



## Getting To Know Your Tires

They are all there is between you and the road. Do not skimp on tires. Don't ride on bad tires or even questionable ones. What keeps the motorcycle from sliding out from under you are what is known as friction. Firestone tires used the ad campaign "Where The Rubber Meets The Road". They were referring to that magical element known as traction. Traction is the friction that exists between the road surface and the tire. The greater the amount of friction, the more traction. When you run out of traction, sliding is the result.

**New Tires** must be broken-in. They break-in between 50-100 miles. Breaking them in means travelling at reduced speeds, using great care to gradually increase speed and thereby increasing lean angle. The new tires come out of the tire molds by the use of a releasing agent. This agent is sometimes silicone based and very slippery. It is not usually water soluble and the only way it can be removed is by wear. New agents are being used by some manufacturers with the hope of reducing the time it takes to wear off the releasing agent.

**Old tires** sometimes need to be replaced even if they look new. As they age they lose their elasticity and get dry and hard. This has an effect on the braking and handling of your motorcycle. Tires are now date coded by the manufacturer so that it can be determined how long the tires sat on the shelf before being installed. Ask about the dates of manufacture of the tires you are about to buy. Sitting on a shelf for three years gives a dealer good reason too want to sell them cheap, and gives you a good reason to look elsewhere for that extra margin of safety.

**Cold tires** have less traction. Warm the tires gradually by riding at reduced speeds. In cold weather this could take a few miles. Better safe than sorry.

**Under inflated tires** wear off the part of the tire that you need for leaning. Always check you air pressure and tread. Check you air pressure when the tires get cold and then again when they are heated up. There shouldn't be more than a 10% difference between the readings. Then you know if the tire pressure is correct.

**The mileage** you get on your bike tires are a lot less than you get on a car tire. A hard tire gets more mileage, but less traction, than a softer tire. All tires are not created equal. The composition of the tires make a big difference. Generally speaking, you will get twice the mileage from a front tire than a rear. Some manufacturers sell tires in sets of three for this reason.

**Clean tires** as per manufactures directions. Never use an oily substance like Armor All.

Ask your dealer or knowledgeable friends about the differences in tire brands and manufacturers. Select tires to meet your needs and riding style. Many riders sacrifice long wear for added traction. Conservative distance riders alter their riding style for mileage. Know your tires and remember, "Traction is like money in the bank, you can never have enough".