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In the Saddle is an eNewsletter for motorcycle enthusiasts that is produced several times a year.

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Do you make a point of attending bike shows?

- Not usually; I talk bikes with the people I know.
- Sometimes, if there is something I want to see.
- As many as I can, as often as I can!



Women riders celebrate

The International Women Riders Congress and Festival is like no other motorcycling event for women in Canada.

"It's not a rally or a party," says Liz Jansen, Congress coordinator, about the event, which takes place at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville, Ontario, this summer. "It's about leadership and the positive changes we can make in our community and the special skills that motorcycle riders have to do that."

Focus on achievement

The event is the initiative of the Women Riders Council of the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada (MCC) and presented by Honda Canada. The Women Riders Council was established by the MCC Board to focus specifically on the interests of women riders.

Themed "One World, One Ride," it's designed to celebrate the achievements of women riders from across Canada and around the world. It offers something for both novice and experienced riders (including men, says Jansen).

Registration will give participants access to workshops, seminars, demo rides, and touring routes — that's in addition to opening and closing ceremonies, dinner, entertainment, a DVD of photos from the event, and conference room rates for a limited time before and after the event.

"The whole idea is to address three different areas in our lives," says Ms. Jansen, "from being leaders and role models, to learning how to better look after ourselves and our motorcycles, and the role adventure plays in doing what your heart calls you to do."

Participants of all experience levels can take part in skills training and educational seminars to increase rider safety and enjoyment of the sport. They'll also have an opportunity to talk with experts in the field and do plenty of networking.

Fitness training

Among the essential skills that participants will learn are ways to enhance their riding fitness. "I'm a big advocate of being fit for riding — not only physical fitness, but mental fitness too," says Kelly Patterson McGrath, one of the speakers at this year's Congress.

A business trainer and certified Pilates and fitness instructor, Ms. Patterson McGrath also rides a Harley-Davidson Sportster 1200. "Riding a motorcycle takes courage, strength, awareness, and insight," she adds. "These skills are part of personal leadership traits that can help us move forward, drive change within ourselves, and help others along the way."

Build core strength

Patterson McGrath advises an effective way to begin building your core strength for riding is to practise a simple Pilates exercise called The Bird Dog. It strengthens the abdominals, lower back, buttocks, and thighs. Here's how it's done:

- Kneel on the floor on both hands and knees.
- Tighten abdominal muscles (think belly button to spine).
- Keep head and neck in alignment (neutral).
- Keep eyes to the floor.
- Slowly reach your right arm out in front of you.
- Slowly extend your left leg behind.
- Keep hips and shoulders square.
- Do not arch lower back.
- Hold for a count of 8.
- Return to starting position.
- Repeat with other arm and leg.
- Do 5 – 8 repetitions per side.

Keep up your stamina

Ms. Patterson McGrath also recommends that you add these basic stamina- and strength-building exercises to your regimen:

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USEFUL RESOURCES!

blogtalkradio

Sound Tracks
our podcast

► NEW: Port Dover's Friday the 13th

► Getting your bike road ready

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- **Walk briskly for 30 minutes every day.** Walking easily elevates your cardiovascular level and improves breathing.
- **Stretch before, during, and after riding.** Try these quick and simple routines:

Shoulder stretch

- Stand upright with your back straight.
- Clasp your hands behind your back.
- Slowly lift your hands away from your back and up towards the ceiling.
- Hold for between 10 and 30 seconds.

Hamstring stretch

- Stand with the leg to be stretched just in front of the other one.
- Bend the back knee and lean forward from the hips.
- Place your hands on your bent leg's thigh, to balance yourself.
- If you can't feel the stretch, lean further forward or tilt your pelvis forward.
- Hold for 30 seconds.
- Repeat regularly throughout the day.

"When we get our heart rate going, we're also keeping our brain fit," she says. "I often find riding to be mentally exhausting just because you must always stay alert, so being physically fit is going to help you." Some mental fitness tricks she uses are:

- **Practise awareness before riding season begins.** If you drive, practise being aware of what's around you and thinking ahead to avoid potential dangers.
- **Remind yourself to relax when riding.** Be conscious of how tightly you're gripping the handlebars and relax your grip to prevent unnecessary tension in arm and back muscles.
- **Never ride when angry** or feeling a strong emotion. Such situations can impede your ability to focus.

Attitude is as important as mental fitness when it comes to riding. "Women put themselves under a lot of pressure to perform many roles in their lives as mothers, daughters, sisters," says Patterson McGrath. "It's okay to reward yourself by going out there and riding your motorcycle because we deserve that time!"

For more information on pricing or to register for the International Women Riders Congress and Festival taking place August 11 to 15, go to [motorcycling.ca](http://www.motorcycling.ca). Early bird deadline is June 11th. For more information, call Liz Jansen, Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada, at 416-762-7775.

Resources

- International Women Riders Congress and Festival
www.motorcycling.ca

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