

I'm on vacation at the time of our September meeting and will sadly miss getting to enjoy the guest speakers we will have at the chapter meeting. Dr. Susan Bushman is a Doctor of Chiropractic with First Health Chiropractic in Chesterfield. She has 13 years experience treating injury and illness and bringing wellness into people's lives. Cindy Wyrostek is a school nurse with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. There is a lot of knowledge with these two and they have put together a presentation you will not want to miss! It will be unlike any you have experienced. Be willing to have your mind and riding experience stretched like you never have before. With thunderous applause and worlds of gratitude, here is their article. - Matt

Live to ride, ride to live. Whether we've personally said these words or not, we've all heard them. There are many among us at Kirkwood HOG who exemplify this Harley Davidson mantra. There's not much else like the feeling of riding our motorcycle. The longer the ride, the better, most of the time. It's liberating and exhilarating to ride for hours; all day long if we can manage to get the time. And if we're lucky, we get to take longer, multi day rides like the 5-day or 9-day ride. There was a decent sized Kirkwood HOG representation at Sturgis this year. Now that was riding and living.

The unfortunate side of long rides and multiple days of long rides is the effect on the body and mind from the vibration and wind. I was curious about what impact (if any) those elements had on my body from riding. Or is my age showing when I groan with stiffness and complain of a sore bottom from a long ride. As it turns out, age doesn't matter. Riding a motorcycle for long periods of time does take a toll on the body and mind. Who knew there's been research on just this topic –whole body vibration (WBV). It's the vibration, not my age, that makes me tired from riding. Stiffness sets in whenever sitting in the same position for a long period of time. Throw in the impact of vibration and the body talks back. I've also noticed in addition to fatigue, muscle stiffness, and a sore bottom that my vision seems to be a little more blurry after a long ride. My mental alertness is a little dull too. None of these are particularly related to my age (or yours if you have felt these things too).

On the bright side... there are some things that can be done prior to riding, during the ride and after the ride that can help to reduce the negative symptoms (and possible long term impact) associated with WBV. It is clear to those who ride a motorcycle that riding takes more focus and concentration to ride safely than it does to drive a car. Also, sitting in a car also takes less physical agility than riding a motorcycle. So what can a cyclist do to enjoy the ride and reduce the impact?

WBV really can have profound negative effects on muscles. The vibration of riding comes from not only the motor on the bike but also from road conditions. It is important to keep your muscles in shape to help absorb the vibration and impact from bad pavement, potholes, railroad tracks and other obstacles. Good posture when riding can save a great deal of soreness and stiffness. Stretching before a long ride can provide noticeable and invaluable benefit and relief from potential riding related injury. Areas of concern for long rides include the hands and wrists, back and neck, in addition to the thighs and hamstrings. Many riders like to make short stops when spending a full day riding. It's a good idea when planning for a long ride to include time in your schedule to do some stretching of these crucial muscles while at gas or food stops. And certainly after a long ride stretching can make your next day's ride more enjoyable.

These are just a few tips and tricks that can be done before, during and after long rides. We all like to think that riding our motorcycle is just a pleasurable experience. No one wants to think about potential harm that can come from neglecting to take care of our bodies. The better shape we are in and the more we pay attention to the little things, the greater the likelihood that we can enjoy riding for many years to come. So, include taking care of your body and muscles in your planning of your next long or multi day ride.