

Say, just a PS to this: 1) It seems the type of controller purchased below is no longer available, and
2) Oxford HotGrips are a better product as they are fully variable and go hotter, order via Frasers \$120

Are You Hot to Trot and in the Pink (ies)?

Don't know that you'd want to ask about that any-old-where, but hooting along on the Snowy Ride last year over the top of some of Oz's finest alpine scenery, in the cheerful 2 to 6 degree sunny weather, sometimes rain, sometimes snow! it would have been very pleasurable indeed. Yep, it was snowing in November at Thredbo - I had no idea how much this stuff stings your eyes when it is swirling around inside your helmet. Anyway, I resolved to find out if it was practical to fit these heated grip thingies to a Ducati. Good news is - no worries. Well, small ones but easily enough dealt with. And it's a great safety and personal comfort feature we can all do in time for winter.

Now I've got an option to set them on "Warm" or "Hot" just by pressing the button once to get high, next is low, next is off etc and there are little red and green LEDs to show me what its set on. If I'm using them and turn the bike off they default to off next time, which seems sensible. And they seem to do the job well. After the NSWDOC club ride to Patonga in January for fushnchups the NDDOC contingent of 7 got home fairly late and it was night riding at 15 degrees. "Warm" turned out to be very pleasant and "Hot" was too hot, so it should be just right for those alpine adventures - and the Ducati Thunder Rally! The new grips are about 5mm larger diam than standard which feels quite (more?) comfortable, without any concerns about difficulty hanging on in those delicious "extreme moments" one seems to attract with this kind of mount. And it all works like a beauty in action through a thick pair of gloves.

Anyway, there are a few tricks to it but they're well within the grasp of a competent do-it-yourselfer. I



would encourage you to tackle it because it might be the difference between having enough strength in your hands to miss that small furry animal and be able to save your r's when the rest of you is getting a wee bit chilly and your hands are ..%&*\$%.. freezing. Or maybe you know where to buy gloves that work? I've spent a lot of dosh on these over the years and haven't found a really good answer yet. I did see a pair of plug in heated ones at the Sydney bike show for a bit over \$400, maybe they're an answer or maybe they're just a cumbersome gimmick from the land of Milwaukee iron, don't know. But heated grips look like a good, always ready solution to me.

Firstly, there's a few different types to pick from. I didn't want the "element" type which are basically putting a thin resistance wire under your existing hand grips. I figured they would be too flimsy and the temperature would be different left to right no matter what you did (because the aluminium bar on the left would suck out more heat than the plastic throttle grip on the right). I bought a pair of solid



Rivet brand grips which cost \$85 and come complete with a dual level heat controller (an absolute must people with single temperature grips will tell you!). I've seen others that have insulation slots like a spline on the inside but I think they're getting a bit fat for good control of the bike. And there's cheaper stuff off snow-mobiles. There's even a plug-in-and-velcro-them-on-when-you-need-them kind of answer, but they're not stylish enough for a Ducati! Oh, no-one's looking when its that cold? OK check them out if you like then!

When I started the job I still wasn't sure I was going to be able to fit them in a way I was happy about, so I did the "permanent" bit last (putting the grips on the bars). I was worried about getting the electrics on neatly and in a practical way, especially the controller which didn't look like there would be enough space on the bars to mount correctly (and it doesn't need much!). Well I pulled all the bits and pieces

off and considered what could be trimmed or brackets made and finally came up with a nice tidy easy solution so the job went ahead. Without worrying about all of that this is how it was done on my '03 ST4s, and I doubt the differences to any ST or most of the Ducati range are all that significant:

I took the screen fairing off to do something else first but I suspect you could get away without that. However, it might be too hard to really tidy the wiring up unless you do have good access, no big deal to take it off half way if need be. So, starting with the new electrics unplug all the bits from each other and chop the new fuse off - its not sealed well enough to rely on so don't go adding yourself this problem. On the ST there is an accessory fuse (which doesn't tell you but it does the instrument gauges as well!). Pull it out and locate the wire coming off the fuse and join the wire you just cut off to it - I prefer a good old piggy back soldered joint but there are some pretty good gel packed clip on joiners around these days.

Then you need to find a good place to attach the earth wire to (maybe this makes the fairing come off?). Remember when you're attaching and putting wires around that a mechanic will come along later and they may not quite appreciate how you've got it all "twisted and attached like so". So attach the new wires to things that won't need to come off and use cable ties to keep it all properly in place, well clear of anything that moves, and ensuring nothing is strained by the full movement of the bars etc - when you get to this bit that is.

Next mount the two position controller. It is designed to clamp directly on the bars and suits a range of bar sizes, starting from a Ducati handlebar size and going up! However, a neat looking functional location for this controller is for it to be clamped on the protruding end of the clutch master cylinder, which is a fair bit smaller. I wrapped about 10 circles of the compressible 3mm black glue backed foam I have used under the tank bag base (off-cuts are very cheap at Clark Rubber). That made it a simple job and it is very tidy plus, when you press the button, the case presses against the handlebar stem so it doesn't slip round and everything stays neatly in its place.

So the next thing is to remove the bar end weights and the grips. There's this old Aussie bush trick perfected hotting up pushbikes and never forgotten: Get a longish relatively small diameter screwdriver that is a bit longer than the grip. Flat or Phillips head is unimportant - I usually use a small flattie about 2mm diam. Anyway, take said object and work it up to the end of the grip between it and the bars. Start spinning the screwdriver handle and the screwdriver will walk circles around the inside of the grip. With the other hand you just keep a steady light pull on the grip. Hey presto it starts to walk off. Of course the screwdriver starts to pull out a bit too but you will soon figure out how to angle the screwdriver a bit to get the grip to walk off faster than the screwdriver comes out.

What you end up with is an undamaged grip - ready for re-use as well if you chicken out! This trick works great in reverse for installation - a bit of care is needed so the screwdriver doesn't walk into the handlebar furniture and scratch it but its a snack really. And no lubricant or glue is required to cause you problems later on.

The Rivet grips hard inner sheath is a neat sliding fit on the left - check that it is and put it down. But they won't go over the right one in standard condition. Here Ducati have a very tidy arrangement to ensure a no-slip neat grip configuration - I don't know if they just bought it in but it is the sort of styling detail they pride themselves on. There is a raised rim around both ends of the grip and raised longitudinal bars along the length of the grip (all of which the screwdriver trick has no worries with!). I trimmed off the outer rim until the new grip just slid over it. Then I bevelled the inside open end of the new grip so it slid up about 2/3 the way over the inner rim - can't go too far as might damage the wiring inside the new grip. This is not quite good enough as a bit of the original white rim still shows but I had run out of time to deal with it. I will probably put a bit of matt black paint on it later but that would be much easier with the new grip off, which ain't happening now! I guess you could also pull the throttle to pieces and file this off if you wanted, I don't think it's a problem but.

As you are fitting the right side you will have to deal with cutting the blank end of the grip out. It is worth considering carefully exactly how you will trim the blank outer ends of the grips so they blend neatly with the balance weights in the ends of the bars and you get the right length. The neatest way is to cut a rough hole out of the end first, about the same diameter as the bar. Then cut it at about a 45 degree angle so you open the hole up to meet what was the corner of the rubber - it will be pointy and only a bit untidy. However, it is thin and easy to trim and you can progressively square it up so it runs close to the weight but doesn't touch it while getting the overall length right. Same again on the left, or just cut it off square as appropriate.

So now you can attach the grips - the most critical thing is to first have a big think about exactly where the wires are going to go as this will be hard to change later. By installing all the wiring first and the

grips last it will become clear in your mind - I was more worried about the wire loop to the front wheel elevation controller (throttle) not getting caught on anything and being gentle enough in motion that a fatigue failure of the wire was unlikely - you will see a big loop in the photo. The six o'clock position seems to be the best compromise so it doesn't get caught on the tank or the fairing through the range of bar movement and it nicely clears the front brake lever at max "tilt". The left side can be much more snug but just check out what moves when you pull the clutch in and miss it.

So, how do you attach them now that you've thought about it? I decided it is more important to me to be sure these grips do not let go in action than to have "ease of replacement" in the criteria. Since they don't have the natural rubber stiction of the standard grips I have glued them on with urethane glue, so there's no changing wire positions later - maintenance is done with a penknife (or worse, this stuff is like flexible superglue!) However, you usually know about the task of replacing grips a long time before you have to bother with it.

When you've glued them on the right one should be a tight fit but the left one may need a bit of tape to hold it in place while it sets, so it doesn't slowly turn round and cause a problem when you find it later! So, tidy the wiring up as mentioned above, test and enjoy...

I hope this delve into the minutiae of detail that goes on in some blokes' sheds has been of some interest.

Kindest regards,
Vince Sunter