

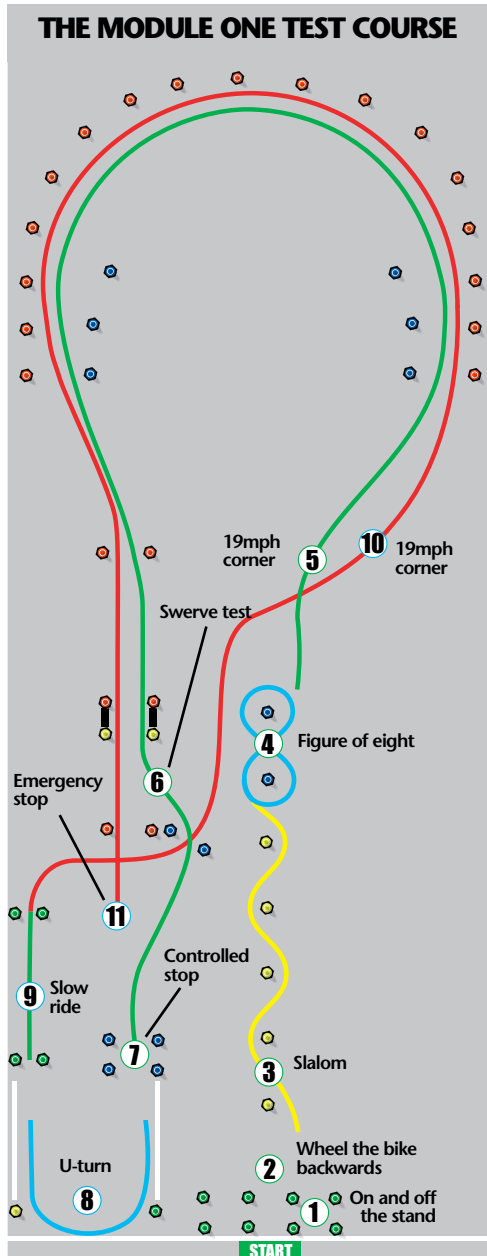


CHAPTER
FOUR



MODULE 1 TEST DAY

How to breeze the off-road section of the bike test



You have, of course, already made sure your chosen riding school has the facilities to practice the entire Mod 1 test (left), particularly the hazard avoidance test and emergency stop. A school playground is not good enough!

Your enquiries (see Chapter 1) have also ensured that you've found an instructor who can explain and fully demonstrate what countersteering is. You're going to need it.

What the test is about

Introduced in April 2009, Mod 1 is designed to let the examiner see if he trusts you on public roads! It can run as a left or right-handed circuit. By looking at your bike control away from the road, the examiner can see if you're up to it. If not, you can't proceed to Mod 2.

The first moments

As soon as you're within sight of the examiner you must perform all appropriate observations. So act as if you're on the road before, during and after each manoeuvre. That means EVERY time you pull away, for whatever exercise. OK? Just so we're not going to keep repeating the bleedin' obvious!

The examiner will ask you to ride the bike into the enclosed area and stop just inside the gates. Once they're closed, he'll invite you to ride the bike around into one of the parking bays (green cones at the bottom of the diagram opposite) ready for the test to officially start. By this point, regardless of your riding background, your legs will be turning to jelly. It's really important to take your time and allow yourself to settle.

The best thing to do is ride all the way up the test pad, allow yourself time to see which side the speed trap has been set up, and then get a good view of where the cones are and how much room you have. Remember, the test hasn't officially started yet, so you can ride all

ON AND OFF THE STAND
Your first task. To get the bike on its stand, push down with your leg rather than pull up with your arm



the way to the top of the pad, test your brakes, use your gears, settle your nerves. When you're ready, park up in your preferred bay.

All this may take you 20-60 seconds. That's fine. Your test has a 30 minute window allocated to it, and it'll all be over in less than 10 minutes!

straight back, stop, do a semi circle, the back it in. Either will do as long as you don't drop it! You'll finish facing out, ready for the slalom test.

1. Centre stand

Once you're parked, the test will begin. The examiner will explain each element individually once you've put the bike on its stand. Officially this is the first exercise but if you can't do that you shouldn't be here!

2. Pushing U-turn

The first real element is the manual handling exercise: walking the bike in a semi circle from one bay to the other. It's simple enough; you can keep your side stand down if you want, but don't let it scrape. Alternatively, push the bike

The Theory test

You'll have to complete a theory test (call the DSA on 0300 200 1122) at least three days before you take the practical test. It's not a huge problem; if you can't pass it you shouldn't be driving a car, let alone a bike. There's plenty of revision material at direct.gov.uk/en/motoring, or geton.co.uk.

The theory test is a first step towards road safety, and your instructor should continue to test and instruct you even after you've completed it successfully. When you tackle your test the examiner will look closely at how you interpret the Highway Code through your riding decisions and progress.

This is the technique the examiner wants to see: one hand on the bars, one on the seat



It may be the only time you ever need to do this



3. Slalom

First of all, remember to observe both sides before pulling away.

The slalom (see over the page) consists of five yellow cones which you have to weave through. It's a test of balance and clutch control.

Try not to go too slowly. You should have practiced this before and will therefore know whether you prefer to approach the cones from the left or right. It may sound odd, but to many it does make a difference!

A really confident rider will flop the bike from side to side, countersteering lazily and pivoting at the hips. Done well it looks like dancing.

3. Figure of eight

You have to do the figure of eight (page ??) twice without stopping. The examiner will signal when

he's seen enough so don't bother counting! Make sure you use the space available to you; don't be tempted to turn too tight.

“ I woke up that day feeling strangely calm. A lot of press focus is put on the 'high speed' parts of the test but, at 31mph, they are actually very easy. Some good higher speed practice was key to giving me the confidence here. I only needed one run, and it was well above the required minimum speed. Overall it was much easier than I'd expected. It was wet that day too! The examiner was friendly and un-intimidating, making the process almost pleasant.

Gary Mason



The slalom is the first reason why you need to learn countersteering. If you don't, you won't be able to flip the bike over quickly



SLALOM TEST

If you're confident with the bike this test will hold no horrors for you. Just get in a rhythm. You can also do it much more slowly with less lean by keeping the bike upright and slipping the clutch





FIGURE OF EIGHT
There's plenty of room and time to get this right. Just breathe and compose yourself before rushing into it. And look where you're going!



The 19mph corner in the circuit ride is easy to do, even in the wet

5. 19mph circuit ride

The examiner tells you what to expect and away you go.

During the circuit ride you'll be expected to do a minimum of 30km/h, which is how they arrive at the 19mph figure. As there is no speed measuring equipment on the curve you don't need to worry about whether you're bang on 19mph; just concentrate on not hitting any cones and exiting properly to get the drive you need to hit the minimum speed of 50km/h (31mph) for the hazard avoidance swerve test.

6/7. Swerve test/stop

You need to hit at least 31mph on the approach to the swerve box. On a low-powered 125 this takes a bit of effort. On a bigger bike it's fine. All the same, it's best to select your gear on the

approach to the top bend, and then leave the gear lever alone. Trying to change gear just as you approach the speed measuring equipment tends to lose you speed.

The swerve itself has attracted a lot of controversy since it was introduced in April 2009, with some riders crashing and even hurting themselves, especially in the early days. Our view is that they were poorly prepared by their instructors. The swerve absolutely isn't a problem as long as you've been taught well and had plenty of practice. We've had clients doing it on our 1000cc Yamaha R1. Sean has even discovered you can do it sidesaddle.

The trick is not to look at the cones as you approach. Just ride plum down the middle and then countersteer positively through the hazard (see over the page), making sure you stop with your front wheel inside the four blue cones.



For the swerve you ride down the approach channel, flick left after the yellow cone, jink round the blue cone 'hazard', then cut back in and stop. It's actually good fun



SWERVE TEST

You can see the approach channel in the top pics. If you can countersteer, and you're not afraid of the front brake, you can do the test even in the wet



I expected a simple test around some cones. It wasn't until I started that I realised how much more was involved. Over the four days before I was taught all elements of CBT in classroom, track and road sessions. I practised all the elements on Circuit Based Training's Mod 1 course, and did the braking and swerve test at higher speeds than required. The day before I watched another test at the centre. I was nervous before my test; a simple mistake meant I'd have to come back another day. But I relaxed as soon as I started the bike, took my time and passed. Looking back, the way I was taught made the difference.

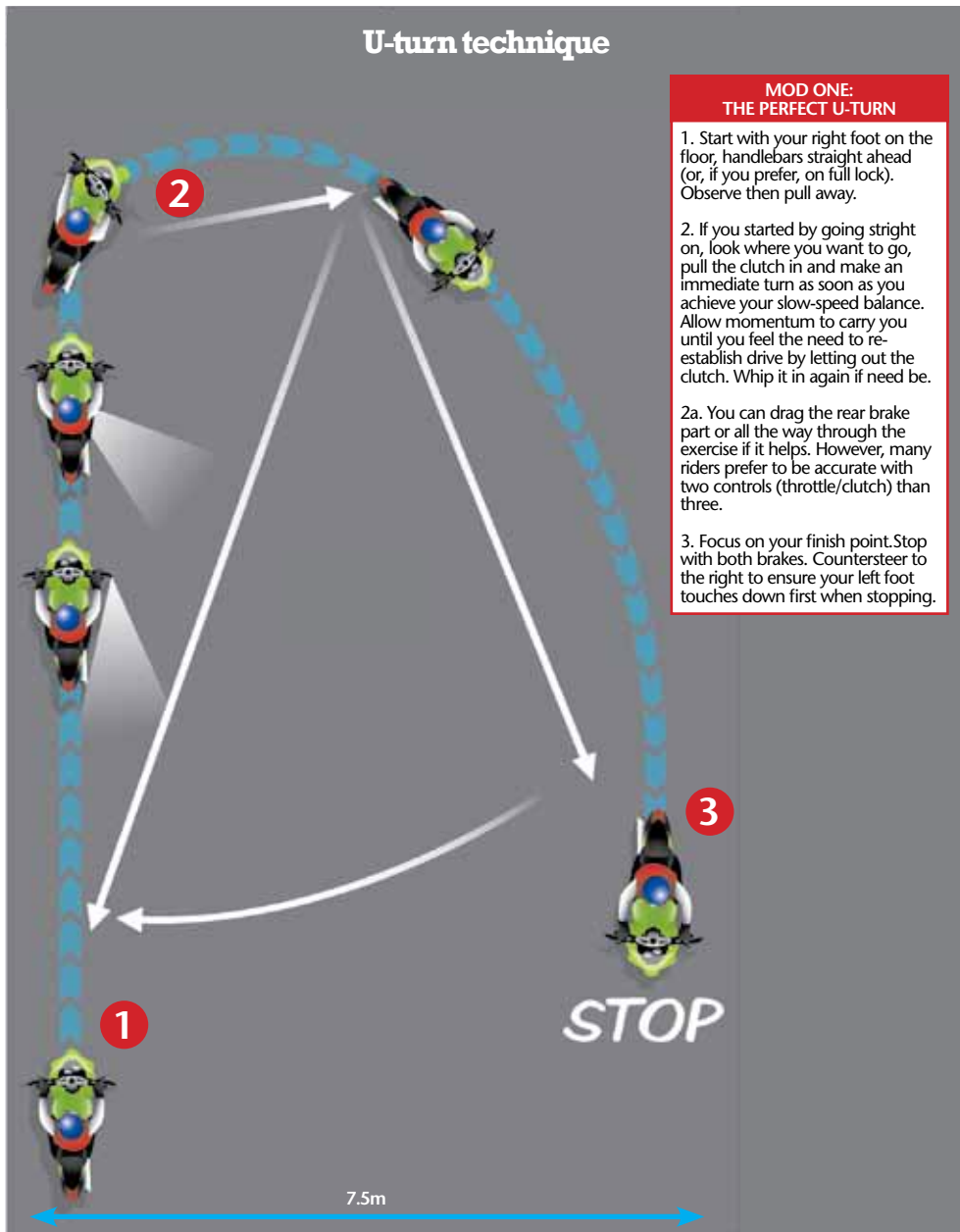
Jonathan Walker



Before I booked my DAS, riding a motorbike seemed impossible. Yet the trainers were patient and easygoing, and to ride at Mallory Park and learn all the manoeuvres there was brilliant. Many people think Mod 1 is very difficult. At the time I thought the same but, once I'd gained the confidence, it wasn't a problem. If you stay focused and calm, and concentrate, you should get through it no problems at all. Don't rush – you have ample time. If you feel stressed, ask the examiner for a minute to pull yourself together. They do understand. I did this, and they were great. When I passed it was overwhelming.

Hayley Lyness





8. U-turn

With a 7.5 metre wide strip, there's masses of room to get this done perfectly. You can turn while moving slowly or perform the U-turn from a stationary position with the bars on full lock. Make sure you perform an adequate lifesaver before you commit to either turn.

9. Slow ride

Don't look at the examiner at any point. Just ride as slowly as you can and keep looking as far ahead as possible. You'll know when you've finished. All you're trying to show is slow-speed control using throttle, clutch and, if needed, a drag of rear brake in first gear.





It's a nice feeling when it's over



A good emergency stop always comes with a clatter of chain and suspension, followed by paddling feet

10/11. Circuit ride/stop

This is a straight braking test; though technically a separate element, the 19mph circuit ride is just there to get you up to speed. The whole thing is a really simple exercise that shouldn't surprise you.

You'll follow the same route as before and exit with the same drive. Once you're on top of the speed trap the examiner will start to raise his arm. This is your signal to stop. There's very little variation when it comes to this signal. The examiner needs to see you register a speed, but also he wants to give you the maximum possible distance in which to stop. Remember, there is a steel fence surrounding the Tarmac!

To allow for nerves, make sure that you take your time and get used to the feel of the layout, both for this element and the hazard avoidance

swerve test. And remember you're allowed two goes – as long as you haven't knocked over any cones. So use your head and take your time.

For your first attempt, just flow nicely and think of technique rather than speed. You may well inadvertently hit the minimum speed required anyway, and take some pressure off as a bonus. You've got two attempts for this and the swerve test, so you may as well use them.

And suddenly you've finished. Passing is really a matter of good instruction and practice back at your riding school, with the right Tarmac area to replicate the test pad. Once you've got Mod 1 under your belt you'll be in a great position to go for Mod 2, because most riders report that Mod 1 is the hardest part of gaining their licence. You're 80 per cent there!

