

## Training

One of the primary “complaints” and “fears” of the student and new pilot is **the wind!** And usually the fear is caused by the velocity of the wind. At first, anything above dead calm is cause for alarm. After a while, as confidence grows, we get used to anything in the 5 to 10 mph range. Still later, we learn to tolerate up to 15 mph with certain aircraft. Few of us like to fly when wind speed exceeds 20 mph.. Good day to sit and chat!

There is another issue about the wind, however which can have an impact on our training and on the ability of the student pilot to succeed after his Solo. That issue is **wind direction**. As we all know, at our field, the wind is usually between SW and SE. It makes us all great at **left-to-right** takeoffs and **landings** since the field runs SSW to NNE. We get to feel comfortable with that. But, we also know that on some days, the prevailing wind is between NW and NE, and that causes takeoffs and landings to be **right-to-left**. That makes us learn a new trick...a trick that perhaps we did not get to learn prior to our Solo!! And just to add to the fun, there have been a few trees installed down to the right that just love to “grab” airplanes!

So, in this column, we will make a few suggestions for getting used to the right-to-left issue early in your flying career. It could save a plane or two.

Remember that you can learn a lot by simply **watching** how other pilots do what they do. More specifically, if you watch several pilots make right-to-left landings, you will begin to develop a “typical track” in your mind that represents the average of the tracks taken in each of the landings. If you watch long enough, you may also see a couple of tracks that don’t work!! Remember NOT to use them! I prefer to watch than to ask questions, because it is amazing how often people cannot put into words what it is they actually do. Also, my personal preference is to always keep open sky visible between the plane and the trees to the right until you are close enough to be sure you are clear of the trees. You will still have time to make a slight course adjustment before landing.

Also, don’t forget the simulator if you have one or have access to one. Practice right-to-left landings early on. Our favorite trees will not be there, but the routine will help. If you don’t have access to a simulator, you can practice “in your mind” what you would do and how it would feel. Even try holding your Tx, closing your eyes, and going over and over how it should look and how you should move the sticks. This might sound a little “goofy”, but it can help.

Finally, during your training, be sure to let your instructor show you how to do some right-to-left approaches (without landing) even if the wind is light from the south. You can only do this if no one else is flying and if approved by your instructor. Better yet, if you can find the “right” day, let your instructor help you on the right-to-left landings.

And finally, once you have a few right-to-left landings to your credit, find the right day and practice lots of “touch-and-goes”. Soon you will feel just as comfortable from the right as from the left. Hopefully, these thoughts will assist you with this tricky little issue and until next time...

Remember to try something new each time you fly!

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