

# KNOWLEDGE

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## 'THE TRACK IS A CLASSROOM'

IAM RoadSmart is an organisation associated with roads, not track. But as it turns out, racing circuits are great places to hone your road riding skills

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**"A**ny buffoon can go fast in a straight line!" That was the opening line from IAM's Shaun Cronin at the IAM Skills Day at the Croft circuit. And he has a point. It's easy to make progress on straights, it's the corners where most of us have problems with speed.

To help people gain cornering confidence IAM RoadSmart has stepped away from its traditional domain of public roads, and set up a series of Skills Days. These track-based training days are designed to

improve participants' road riding, without having to deal with the dangers of erratic drivers, oil spills, potholes and the rest. The same cornering principles apply on road and track, so in theory you can build up your competence in the safety of a closed circuit, then take the new skills to your favourite roads.

### DEAL WITH IT

Going round corners fast is tricky enough in perfect conditions, but the Skills Day at Croft was a rainy one, which didn't exactly fill me with confidence.

However, the instructors promised that I would learn even more in the wet because the two key principles, accuracy and smoothness, would be even more evident in the wet than on a dry, sunny day. I wasn't quite convinced... The classroom sessions and track riding had a big job on their hands if they were to get me comfortable with the idea of speedy cornering in the wet.

I'll be honest, the first three laps were awful. I was a bag of nerves, and spent most of the



Track days can be like Wacky Races, but here we concentrate on creating a safe learning environment



session worrying about losing grip in the rain. But just as the instructors had promised, as the day progressed I grew in confidence. Using the techniques introduced in the classroom, together with the insights of my track instructor, I saw my track riding gradually becoming smoother and more accurate. From extending my vision and honing my body position to more precise steering, throttle and braking

control, every drill worked to reduce my 'rain anxiety'.

### TIME WELL SPENT?

I didn't think I would ever say this, but the day spent going round in circles in rain was brilliant – one of the most useful bits of riding training I have done. The confidence boost and a set of new skills meant that by the end of the day my riding was much better, even though the weather was worse.



### IAM Skills Days

For further details about IAM Skills Day at venues such as Thruxton, Mallory Park and Croft, visit [www.iamroadsmart.com](http://www.iamroadsmart.com)