

How to Ride a Motorcycle with a Passenger

Riding a motorcycle with a passenger requires more balance and control than riding solo. Make sure you are completely comfortable and confident riding a motorcycle by yourself before you attempt to do so with a passenger. Once you're ready...

Method 1 of 2:

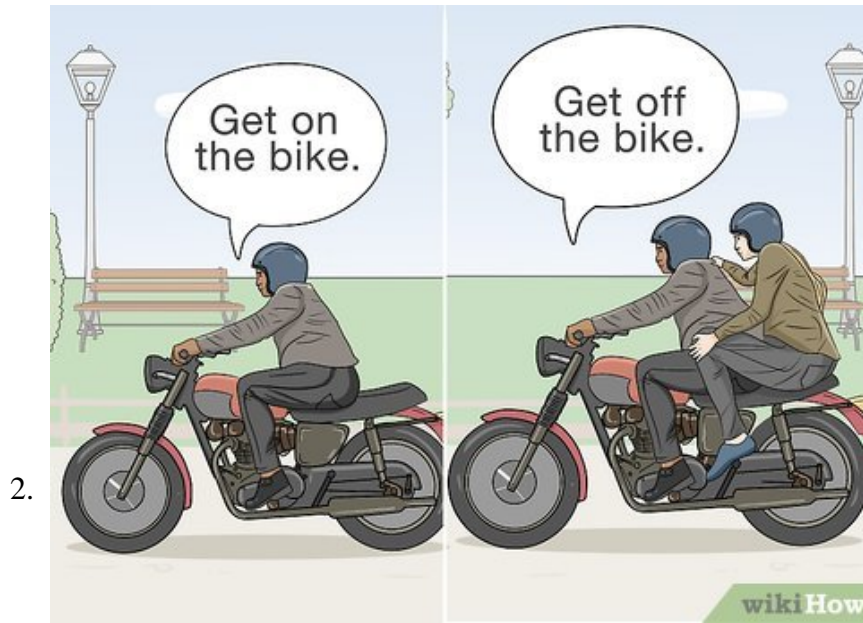
Briefing Your Passenger Before Riding



Agree on hand signals for the passenger to tell you to slow down or stop. It won't always be possible to communicate verbally because of the noise from wind and traffic, so it's important to have another way to communicate. Come up with 2 different hand signals that the passenger can use to tell you to slow down or stop if they get scared or need a break.^[1]

1. For example, the passenger could tap you once on the right shoulder if they want you to slow down and twice if they want you to stop.

Tip: Another option for easy communication, especially if you are going to be riding regularly with a passenger, is a helmet-to-helmet intercom system.



Tell the passenger they can only get on and off the bike when you say so. It's important that the passenger does not get on the bike before you and that they get on only when you are ready and give them the OK to do so. The passenger must also remain on the bike until you are ready for them to get off.^[2]

1. This will ensure that you are in full control of the bike before they mount or have come to a complete stop before they dismount. If they mount or dismount too early, it could cause the bike to fall over or they could get injured.



Instruct the passenger to keep their feet on the passenger pegs at all times. Make sure that your passenger agrees to never remove their feet from the footpegs or floorboards while riding. Tell them never to put their feet on the ground to try and support the motorcycle.^[3]

1. Explain that even in an emergency situation it is your job to control the motorcycle and if they try to help by removing their feet it could result in an accident and injury.

4.



Advise the person to keep their eyes on the back of your helmet during turns. This will help keep their body lined up with yours so they lean into the turns with you. Passengers often have the habit of leaning the opposite way of the turn, which makes it harder for you to go around a corner safely.^[4]

1. Another trick is to tell the passenger to look over your shoulder in the direction you are turning. This will help them lean into the turn slightly more.

5.



Inform the passenger that they must sit close to you and hang on to you. Advise the passenger to sit as far forward in the passenger seat as possible so that their weight will be more centered on the bike. Make sure they hold onto your waist or wherever you feel most comfortable.^[5]

1. A heavy passenger sitting farther back will make it harder to steer and can even cause the front wheel to lift up.
2. After you have some experience riding together, your passenger can hold onto seat grips or rails instead of onto you.

3. Your passenger can also use their knees to hold onto you, especially during turns.



Make sure you completely trust each other before riding together. Your passenger must trust you completely because you are responsible for their safety during the ride. You must trust them to adhere to all the guidelines you have set so that you're able to handle the motorcycle and ride safely.^[6]

1. Communication is crucial to mutual trust as well. You need to be able to tell the passenger if they are doing something that is making it harder for you to drive and trust that they will listen. They need to be able to tell you if they are scared or uncomfortable and trust that you will do your best to accommodate them.

Method 2 of 2:

Riding Safely with Your Passenger

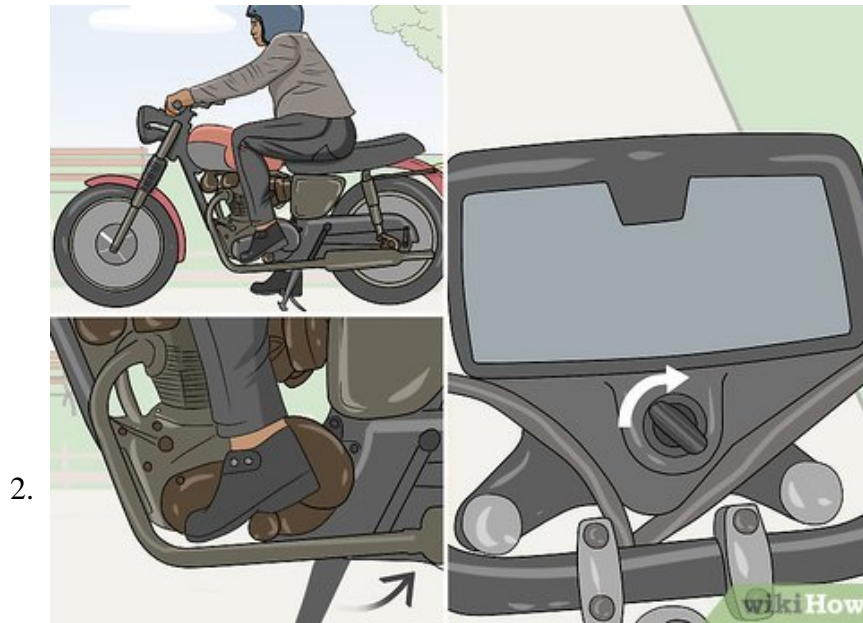
1.



Ensure your passenger has properly-fitted safety gear. The most important piece of safety gear is a helmet that is not too small or too big. Make sure your passenger also has long heavy pants like jeans or motorcycle pants, a pair of leather gloves, a motorcycle jacket, and solid shoes that cover their feet and ankles.^[7]

1. If you are just going on short rides, jeans are the minimal acceptable amount of protection. However, if you plan to go on long rides with your passenger, then they will need pants designed for motorcycle riding.
2. If your passenger doesn't have a motorcycle jacket, a regular leather jacket is OK and a heavy jacket made out of denim is a suboptimal backup option.

Warning: Make sure that if your passenger's shoes have laces, they are tucked in tightly so they can't get caught in any parts of the bike while you are riding.



Mount the motorcycle, raise the kickstand, and start the engine. Get on the motorcycle before your passenger and raise the side kickstand while bracing the moto with your foot. Hold the brake, turn the motorcycle on, and plant your feet on the ground before the passenger gets on.^[8]

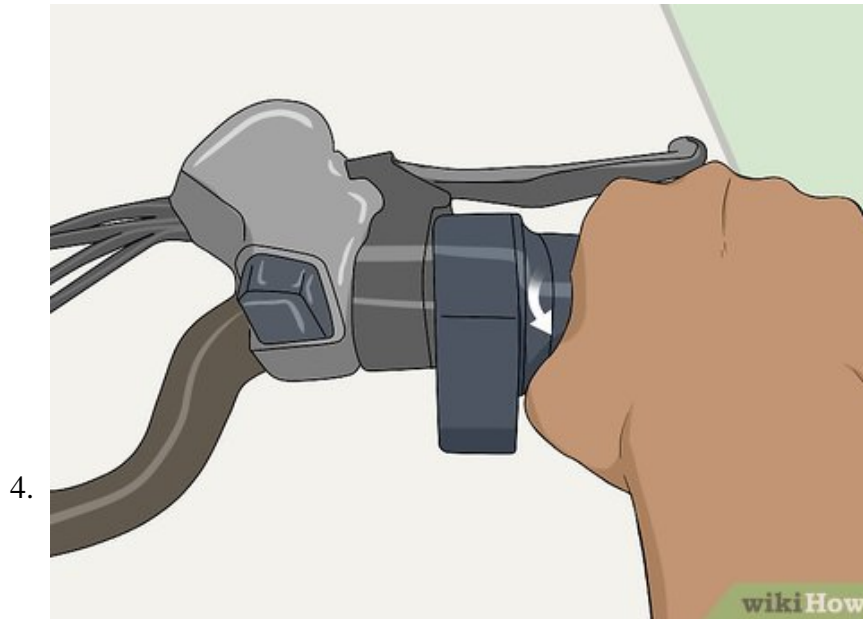
1. It's best to do this on a completely flat surface so the bike doesn't roll.



Have your passenger mount and dismount the bike on the non-muffler side. Tell your passenger to approach the bike from the left side when you are ready for them to mount. Mufflers get very hot, so it's best for the passenger to mount from the other side to avoid any accidental burns. The same goes for dismounting.^[9]

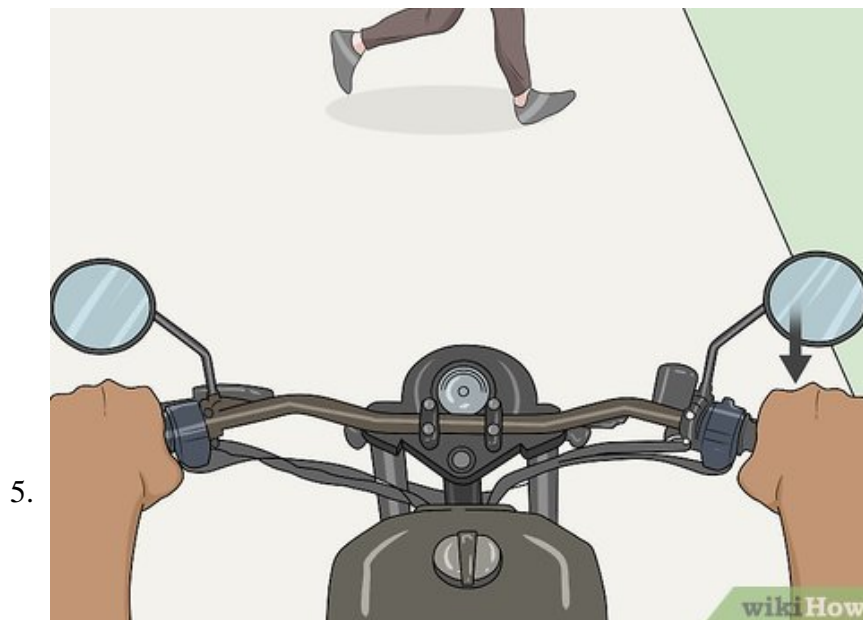
1. If your passenger has difficulty mounting, they can put their left hand on your shoulder and use it as a brace to help them swing their right leg up and over the bike.
2. If the bike you are riding has a muffler on each side, it doesn't matter what side the passenger mounts from. Just make sure they keep their legs clear of the muffler when getting on the bike.

3. Make sure your passenger knows to keep their legs clear of the muffler at all times while riding as well as when mounting and dismounting the bike.



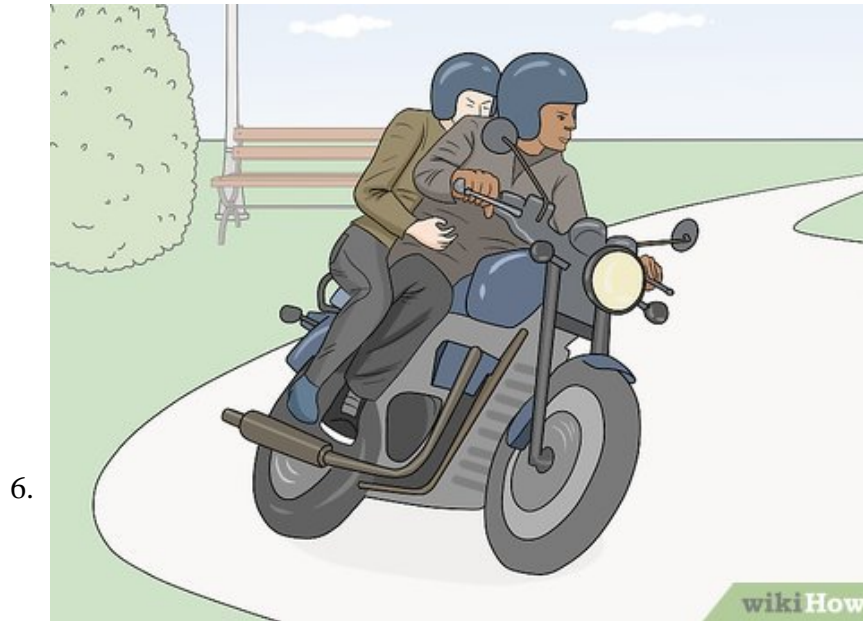
Accelerate slowly and smoothly to compensate for the extra weight. The motorcycle won't accelerate as fast with the extra weight of a passenger, but the front end can jerk up if you crank the throttle too fast because of the added weight at the back. Twist the throttle twice as slowly as you would solo to ensure smooth acceleration.^[10]

1. If this is your first time riding with a passenger, it's a good idea to practice riding around in a big open parking lot before you hit the roads. This will allow you to get a feel for how the bike accelerates and handles.



Start braking sooner than you would if you were riding alone. Your bike will require longer distances to come to a full stop with a passenger because the brakes have to work harder to stop more weight. Plan your stops and start braking slowly well ahead of time in order to come to a smooth stop.^[11]

1. The extra weight at the back of the bike actually has the added benefit of giving your rear brake more stopping power and stability.



Take corners very carefully to avoid scraping the ground. The added weight of the passenger will compress the suspension of your bike, so it can cause clearance issues around sharp corners. Be very cautious when you go around corners so that you don't scrape the ground with any low parts of the bike as you lean into the corners.^[12]

1. Make sure that the passenger doesn't overcompensate for the turn by leaning hard into it. They need only look at the back of your helmet or just over your inside shoulder. A good analogy is that the passenger is like a sack of potatoes; they can move around loosely with the movements of the bike but can't make any sudden sharp movements.

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