

What I have noticed though is that many of these riders have...how can I say this... large frontal protrusions. Watching these same people walk, it is obvious that the extra mass carried in front tends to exaggerate the normal lumbar curve.

Is it possible then that this frontal weight acts like ballast holding the spine and upper body in an upright position when seated on a cruiser? Or are they just victims of popular culture and actually just as uncomfortable as I am on a cruiser?

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Mario, see doc flash's reply to this question is in this month's Medical Motorcycling, "Gut Feelings."

Consumer Tips On Batteries

In addition to the technical issues raised in "Batteries 101," (Open Road, November), there are several noteworthy consumer tips that should be shared:

1. Brands and heat: Most batteries of a given technology are a commodity, meaning there is little difference among most brands in general. Thus, you can expect similar performance and a lifetime rating of 3–5 years at constant 77° F in most typical motorcycle applications. Above all else, heat is the enemy of battery longevity, and above 122°, lifetime exponentially drops, so don't store the battery in high heat if you can help it.

2. Odyssey by Enersys: The most notable exception to the "in general" statement above is the "Odyssey" battery series made by Enersys. For many years, we've used these batteries in the rugged uninterruptible power supply systems we manufacture at my company for the military, as Enersys is the only battery the military will accept for mission-critical applications.

Compared to more generic sealed batteries, these Odysseys last 8–12 years at the same 77° constant, are significantly more resistant to shock and vibration, have dramatically better cranking performance at extreme low temperature, and can be ordered with operating temperatures of up to 176°.

In addition, they have a shelf life of about two years, as opposed to a more generic battery's three months—meaning Battery Tenders are no longer necessary if you ride with any regularity. My controller at work has had the same Enersys battery in his Harley Softail since 1998, and it's still performing perfectly. I use them in all of my motorcycles, and recommend them highly.

At work, we get them for about \$65

wholesale, as we buy them in bulk for the equipment we manufacture. Online prices are not much higher. In dealerships, they can run as high as \$225.

3. Physical size: A vast majority of 12-V sealed, maintenance-free batteries in a given Ah range are a standard physical size. This takes some of the mystery out of cross-brand shopping. Of course, one should double check this before buying, but chances are Brand X's 12 V 15-20 Ah battery is almost identical in size to Brand Y's battery of the same rating.

4. Pricing: There is arguably no purchase where motorcyclists are ripped off more than batteries. A generic sealed, maintenance-free battery for a modern Harley or BMW costs \$18–30 wholesale. At a dealership, you will pay \$90–125 for the exact same battery. A smart shopper should check a local industrial supply houses, and likely to find the battery required for under one-third of what a dealership charges for the identical product.

—Moshe K. Levy

MCN contributor Moshe K. Levy has spent the last 10 years as a manager at Nova Electric which designs and manufactures custom uninterruptible power supplies for military applications.—Ed.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685) 1. Publication title: **Motorcycle Consumer News**. 2. Publication number: **1073-9408**. 3. Filing date: **9/24/07**. 4. Issue frequency: **Monthly**. 5. Number of issues published annually: **12**. 6. Annual subscription price: **\$44.00**. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: **3 Burroughs, Irvine, Orange County, CA, 92618-2804**. Contact person: **Penny Stewart**. Telephone (949) **855-8822**. 8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: **BowTie, Inc., 2401 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90057**. 9. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor: **Publisher: Norman Ridker, BowTie, Inc., 2401 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90057**. **Editor: David Searle, 3 Burroughs, Irvine, Orange County, CA, 92618-2804**. **Managing Editor: N/A**. 10. Owner: **BowTie, Inc., 2401 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90057**. 11. Known bondholders, mortgages, and other securities holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: **none**. 12. N/A. 13. Publication title: **Motorcycle Consumer News**. 14. Issue date for circulation data below: **October 2006–September 2007**. 15. Extent and nature of circulation: A. Total number of copies: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **48,225**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **46,157**. B. Paid circulation: B1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **46,475**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **45,008**. B2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **0**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **0**. B3. Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other paid distribution outside USPS. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **238**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **267**. B4. Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **0**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **0**. C. Total paid distribution: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **46,713**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **45,275**. D. Free or nominal rate distribution. 1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **246**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **266**. 2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on Form 3541. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **0**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **0**. 3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **0**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **0**. 4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **612**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **190**. E. Total free or nominal rate distribution. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **858**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **456**. F. Total distribution. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **47,571**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **45,731**. G. Copies not distributed. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **654**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **426**. H. Total. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **48,255**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **46,157**. I. Percent paid. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: **99.20%**. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: **99.00%**. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. **Dave Searle**, Editor