

Training Tips

For student Microlight Pilots

Part Three

1. Fit to fly?

Just because you have a current Pilot's Medical Declaration or Medical Certificate doesn't mean that you are always fit to fly. Flying well and safely needs huge amounts of concentration. You will feel drained at the end of your lesson so it's obvious you must be fit enough at the beginning. Read up on Human Factors at an early stage (See the first section of the Ground subjects in the syllabus) and run yourself through the IMSAFE acronym before your lesson. (Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol, Fatigue, Eating)

2. Airsickness

If you are prone to motion sickness in a car or boat, it is likely that you will experience airsickness at first when flying. Don't worry, as it is fairly common, can be controlled, and will normally reduce as you gain experience. Any medication you take must not cause drowsiness. Speak to a Pharmacist to obtain the right product and inform your instructor of your condition.

3. Structure of a flying lesson

Each flying lesson consists of three parts;

- A pre-flight briefing during which the instructor will explain the aim of the lesson, check you understand the technical aspects and explain how the controls of the aircraft are used to achieve the manoeuvre. Also, any Airmanship issues or new checklists that are needed. This takes around 20 mins.
- The Flight. This also normally has three parts. A demonstration by the instructor with you following through on the controls. This allows you to feel how the controls are co-ordinated and the associated movements and pressures. Second, a period of "assisted practice" during which you take control and repeat the manoeuvre with only verbal guidance from the instructor. Finally, a longer period of "student practice" during which you practice on your own until confident, with only guidance on errors from the instructor. The flight part of the lesson usually takes around an hour.

- A post-flight debrief during which the instructor will discuss with you “how it went”, maybe over a cup of tea. The instructor will give critique on the exercise flown and guidance for what will happen on the next flight. About 10 mins for this bit.

4. Be well prepared for lessons.

For flying lessons, you cannot just walk onto the airfield and “switch on” your flying head. All good pilots start their preparation well before that. You will learn to read the weather, starting days in advance, to judge if it will be suitable, and how to check if any airspace restrictions apply. As a student, you will need to read up on the exercise to be flown including any supporting technical information so that you are prepared for the briefing by the instructor. Then, before you go home, make sure you know what the next lesson will be so you can prepare again.

5. Arrive in good time for lessons.

Give yourself time to wind down after your journey. Check in with your instructor. After the first couple of lessons, you may be tasked with checking over and re-fuelling the aeroplane. To save time, you can be doing this while your instructor de-briefs the previous student.