when you have a clean line of sight through a left-hand kink, stay to the right of the centreline. Staying on the right side of the centreline is much more challenging than simply straightening every slight corner, and when the whole group is committed to this intelligent practice, the temptation to cheat is eliminated through peer pressure and logic. Though street riding shouldn't be described in racing terms, you can think of your lane as the racetrack. Leaving your lane is tantamount to a crash.

Exact bike control has you using every inch of your lane if the circumstances permit it. In corners with a clear line of sight and no oncoming traffic, enter at the far outside of the corner, turn the bike relatively late in the corner to get a late apex at the far inside of your lane and accelerate out, just brushing the far outside of your lane as your bike stands up. Steer your bike forcefully but smoothly to minimize the transition time. Don't hammer it down because the chassis will bobble slightly as it settles, possibly carrying you offline. Since you haven't charged in on the brakes, you can get the throttle on early, before the apex, which balances and settles your bike for the drive out.

More often than not, circumstances do not permit the full use of your lane from yellow line to white line and back again. Blind corners, oncoming traffic and gravel on the road are a few criteria that dictate a more conservative approach, so leave yourself a three or four foot margin for error, especially at the left side of the lane where errant oncoming traffic could prove fatal. Simply narrow your entrance on a blind right-harder and move your apex into your lane three feet on blind left turns in order to stay free of unseen oncoming traffic hogging the centreline. Because you're running at The Pace and not flat out, your controlled entrances offer additional time to deal with unexpected gravel or other debris in your lane; the outside

wheel track is usually the cleanest through a dirty corner since a car weights its outside tires most, scrubbing more dirt off the pavement in the process, so aim for that line.

A GOOD LEADER, WILLING FOLLOWERS

The street is not a racing environment, and it takes humility, self-assurance and self-control to keep it that way. The leader sets the pace and monitors his mirrors for signs of raggedness in the ranks that follow, such as tucking in on straights, crossing over the yellow line and hanging off the motorcycle in the corners. If the leader pulls away, he simply slows his straight way speed slightly but continues to enjoy the corners, thus closing the ranks but missing none of the fun. The small group of three or four riders I ride with is so harmonious that the pace is identical no matter who's leading. The lead shifts occasionally with a quick hand sign, but there's never a pass for the lead with an ego on the sleeve. Make no mistake, the riding is spirited and quick in the corners. Anyone with a right arm can hammer down the straights; it's proficiency in the corners that makes The Pace come alive.

Following distances are relatively lengthy, with the straightaways taken at more moderate speeds, providing the perfect opportunity to adjust the gaps. Keeping a good distance serves several purposes, besides being safer. Rock chips are minimized, and the police or highway patrol won't suspect a race is in progress. The Pace's style of not hanging off in corners also reduces the appearance of pushing too hard and adds a degree of maturity and sensibility in the eyes of the public and the law. There's a definite challenge to cornering quickly while sitting sedately on your bike.

New rider indoctrination takes some time because The Pace develops very high cornering speeds and newcomers want to hammer the throttle on the exits to make up for what they lose at the entrances. Our group slows drastically when a new rider joins the ranks because our technique of moderate straightaway speed and no brakes can suck the unaware into a corner too fast, creating the most common single bike accident. With a new rider learning The Pace behind you, tap your brake lightly well before the turn to alert him and make sure he understands there's no pressure to stay with the group.

There's plenty of ongoing communication during The Pace. A foot off the peg indicates debris in the road, and all slowing or turning intentions are signalled in advance with the left hand and arm. Turn signals are used for direction changes and passing, with a wave of the left hand to thank the cars that move right and make it easy for motorcyclists to get past. Since you don't have a death grip on the handlebar, your left hand is also free to wave to oncoming riders, a fading courtesy that we'd like to see return. If you're getting the idea The Pace is a relaxing, non-competitive way to ride with a group, you are right.

RELAX AND FLICK IT

I'd rather spend a Sunday in the mountains riding at The Pace than a Sunday at the racetrack, it's that enjoyable. Counter-steering is the name of the game; smooth, forceful steering input

at the handlebar relayed to the tyres' contact patches through a rigid sport bike frame. Riding at The Pace is certainly what bike manufacturers had in mind when sport bikes evolved to the street.

But the machine isn't the most important aspect of running The Pace because you can do it on anything capable of getting through a corner. Attitude is The Pace's most important aspect: realising the friend ahead of you isn't a competitor, respecting his right to lead the group occasionally and giving him credit for his riding skills. You must have the maturity to limit your straightaway speeds to allow the group to stay in touch and the sense to realize that racetrack tactics such as late braking and full throttle runs to redline will alienate the public and police and possibly introduce you to the unforgiving laws of gravity. When the group arrives at the destination after running The Pace, no one feels outgunned or is left with the feeling they must prove themselves on the return run. If you've got something to prove, get on a racetrack.

The racetrack measures your speed with a stopwatch and direct competition, welcoming your aggression and gritty resolve to be the best. Performance street riding's only yardstick is the amount of enjoyment gained, not lap times, finishing position or competitors beaten. The differences are huge but not always remembered by riders who haven't discovered The Pace's cornering pureness and group involvement. Hammer on the racetrack. Pace yourself on the street. - MC

The PACE 2.0

THE STREET IS NOT A RACETRACK: HOW TO RIDE SWIFTLY AND SAFELY ON THE ROAD

By Nick Ienatsch, 2013

ROADRACING CHAMPIONS find and maintain a pace that keeps them near the front. The stakes for street riders are higher due to the everchanging and uncontrolled environment; finding an enjoyable, survivable pace on today's exemplary bikes takes mental forethought and physical skills. Physical skills start with scanning eyes that feed information to calm and smooth hands. Mental forethought begins with relentless concentration and the constant thought, "What's next?" Every ride, practice for the inevitable emergency when suddenly everything counts.

AS A MOTO-JOURNALIST SINCE 1984, I've witnessed motorcycle and tyre technology soar each year ... but there hasn't been a commensurate decrease in crashes. And in 1986 I got scared: Senator John Danforth's legislation to limit horsepower had me imagining our sport decimated by politicians, and the vision made me sick. Luckily, I was able to do something about it: I wrote The Pace. And every weekend my group of friends, most of whom had won at least a class championship at Willow Springs International Raceway, rode The Pace. These were seriously talented riders, but like you, we each had to work Monday morning. Our pace evolved from the dual desires to enjoy a modern sportsbikes and survive a potentially deadly sport in a dangerous world. It was the best of times, and riders around the planet read and adopted The Pace. So here we are more than 20 years later. The Pace's message continues to

ring true in many ways, but I want to review and strengthen the best of the message and make amendments to the worst. Let's call it Pace 2.0.

THE CONTROLS

THE GOOD

The separation of street and track must be stressed in riding groups. One leader, changing as frequently as desired. Passing within the group only after a wave-by. Keeping an eye on your friends because you're riding with your friends, not against your friends. Your goal is not money and a trophy, it's to get to breakfast every Sunday, tour Europe at a fun pace, enjoy a modern motorcycle on great roads, ride with your friends.

Riding against your friends is what a racetrack is for. Go to a track day. Enter a club race. Reserve the street for riding with your friends at a pace that allows you a margin of error for the unexpected, because not only is street riding much less predictable than track riding, but there are many more immovable objects to hit should things go wrong.

Limiting straightaway speed makes sense from so many angles. Radar traps usually hide on the straights and going fast in a straight line is just so ... simple. Rushing corner entrances on the street continues to lead the list of causes of single-bike crashes, and riders who do it in right-hand corners with oncoming traffic die.

How many of us have ventured out on the racetrack to find out what "fast" really means? Occasional track days not only hone your skills but also allow you to re-evaluate your street-riding priorities.

Give yourself a straight-line speed limit when you are out sport riding. There are a few states that have mandatory jail time for speeds over 100 mph, so setting your own limits might save major hassle. Want to go seriously fast all day? Visit your local racetrack... Bonneville ... Maxton ... El Mirage ... the dragstrip. On the street, know that lots of speed all the time will eventually catch you out.

THE ART OF SMOOTH: The tire will take a tremendous load, but not an abrupt load. Focus on smooth initial throttle application/brake pressure, especially at lean angle or on suspect surfaces. Also, focus on brake release: You'll find you're in control of your bike's rebound and compression damping

I'm a fan of small, constant corrections. Talk about all this stuff in your group. Talk about mistakes you make or see. What makes you uncomfortable? Be tactful, but don't put up with idiots in your group. Reduce their idiocy or move them or yourself out. This sport is edgy enough; don't hang around with riders making bad decisions.

The Pace considers body position, and discussion of this circles back to outright speed in an environment that is basically uncontrolled, the opposite of what is found on a racetrack. Roadracers hang off their bikes to run less lean angle and street riders can do that, too, except that I've seen riders hang off their bikes on the street and then increase their speed until

they're running "fun" lean angles. Because of hanging off, these "fun" lean angles can be at extremely high speeds. When a surprise happens, the extra speed is a killer. Dragging a knee on the street is insane and a clear indication of mistaking public road for the track. The track is the place with an ambulance 60 seconds away... room to run off... tech inspection ... corner workers ... rules governing direction ... no oncoming traffic. Do I sound preachy? I hope so.

So, The Pace talks about not hanging off, first as a speed control, and second to appear less guilty to officers of the law. I shift my body to the inside of the bike, moving my head a bit to load the inside footpeg to help the bike turn, saving the big hang-off move for unexpected gravel/hazards or a surprisingly tight corner. Relaxed and mellow and innocent, sir.

THE BAD

All that said, I have two friends who hang off in the corners and have the discipline to run sane speeds. Can an article teach judgment and discipline? No, hospitals teach that.

DOWNSHIFT LIKE A REAL PRO: Even with a slipper clutch, blip the throttle to bring up rpm to match the lower gear before releasing the lever. Also, don't snap out the lever too quickly. Real pros use two fingers and pull in only enough to disengage the clutch plates.

In The Pace I wrote that you might not see a brake light flash all day. This is misleading. Readers could interpret this to mean that using the brakes is wrong, and I should have been much clearer. Yes, riding up Angeles Crest Highway with almost no corners below 50 mph, seeing the brake light would be uncommon because we weren't hammering the throttle on the straights. But if you went with us to tight-and-twisty Stunt Road in Malibu, you'd see lots of brake lights.

Brakes. Yes. To not only control your speed, but your steering geometry, too. That is the biggest and most important clarification in The Pace 2.0: The use of brakes. You go to the brakes anytime you need your speed controlled more than is possible by simply closing the throttle. The faster you ride, the more brakes you will use, all things (like lean angle) being equal. If you're in the habit of slamming on the brakes at every corner entrance, you are definitely not riding The Pace and that big speed and abruptness will eventually hurt you. If you use a little brake pressure to trail-brake (brake while turning) into the occasional corner, you've got the right idea.

PACE 2.0 UPDATES

The Pace 2.0 wants you to add this to your riding portfolio: "I can go to the brakes any time during my ride." Yes, even leaned over in your favourite corner. In my book, Sport Riding Techniques, on fastersafer.com and at Yamaha Champions Riding School, I give each tire 100 points of total grip. If you're leaned over and using 98 points (98 percent of the front tire's grip is going to cornering forces), you have two points left for braking. Most riders aren't subtle enough with initial braking to be able to use the remaining two points, so this subtlety is something Pace 2.0 wants you to master. Know that your ability to squeeze on one or two

points of brakes is the difference between the bike running wide across the centreline because of no brake application (no speed or geometry control), or the bike steering into the corner and delivering you safely to breakfast.

For those who say their bike stands up in the corner when they brake, this is almost always a result of too much initial lever force, which bottoms the fork and flattens the tire (and its contact patch) too abruptly, upsetting the bike. This sport is more subtle than these riders understand.

Same with initial throttle. Make your first application of power so smoothly that the suspension loads and the tyre, and the contact patch expands...smoothly. More rubber, more grip.

MULTI-TASKING

This sport rewards subtlety and punishes abruptness. Learn to move quickly but smoothly. THE HANDS of the onboard engineer can do a lot to make a perfect bike evil and an evil bike perfect. Your left hand is the slipper clutch, your right hand is the compression and rebound damping adjuster. Your palms will be heavily loaded under braking, but your elbows shouldn't be locked. Holding light, steady throttle mid-corner keeps the bike on line.

Traction loss is rarely a simple case of using too many total points; far more often it is a case of points being added too quickly. Read that sentence again, please. Quit grabbing, stabbing, hammering and quit "flicking" the bike into the corner. Add braking, throttle and steering points in a linear manner so when you do creep up to the tyre's maximum, it has a chance to gently slide and warn you about its limit.

MASTER GEOMETRY

A COMPRESSED FORK aids turn-in through improved geometry and a bigger tire contact patch (see p.69). But it must be in the effective travel range: releasing brakes before turn-in extends the fork and the bike wants to run wide. Get to the turn-in point with excessive brake pressure and the fork is too collapsed, again forcing the bike to run wide. Learn to use the brakes for both speed and geometry control.

In the second article, on The Pace, my views on trail-braking started to evolve because racing was teaching me so much. For speed on the track or safety on the street, you must be able to use some brake pressure at lean angle. On the street in corners, you brake for, do your best to "leave the brake light on" at corner turn-in so you are taking advantage of slightly better steering geometry provided by fork compression.

The Pace 2.0 needs you to understand the formula $\text{Radius} = \text{mph}$ (and $\text{mph} = \text{Radius}$), and not just in theory. You need to feel it. Find an empty parking lot and ride in a circle at a given lean angle, one that you're comfortable with. Pick this lean angle, and then gently accelerate while doing your best to hold that very same lean angle. Then do it again and gently decelerate, again holding the same lean angle. Increase your speed and your radius increases, slow your speed and your radius decreases. Steady throttle holds it. After this exercise, you'll realize how insane it is that some new riders are being taught to increase throttle and push on the inside handlebar if they enter a corner too fast.

Emulate your racing heroes and wear all your gear every ride! Quality equipment will amaze you with its ability to protect the human form.

Getting your brain in gear before your bike goes into gear is a big part of 2.0. Call it being in the moment or having a plan or focusing. Most important is clearing your head and asking: What's next? That two-word question, repeated often during your ride, might go further to reduce crashes than anything except better brake use. **What's next?** Write it on your triple clamp, mutter it out loud, whisper it every five seconds, maybe yell it out to your friends just before the face shields snap shut.

Riders of longer, heavier bikes should master both front and rear brakes because, in an emergency, each brake does about 50 percent of the work. I've headed Harley-Davidson's "Back to the Track" program for years and can tell you firsthand that the best stops and speed control on a cruiser/dresser/bobber utilise both front and rear brakes in roughly equal measure.

Perhaps the biggest myth lies in the sportbike world where riders have heard "never touch the rear brake". The advice should be "never stab the rear brake". Yes, in an emergency, it might only provide a small percentage of the overall stopping power due to a sportbike's weight transfer, but this sport is all about small percentages. If you miss the car in your lane by one foot, you've missed the car, right? Add rear-brake finesse to your riding portfolio.

TWENTY YEARS

We've all evolved over the last 20 years, but bikes have evolved more quickly than most riders. What I believe and teach (and do on every ride or drive) really counts when the pace is up or the grip is down.

Let me close 2.0 with this: Most of us don't approach our riding improvement seriously enough. Get relentlessly focused on your riding, don't put up with riding errors, don't think "good enough" is good enough. When you add speed to mistakes, you don't just hit the ball into the net. Our riding mistakes not only hurt bodies and wallets, but our sport, as well. Consider giving this article to your friends or adopting it for your club. More important: carefully evaluate the riding advice out there and seriously study how you ride your pace. It may help save our sport.

Riding well is the most wonderful feeling in the world, the reason we're all hooked, and that's what The Pace celebrates. You're riding quickly and controlled. Your friends file through a tight, left-right-left with the fluidity of a rushing stream. Your mirror is filled with friends riding your pace, using their eyes, brakes, throttle and body to ride with you. You arrive together. You and our sport are healthy tomorrow. The best.