



A GUIDE TO  
**Motorcycles**

# Affordable Motorcycle Mods

After buying your dream bike, it's easy to come up with ways to customize it with a unique touch to give it a more personal flair.

If you're adding power to the engine or making it stand out with aesthetic boosters, motorcycles offer riders numerous ways to provide it with a sense of personality. Fortunately, most upgrades can be done on a budget and with a bit of mechanical knowledge.

Before you make factory adjustments, one thing to consider is if the modifications will disqualify the warranty that comes with new or certified used models. Make sure to call the dealership or lot that sold you the bike to discuss the guarantee's terms and explain the mods you are thinking of making.

If the warranty will be debunked, consider an alternative like a professional installation rather than a DIY approach, or ask for similar customizations that fall in line with a guarantee.

Once you're familiar with acceptable modifications, here are a few ways to increase your bike's character on a budget.

## LET THERE BE LIGHT

Applying LED strips to the undercarriage of a motorcycle creates a unique flair when the bike is parked. Before pur-



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chasing a kit, do your research to find out more about the product.

For instance, check reviews from other customers to ensure the strips adhere well to the machine or if additional double-sided tape or Velcro is necessary. You'll also want to consider if the equipment is waterproof and durable for your riding style.

Another way to increase your bike's aggressiveness and add safety to your rides is by upgrading to an LED headlight system. Of course, you should check your state laws beforehand to ensure that the brighter capabilities are following local regulations.

## ENHANCED BRAKING

It's no secret that motorcy-

cle riders want to go fast. While speed may be the name of the game, operators should also invest in heavy-duty stopping capabilities.

Consider upgrading to a high-performance brake pad to improve the overall friction and durability to withstand more intense temperatures. Braided brake lines are another quality option when

enhancing the braking system as they are more durable than factory rubber hoses.

## EXHAUST

Changing the factory exhaust on a bike can increase power and offer an impressive sound. Aftermarket systems are also excellent options to add a unique style and maximize fuel economy.

# Before Visiting a Dealership

Like any automotive purchase, buying a motorcycle can be a significant expense. Before visiting the lot and falling in love with a brand-new bike, it's imperative to do your research about what you can afford and determine the machine's must-have features.

Failure to stick to a budget because of flashy features can cause buyers regret and lead to a stressful financial future.

The first move one should make before visiting a dealership is reviewing your credit report. You can find numerous apps that help you track your financial history or ask a bureau for a free version of the document. Check its accuracy and attempt to contest any remarks that you feel were made erroneously. The Federal Trade Consumer encourages consumers who find mistakes to contact the credit reporting company in writing, discussing the inaccurate information. They are required to review your request, usually within 30 days, of receiving the questionable data.

If the statements are proven true, it's beneficial to clean up your report by paying off

overdue bills or lowering debts that include high-interest rates like credit cards.

## **GET PRE-APPROVED**

The benefits of getting pre-approved for a motorcycle loan are understanding your borrowing limits and providing negotiating power when entering the dealership. Visit with a few lenders to find the most affordable interest rates and attractive

term requirements. Once you're approved for a loan, you can walk into a buying situation as if you have cash in hand.

## **RESEARCH DIFFERENT MODELS**

Whether you're deciding between a sports model or a touring motorcycle, it's imperative to research different manufacturers' options. Find out which bike will offer

the proper ride for you and then determine which features you must have, and which may turn into unneeded expenses.

Like cars and trucks, these machines are loaded with innovative technology that can dramatically alter the price tag.

## **PREPARE TO NEGOTIATE**

Prepare for the negotiations by researching the real-

istic cost of the machine and the value of your trade-in. Make sure to ask questions about the bike and evaluate the answers when determining what you are willing to offer.

Don't be afraid to walk away from a deal that doesn't make financial sense. Your ability to turn down an interaction may entice the seller to adjust to your terms or offer a better price.



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# Choosing an Effective Helmet

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, helmets saved the lives of 1,870 motorcyclists in 2017. Unfortunately, the absence of protection was blamed for the deaths of about 750 riders lost in motorcycle accidents.

If you're going to get on a motorcycle, it's imperative to find a well-fitted helmet to help save your life.

To get a sense of the urgency and importance of wearing head protection while riding, check out these startling statistics regarding motorcyclists from the Advocates for Auto and Highway Safety.

- Helmets represent \$2.7 billion in savings of annual economic costs.

- Motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 69% and reduce the risk of death by 42%.

- Per vehicle mile traveled, bike operators were nearly 28 times more frequently killed in a traffic crash, as opposed to occupants of passenger cars.

- In 2017, there were ten times as many non-helmeted fatalities in states without universal helmet laws.

Even if your state doesn't



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enforce laws requiring helmet wearing while operating your bike, it's crucial to consider enhancing your protection. Here are some ideas to find an effective fit that offers lifesaving durability.

## WELL-FITTING

Most motorcycle helmets feature the same sizes as baseball caps— S, M, L or XL. Determining which size you

wear is a good starting point to decide which helmet to purchase. Here are some tips from the Motorcycle Industry Council about how to find the right fit.

- The cheek pads should touch your cheeks without causing discomfort.
- Ensure there are no gaps between your temples and brow pads.
- The neck roll shouldn't

push the helmet away from the back of your neck.

- Full-face equipment should not touch your nose or helmet under pressure.

With the straps securely fastened, move the helmet up and down and to the sides. Your skin should follow the movements.

## SMART FEATURES

In addition to enhancing

safety, today's helmets are loaded with innovative features. Look for models that connect to your cell phone for hands-free calling or that plays music via Bluetooth.

Advanced options can act as your key and stop the bike from starting until the helmet is detected. Some even act as wireless charging systems for devices and can send an alert in case of an accident.

# Dress for Success and Safety

Because motorcycles offer little protection for riders compared to passenger cars and trucks, wearing protective clothing is imperative.

Novice riders may forget this simple but important part of hitting the road. While you should choose attire that provides comfort, especially when traveling a long distance, additional armor can be life-saving in the event of an accident.

Find out more about stylish body armor and how to dress to protect when traveling on two wheels.

## WHAT IS BODY ARMOR

Motorcycle riding armor is usually featured in jackets, vests or pants. The durable material is equipped with leather, mesh or Kevlar to protect body parts during an accident or sliding. Look for options that offer optimal protection on the back, shoulders and elbows.

Most equipment includes straps or snaps to ensure the armor fits snugly and stays in place if it's needed during a spill.

## BRIGHT AND REFLECTIVE CLOTHING

During night adventures, bright and reflective clothing helps automobile drivers spot your location and avoid collisions. According to the National Institutes of Health, riders wearing high visibility or fluorescent clothes had a 37% less risk of a crash-related injury.

Motorcycle riders should consider wearing the noticeable attire by slipping a vest over their regular clothing or adhering reflective strips on their helmets.

## WIND-GUARD SHIRT AND PANTS

Prepare for unexpected weather events by wearing water- and wind-proof clothing. The specialty attire will keep you warm and dry during downpours and protect the skin from cool windchills. Covering the entirety of your skin is also benefi-

cial to keeping yourself safe in case of an accident that causes skidding.

## HAND AND FEET PROTECTION

Because your hands oversee the throttle's control on a motorcycle, it's imperative to protect them from highway hazards or weather conditions. Wear heavy-duty gloves to avoid damaged asphalt or rocks

from impacting your abilities to command your bike and maintain a safe speed.

Comfortable and durable boots are another crucial piece of equipment. Make sure they are waterproof and breathable and consider equipping them with reflective strips.

Look for options that include suitable shin and ankle protection.





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# Motorcycle Culture

Riding a bike is more than a mode of transportation. For many, it's a lifestyle and an exclusive club where motorheads share stories and show off their chrome chariots.

Much like car enthusiasts, bike riders gather in masses to rub shoulders with their like-minded peers and travel the country on two wheels.

While pop culture is notorious for painting an unruly perception of riders, most motorcycle enthusiasts are simply out to enjoy the open roads and even raise money for their communities

through charity work. Check out why motorcycle culture took over the nation and why you should consider joining in on the excitement.

## UNEXPECTED HEALTH BENEFITS

You may not realize the numerous health benefits motorcycle riders gain during excursions. Not only are you able to find some space for thinking and relaxation, but there are many physical benefits, as well. Here are some ways riders keep themselves healthy, as reported by the Good Works Wellness Research group.

- Healthier, stronger knees and thighs.
- Improved core strength.
- Increased insulin sensitivity.
- Increase in calories burned.

- Improved neck strength.
- Better mental outlook.

Operating a bike safely requires the collaboration of numerous muscle groups and is considered a low-impact exercise.

## CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have ever seen a large group of motorcycles traveling the roadways, they are likely traveling for charity. Riders typically follow a dedicated route to visit local outlets and purchase memorabilia documenting the event or participating in donation-fueled scrambles. Many times, these events require a fee for inclusion that goes to a charity.

## ALL ABOUT RESPECT

Becoming an insider into the motorcycle world requires adamant respect

for other riders. Motorcyclists are dedicated to protecting their own and ensuring that safety is the most significant priority.

Operators follow a set of unwritten rules that hold their peers responsible for safe driving techniques and respecting one another.

## RIDES ARE ADVENTUROUS

There are parts of the country that are inaccessible without the flexibility of a motorcycle. Passenger vehicles are unable to navigate through some adventurous trails and windy roadways safely.

However, with a two-wheeled machine, riders are invited to travel the unbeaten path and share once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

# A Career in Motorcycles

Being a motorcycle enthusiast offers a unique perspective of American roadways. Riders can navigate highways inaccessible by larger vehicles and hit the open road to deeply appreciate nature. Did you know that your passion for riding can also turn into a lucrative career?

With the proper knowledge and excitement about bikes, you can become an advocate for advancing motorcycle culture and make a comfortable living. If you're on the fence about ditching your nine-to-five, consider these job opportunities that can spark your creativity and provide an inspiring workplace.

## DETAILER

Motorcyclists are adamant that their machines are kept in optimal shape regarding both mechanically and aesthetically. You can make a splash in your local area by offering cleaning services for the community's bikers.

The gig doesn't require any formal education or training and can be built on word-of-mouth referrals.

As you get started, try to visit events where you know riders gather. Bring along



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business cards and new customer promotions to entice them with trying your services. Before long, you may find yourself overwhelmed with business, especially as warm weather enters your region.

## MOTORCYCLE GUIDE

Get paid to do what you love and travel the country by

becoming a motorcycle tour guide. Experts will show riders with various traveling skills around local attractions or take them on long-distance journeys throughout the nation. If you plan to start your own guide operation, make sure to speak with local authorities about becoming properly insured and licensed to practice.

## WRITER

Do you have a passion for learning about the latest and greatest in motorcycle technology and culture? There is a broad audience across the world with the same interest but who may lack a way with words.

Gain their attention by creating a website or joining an established page that covers

everything on two wheels. Freelance writing is a great way to earn money for your interests and provides incredible flexibility for workers.

As a motorcycle journalist, not only will you get to write about what you love, but you can expect to build relationships with other bike enthusiasts and open the door for exciting opportunities.

# Destinations for a Bucket List

You didn't buy a motorcycle to let it rest in your driveway while you vacation in a larger vehicle. Sure, the challenges of traveling on a bike can be a struggle, as you lack the space to pack belongings and may face unexpected weather events.

However, traveling the country on two wheels gives riders an unprecedented perspective and offers unique adventures. With the right strategy, you can bring your necessities while you visit different country.

Before committing to a long-distance vacation, consider equipping your bike with more storage options. Some choose to purchase sizable saddlebags to pack their belongings or pull a trailer with significant space. Another idea is to store your bike in a toy trailer and travel in a suitable hauling vehicle. As you reach destinations, park the car or truck and check out some of these must-see motorcycle destinations.

## **THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY**

The 1,700-mile, all-paved highway is one of the most visited motorcycle destinations in the country. Riders travel along with breathtaking views of the



Capitol Reef National Park from Scenic Byway 12 in Utah

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Pacific Ocean, navigate through redwood forests and take a break at numerous restaurants, shops or beaches. While the road is available from public transportation, the real experience comes with a full guided tour.

## **THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY**

The United States National

Park Service deems the Natchez Trace Parkway a 444-mile recreational road and scenic drive through three states. The roadway follows the historic path once used by Native Americans, European settlers and soldiers through the country's history.

The tour offers Ranger-led programs, which include

horseback riding, fishing and camping sites. Motorcyclists who make the trip can view amazing Civil War sights, dine at great Southern restaurants and take in the sights of a ghost town, Rocky Springs, Mississippi.

## **UTAH'S SCENIC BYWAY 12**

Travel across the famous

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's backbone while navigating 123 miles of varied altitude and terrains. Riders navigate through numerous landscapes like forest, mountains and deserts throughout the adventure. The roadway is known for its intense curves that make for an exciting ride and provide incredible views.