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TT2000 PREP

PREPARE YOURSELF

Words: **Michael Green**

Michael Green is busily preparing for his fifth TT2000. What does it take to head into this iconic event feeling confident? Here's how Mike does it.

Are you an endurance rider? Preparation, preparation, and preparation. Oh... and did I mention preparation? If you've been contemplating having a go at this endurance riding idea – great, it's demanding, can be very rewarding, or very disappointing, depending on how well you've prepared for the ride. But the whole adventure is fun, from the preparation through to completion.

Obviously some bikes are more suited to endurance riding than others, but as long as you're comfortable with your mount, it's in excellent mechanical condition, prepared properly for the distance you want to travel, then that ticks the bike box.

I know it sounds obvious but tyres and brake pads need to be able to last the

distance. I can hear you now - I don't need to be told how to suck eggs, but you would be surprised the number of times I have seen riders do a tyre change halfway through an event because they wanted to squeeze the last few kays out of a set. 600km over a week is a lot different to doing 500 or 600km in a day's outing. If you're on the frugal side, do some long rides in succession to use up those tyres before putting on the fresh set for the main event. This will also help you get bike fit so that your mind and body are used to doing long distances day after day.

There are several endurance rides available in New Zealand, some of them over a week and others shorter. The TT2000 is a 48hour event, with the aim of a minimum of 2000km over that

time. You'll also be collecting points at a number of various locations; this year's requirement is 35,000 points from an available 90,000.

With the TT2000 there is a lot of preparation work that can be done before you even leave your computer.

Mike Hyde, the convenor of the TT2000, provides a website www.tt2000.org loaded with all the check points and rally information there. It's just a matter of going through the check points, deciding how you're going to collect the 35,000 points and achieve the 2000km, or more if your aim is higher.

Google maps is a great place to start. Go through and plan your route with the mapping system, giving you times and distances for the route you're planning.



After you've planned your route for the main event, plan a route close to home that covers say 500km of the same type of roads. Make up your own checkpoints and allow at least eight. The reason for this is to compare what you can do and how your time average works out, taking into account the number of check points/stops that you will be making over that distance.

Talking about stops, I've heard different people say "it'll only take a few minutes." That's true, but if you're doing 45 stops over 2000km and it takes two minutes from slowing for the check point, getting off your bike, taking the photo, and getting back to cruising speed, that is 90minutes or 3.1% of your time allowance.

That two-minute window is based on the assumption that you know exactly where the stop is and where you're going to park your bike to take the picture. As you can see, it would be very easy to double, treble or even quadruple (12.5%) that stop time if you are not sure of exactly where you're going. Add in fuel stops and rest stops and you can see that the 'preparation' word comes up again. On the subject of fuel, if you're planning on doing any distances at night, check that fuel is available on your route during those hours. It pays to have a backup fuel plan because I've pulled into a card pump running on fumes, only to find the card pump isn't working!

There is always the option of testing yourself beyond the minimum 2000km/points requirement. As an example, last year's ride had a total of 70 check points which was around 3000km, and all in the South Island. Some riders achieved all the checkpoints and what that amounted to was extensive preparation, knowing what their limits were and knowing what they could achieve safely.

Preparing yourself mentally and physically is just as important as preparing your mount. If you're used

to riding out on a Sunday to a café and a distance of 150km for the day then you need to get some distance under your belt by doing some long haul rides. For example, if you can average 80km/h including all your stops, you're going to be riding for 12.5 hours to achieve 1000km per day. At 75km/h average you're going to be riding for nearly 13.5 hours. It's those couple of minutes here and there that will reduce your average very quickly. Let's assume you're used to doing some quite big days on the bike. The trick to doing them in succession is your mental and physical preparation. At least a day before the ride, stop drinking coffee and alcohol, and stay away from heavy fatty foods. I know Mike Hyde is into pies, pies and more pies... (Not Australian ones though) but even Mike would forego a Jimmies pie during a full-on endurance ride. Water, salads, light sandwiches' little and often, fruit and protein packed snack bars with very little sugar.

The TT2000, by its nature of regular stops means staying hydrated and fed is easy. The micro-breaks are great as you're off the bike, moving around getting blood flowing to a sore butt and exercising muscles that have not been used while riding, but remember time is of the essence and time not riding equals distance not covered.

The Iron Butt Assn. based in America, has some great information and reading on long distance riding, so head for their website and check out some of the tips they have; the information will be invaluable. www.ironbutt.com

If you would like to give endurance riding a go, then the TT2000 is a great place to start. Go on, check it out at www.tt2000.org. You won't be disappointed because even the website is an adventure.

Michael Green is a veteran TT2000 participant, currently preparing for his fifth TT rally. As a balance to the many post-rally 'how it all went' articles over the years we thought riders interested in long-distance events would like an insight into how critical the preparation is for a ride such as this one.

The TT2000 is open now for entries and it all begins with a few hours browsing their website, especially to understand the scale and spread of the various checkpoints. The TT is described as New Zealand's 'Iron Butt Lite' and is not particularly for the faint-hearted social rider. However the rally aims to set a minimum qualifying combo of distance, time and points, which at its minimum is quite achievable for most riders with a bit of determination.

However, as Michael Green, highlights here, the success of completing your self-imposed goals in the TT2000 lies in preparation of your motorcycle, your gear and yourself.

