

Trike EZ Steer

Submitted by Billy Laue

A factor that most don't consider is that each rake manufacturer's idea of the ideal rake can be different for a very good reason. Its because one manufacturer will have their 4 degree raked tree's fork tube holes drilled on a different plane in relation to the steering stem than another guys 4 degree rake, by that I mean the fork tubes will exit further forward on the top and bottom triple tree plates as it relates to the exit point of the steering stem. This will result in a larger trail number even though the degree of rake is the same. Trail is what ultimately determines handling, not degree of rake and 2-2.5 inches is the sweet spot. For this reason, if a particular rake manufacturer or trike conversion manufacturer recommends you not go over 4 degrees, they are probably correct for their particular rake kit manufacturer, but not necessarily for another manufacturers rake kit. This is one reason for the different results achieved by different trike owners. The other is due to the following factors not being the same for all trikes, owners and riding styles.

In a nutshell, buy a rake from someone who knows rakes and I'm not saying that's just me. Secondly consider these factors:

- 1) If you live in and ride areas with a lot of twisties (more rake).
- 2) Limited upper body strength, small size person or arthritis, etc (more rake)
- 3) Extra-wide, long trike design, i.e., Hannigan, Roadsmith, CSC (more rake)
- 4) IRS / independent rear suspension (more rake)
- 5) Trailing arm IRS suspension (more rake)
- 6) Live in and ride mostly in areas like Texas, Oklahoma, Utah, or Kansas, no curves, lots of wind (less rake)
- 7) Shorter and more narrow style trike, i.e., Motor Trike, Champion (less rake)
- 8) Solid axle trikes (less rake)
- 9) Rake Kit manufacturer's unique design (depends on who's rake you're talking about)
- 10) Your PERSONAL preference, everyone else's opinion be damned (either)

These are general guidelines and not a MUST when deciding. Any degree rake is a huge improvement. Any rake kit, particularly the 6 degree rake should always be torqued to 40lbs, rotated several times then backed off slightly until snug, which is normally around 30-35 ft lbs. The bearing cups, or races, as they are commonly referred to, must also be completely seated in the neck so they don't "get loose" when they do fully seat after the trike is ridden a few miles. Some put the races in the freezer overnight so they tap in easily, assuring a complete seating. A tapered race bearing driver tool is a MUST. Even the \$24 set from Harbor Freight is decent and works just fine, as will a 1 3/4 or 2 inch trailer hitch ball in a pinch!