

Riding a moped is great fun but unlike car drivers with their protective belts, airbags and safety cages, two wheeler riders are vulnerable if they are involved in an accident.

Even a low speed fall can result in serious injury. Think of the road surface as heavy duty sandpaper and then consider the effect on an unprotected elbow or kneecap of hitting it at 30 mph.

Many serious rider injuries are avoidable simply by wearing protective clothing that provides a strong barrier between you and the road surface. It doesn't have to be expensive and you don't have to wear leather, but you should wear something appropriate and wear it every time you ride.

Whatever riding gear you are buying, always check the label for the CE mark: this shows that the garment meets the latest European safety standards. Good motorcycle dealers will have a range of clothing to choose from.

Helmet

Check that your helmet carries BSI kite mark BS 6658 or European standard ECE 22-05. If it doesn't, don't wear it.

Full-face helmets fitted with a hinged visor are best because they protect the face and head and offer protection against the weather. If you choose an open face helmet, remember that it will leave the chin and face exposed.

Remember – your head is priceless so buy the best helmet you can afford and never buy a helmet second hand – it might look fine but could easily be damaged internally.

Avoid dark colours. The brighter the colour of the helmet the easier it is for other road users to see you.

Always fasten your helmet when you ride.

Gloves

Don't be tempted to ride without strong gloves. Gloves provide protection for your hands, which are often the first part of the body to hit the road surface in an accident. They also keep hands warm, protected and dry to enable you to operate the controls safely.

Ideally, buy proper, leather, motorcycling gloves, but if you do not have these, wear the heaviest duty pair you can find.

Boots

Your feet are vulnerable, so wear the strongest footwear you can find. Avoid fashion footwear and ideally pick boots that give good protection at the ankles. Purpose made motorcycle boots are the best of all as they are designed for the job.

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Clothing

Riding in a t-shirt and shorts is the surest way of ending up in casualty with serious injuries if you fall off – but wearing the right clothes for the job can mean the difference between a few bumps and bruises and a skin graft.

The clothes you wear should protect you from abrasion – sliding along the road – and impact.

You don't have to wear leather but do look for clothing reinforced with Kevlar™ or Cordura™ armour, especially around the knees, ankles, elbows, shoulders, hips and back. You can buy reinforced jackets, biking jeans and cargo trousers that are far more protective than ordinary ones and look good too.

At the very least, wear a heavy coat or jacket and tough trousers like jeans.

Spend time looking for your clothing. You can be safe and still look good as there is a huge range of stylish stuff out there for both men and women - safe gear doesn't have to look dull! Take time to find the clothing that suits you and make sure you are happy with the comfort, fit and how you look.

WHENEVER YOU RIDE:

WEAR BRIGHT, PROTECTIVE CLOTHING
DO UP YOUR HELMET
USE DAYTIME HEADLIGHTS
RIDE OUT FROM THE KERB