

Excessive Lean Angle . . . and what it taught me about practice

I just slowed, downshifted to second; looked through the curve for the exit, started to roll on the throttle and the next thing I know I was sliding down the practice range without my bike. The first I said after I made it back to my feet was, "What happened?" The reply was crisp and concise, "Excessive lean angle." Yep, I crashed; no damage to me other than a slightly bruised ego. This turned out to be a "bad news, good news" story. The bad news is I crashed; the good news is it happened during a facilitated training session where I had someone to give me coaching about the error I made.

So what does this have to do with practice? Simple, I learned from my several days at the course was that I need to be much more careful about the amount of lean I introduce while maneuvering through hard curves and I have gotten a bit lazy using my front brake properly. The lean angle thing lesson was clear, but it turns out I have gotten lazy with the front brake squeeze because I have come to depend on the linked braking systems on my bikes. So now, I spend at least part of every ride consciously working on those issues.

Now since I have told you what I am working on, I would bet that if you were to really look at your riding skills and be honest with yourself, you could identify some things that you do not feel completely comfortable about while riding. (Perhaps U-turns; excessive slow traffic maneuvering?). How often do you get a chance to practice? Well the chapter has been working on this for you. GWRRA calls it Parking Lot Practice (PLPs)

As you know, Dave has been pushing for attendance at PLPs for some time. I recommend you try one out; I will almost guarantee you will find skills you need improving. Besides, this is free and a great opportunity for you to identify and practice skills in a non-threatening, safe and facilitated environment.

Remember we all can get better and are constantly looking for an edge to make us safer, so take the time to attend one of our PLPs. Who knows maybe you will find something you want to work on. Can anyone say "**Excessive lean angle**"?

Bob Reagle

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Ride Well, Ride Safe