

Track Day 101

Presented By:



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So, you want to go to the track? If you're reading this, then you have expressed at least a mild interest in unlocking the true potential of your motorcycle.

Why?

Race tracks are not only for people interested in becoming the next *Valentino Rossi*. Track days are for anyone and everyone. You can take **ANY** bike to the track. Yes, people even take Goldwings to the track.

The track is a place where you can ride without many of the common dangers found on public roads. There are no intersections - everyone is going in the same direction. There are no mailboxes, medians, telephone poles, or other stationary objects. There are no vehicles recklessly changing lanes, or any mountain dropoffs. Best of all, there are no speed limits.

This is the place to discover the true potential of your bike. It is said that **one day** on the track gives the experience equivalent of **one year** on the street. If you talk to anyone who has been to the track, they will likely tell you this is true.

You will discover that your machine is capable of turning much faster, leaning much further, and stopping much sooner than you previously thought. These skills are invaluable if you do happen to get into a sticky situation on the street. If you need to get out of dodge in a hurry, you will have the confidence to safely handle the situation.

Every track has an ambulance on site, and nearly every track can call in a helicopter in a timely manner, if needed. You don't have to wait around for a 911 dispatch or hope that the ambulance can make it through traffic quickly. If you get hurt, help is available immediately.

How?

Most tracks do not offer track days directly. Usually, you will be going through a track day organization.

These guys pay a hefty sum to rent out the entire track for the day, and then subsidize the cost by charging riders to head out and play.

There are many organizations out there, but here are a select few that offer days at tracks in the northeastern area:



Absolute Cycle Experience

www.absolutecycle.com/raceshop/

California Superbike School

www.superbikeschool.com

Evolve GT

www.evolvegt.com/

Motorcycle Xcitement

www.motorcyclexcitement.com/

N2 Track Days

www.n2td.org

Sportbike Track Time

www.sportbiketracktime.com

Team Pro-Motion

www.teampromotion.com

Yamaha Champions Riding School

www.ridelikeachampion.com

The following are general guidelines but keep in mind that each school may have slightly different rules so please be sure to contact them in order to see how they prefer to do things.

Where?

There are countless race tracks in the US, but here are a few popular ones relatively local to the Philadelphia area:

New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP)

www.njmp.com

8000 Dividing Creek Road, Millville, NJ 08332

[Approx. 1 hour / 50 miles from Philadelphia]



Pocono Raceway

www.poconoraceway.com

1234 Long Pond Rd, Long Pond, PA 18334

[Approx. 1.5 hours / 100 miles from Philadelphia]

Summit Point Motorsports Park

www.summitpoint-raceway.com

201 Motorsports Park Cir, Summit Point, WV 25446

[Approx. 3 hours / 190 miles from Philadelphia]

New York Safety Track (NYST)

www.nyst.com

396 Zimmerman Rd, Jefferson, NY 12093

[Approx. 4 hours / 250 miles from Philadelphia]

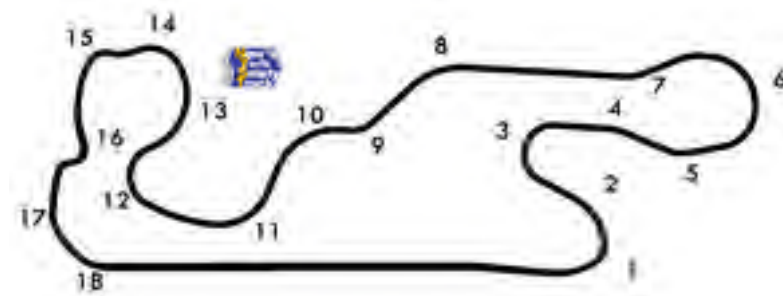
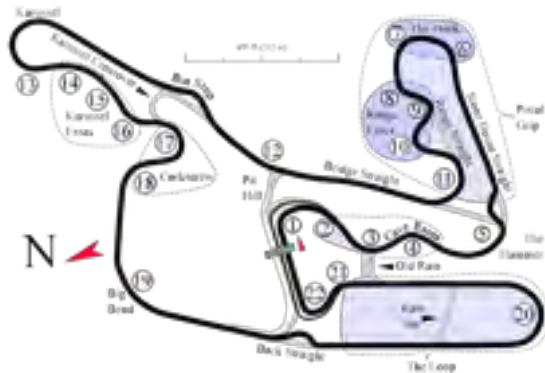


Virginia International Raceway (VIR)

www.virnow.com

1245 Pine Tree Road, Alton, VA 24520

[Approx. 6 hours / 390 miles from Philadelphia]



Okay, You've Piqued My Interest. What's Next?

First, you will need to get your bike track-ready. Make sure all of your maintenance is up-to-date. Specific requirements vary by organization, but here are some general things you will want to do:

- ❑ Change your oil and brake fluid, and/or bleed your brakes.
- ❑ Ensure your chain is in good condition and properly lubricated.
- ❑ Ensure your sprockets aren't worn out.
- ❑ Ensure your tires are in good condition and have proper tread left (80% is recommended)
- ❑ Check your air pressure. For your first few track days, you will be fine using your regular street tires. However, you will be riding much more aggressively than on the street, so you will typically need to lower your tire pressure for added grip. There will usually be a tire vendor on site - ask them what pressures you should be running. Take advice from other riders with a grain of salt. Everyone rides at a different pace and tire pressures are as controversial as politics.
- ❑ Tape your headlights, taillights, and turn signals. Again, this is **required**.
 - ❑ If you do happen to have an incident, plastic shards will litter the track if your lights aren't taped. Plus, any lights can be distracting to other riders. Blue painter's tape is your best option - it goes on and off easily and doesn't leave any residue.
 - ❑ It's also a good idea to remove the fuses or disconnect the wires for your lights. Not only will this make your bike less distracting, but it will prevent the adhesive on the tape from becoming tacky and sticking to your lights.
- ❑ Change your coolant. This is **required** (after novice level). Antifreeze is extremely slippery and incredibly difficult to remove from the track surface. Contrary to popular belief, coolants such as Engine Ice are **not** track safe. Many organizations will say that they don't require a coolant swap for Novice riders, but please do your fellow riders a favor and use Water Wetter. It's inexpensive and will keep the track day running smoothly if you do happen to have an incident where your coolant leaks.



Transportation to the Track!

Next, you have to find a way to physically get your bike to the track. If you have a truck or a van, great! Toss that puppy in the back and be on your merry way.

If not, don't fret! You can add a tow hitch to your car relatively cheaply (U-Haul will do this for you). After doing that, if you don't want to buy a trailer, U-Haul also rents them for a reasonable rate. Renting a truck or a van is always an option, as well.

Additionally, if you have any friends going to the track, ask them if they can haul your bike with them. Try checking out your local motorcycle forums too - track day riders are usually extremely nice and many would be willing to bring your bike with them, provided they have the space.

It isn't recommended to ride your bike to the track. It's certainly doable, but it will tire you out and if you do have an incident it may leave you without a way to get home. Plus, you won't have a way to haul all of the stuff you'll need to have a comfortable day.



How Does it Work?

Typically, you will get 5-6 sessions per track day. A session consists of approximately 15-20 minutes on the track. It may not sound like a lot, but you will definitely be worn out by the end of the day. Many people don't even participate in every session! Groups (commonly labeled "Novice", "Intermediate", and "Advanced") will rotate in a set order throughout the day. You will have a 1 hour break for lunch at some point. In novice groups, there is typically a classroom session where you will learn some techniques and ask questions to improve your next track session.

Gear

Different organizations have different requirements, but typically you will need the following:

- ✓ **One-piece or Two-piece** suit.
- ✓ **Gauntlet Gloves.** Gloves with a wrist strap (i.e. dual-closure) are highly recommended as they have less of a chance of coming off in the event of an incident.
- ✓ Up-to-date **Full-Face** helmet. Your organization may or may not inspect your helmet, but for your own safety you should wear a helmet that is less than five years old, and ideally SNELL or ECE rated.
- ✓ **Over-the-Ankle Boots.** The rules may allow you to get away with a short boot that simply covers your ankle, but a full boot that covers your shin is ideal.
- ✓ Back protector. Most organizations will require this for the Advanced group, but it's never a bad idea even if you are riding in a different group
- ✓ There are many choice. Please visit us in the Showroom to talk to a gear geek with any specific questions or call us to speak to a gear geek!



(Left To Right: Alpinestars SMX-6 v2 Air Boots, Dainese 4 Stroke Long Gloves, Shoei X-14 Rainey Helmet, Alpinestars Nucleon KR-1 Back Protector, Rev'it Akira Air Jacket, Revit Masaru Leather Pants, Revit Excellerator Undersuit, Alpinestars Motegi v2 1 Piece Suit)

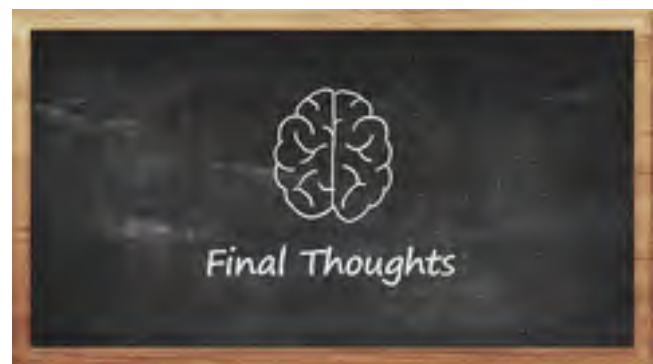
Tips/Tricks

- ✓ **Arrive at the track early.** You will want to be there at least one (ideally two) hours before the rider's meeting. Arriving early allows you to take your time setting up your pit area and relax. Having to rush in the morning can be stressful, and you'll want to be at your best for the day ahead.
- ✓ **Bring a friend.** This can be a family member, significant other, coworker, etc. If you do happen to get injured, they will be able to coordinate with other riders to get your stuff home and alert close ones of your situation. At the very least, let someone know that you will be at the track.
- ✓ **Stay hydrated.** If you don't have to go to the bathroom after every session, you probably aren't hydrated enough. Skip the soda - you want to drink water and/or a low-carb sports drink. It may sound silly, but a lot of veterans also drink Pedialyte for the electrolytes.
- ✓ **No junk food.** You will want as much energy as possible, so stick to light power-foods such as bananas, trail mix, protein bars, and sandwiches.
- ✓ **If you are tired, it's okay to skip a session.** It's also okay to pit in before a session ends if you are getting tired or aren't "feeling it". Don't worry about trying to push yourself simply because you paid for a full day. It's better to be focused than to have an incident because you pushed yourself too hard.
- ✓ **Take it easy for the first couple of laps.** You need to give your tires some time to warm up. Even if you are using tire warmers, you still have to give your suspension some time to get up to temperature. It's not a race - you don't have to go all-out on the first lap.
- ✓ **ASK FOR ADVICE.** This is something that many riders don't take advantage of. Every track day will have control riders - these guys are there to help you ride better. Even if you don't feel that you need it, ask one of them to tow you around and show you the ropes. After your session, ask them what you can improve on. They are nice people and would be more than glad to help you out.



Just do it! You may be nervous about heading to the track, but again, you're there to have fun and improve your riding skills. Leave your ego at home and no one is going to judge you. Track riders are some of the nicest people on the planet. Be sure to socialize!

HAVE FUN. Don't worry about your lap times or feeling that you are "too slow". You will **never** be the fastest rider on the track. Even if you're a racer, there will always be someone equivalent to or faster than you.



TRACK DAY CHECKLIST!

MUST HAVES:

- The key to your bike.** You'd be surprised how many riders forget to bring these!
- Chair.** You'll be tired after your session and will be greatly appreciate having a place to relax.
- Cooler & ice.** You need to keep your **food and drinks cold**, after all.
- Food and Drinks** – Also bring a little extra for new friends who may not have brought any 😊
- Air pressure gauge.**
- Ear plugs.** Track riding is loud. Tinnitus is no joke and it will also help you better concentrate on your riding.
- All Your Gear**

NICE TO HAVES

- Basic tools.** You'd be surprised at how easy it is to patch your bike back together after a minor getoff.
- Zipties.** These are the duct tape of the motorcycle world.
- Spray cleaner and rags.** Your visor will get splattered with bugs after a session or two. It's somewhat important to be able to see where you're going.
- Breathe Right Strips.** These are completely optional, but many seasoned veterans use them to better control their breathing, which can help you relax while on the track.
- A canopy (EZ-Up or similar).** During track season, days can be extremely hot - you will be thankful to be able to hide from the sun. **ALSO**, Something to weigh your canopy down. Some days can be windy and you don't want your shelter to blow away!
- Table(s).** This will give you a place to rest your helmet, gloves, tools, etc.
- Extension cord and power strip.** For instance, this will allow you to charge your various electronics, and as you get faster, you will eventually need this to power tire warmers.
- Gas cans.** Your bike will burn a lot of fuel, and most tracks don't have regular gas on-tap. Top off your bike and bring at least two filled 5 gallon jugs. (on your first track day, it's highly unlikely you'll be burning through more than $\frac{3}{4}$ tank of gas)
- Towel** (if it's really hot that day)