

Learning to Fly

Do I really want to?

Step 1: Your Checklist

- a. Before anything else, take an introductory flight. No matter how much time you have flying in light fixed wing, an ultralight experience is much different. Don't think about buying a plane until after you have determined that this is something you like to do. Learning to fly can be frustrating but it's worth it in the end.
- b. After the introductory flight, think - Do I want to do that again? Do I have the time to learn to fly? Can I afford flying ultralights? If you can answer "yes," then continue on.

Step 2. The Schedule and the Cost

- a. Flight training can be very frustrating, especially interruptions due to weather. Sometimes you will arrive for a lesson only to have it canceled by winds or other problems. Plan on some scheduled flights to be canceled.
- b. Your ability to pay for the training can affect how long it takes, and how much it costs, to complete flight training. You should fly as often as possible once training has begun. Waiting too long between flights will increase the time required to finish because you will have to re-learn much of the previous lesson. You should start with at least \$500.00 set aside for the purpose of ultralight flight training.

Step 3. Training:

There are many good books explaining flight maneuvers you will be performing, and the aerodynamics involved in flight. The instructor will explain each maneuver prior to execution, but being already familiar with the task will certainly speed the process of learning. Remember, you are the one who will be ultimately responsible as a pilot. This is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly. Ask the instructor for recommendations of flight instruction books and check your local library for books they may have.

Prior to the flight, you will be briefed on the maneuvers to be accomplished. If anything is unclear, or you don't understand, ASK NOW... Communication in an open air ultralight, with the wind and engine noise can be difficult. Prior to the flight is the time to clarify anything that is unclear. After the flight, your performance will be critiqued, the good and the bad points will be discussed. The instructor will recommend areas of study prior to the next flight. Make sure you note these areas, and look at them until they are clear in your mind prior to arriving for the next flight. The instructor is not a mind-reader, only you know if there is something you don't quite understand. Ask!!!!

Also, areas not related to the actual control of the aircraft such as weather requirements and how to get a weather briefing, controlled airspace in your area, and other ground school subjects will be covered.

Finally, make double sure you are prepared for a flight period. Stress induced by problems at home, illness and taking any kind of medication are just a couple of reasons you should not be flying at that time. Your instructor will understand if you cancel a flight due to any personal reasons, and will himself cancel the flight if he learns of any problems which would affect the flight, safety or your ability to learn.

Step 4: Completion of training.

As you approach the completion of your training, you will probably be scheduled for a flight with a different instructor. The main purpose of this is as much for your benefit of a different critique of your performance as it is for your instructor to check the effectiveness of his training. You are now getting close to completion. If there is no aircraft available for solo, the instructor will make one flight a "supervised solo". This is a flight where the instructor, while present on the aircraft, will provide no input to the conduct of the flight after the pre-flight briefing. You will be responsible for all aspects of the flight, obtaining weather, pre-flight, taxi and takeoff, conducting the flight as briefed, landing and post-flight without help. The instructor will only take control if any safety concerns become apparent.

Step 5: Flying your own aircraft.

If by the completion of your training, you already have an ultralight of your own, your instructor will go over a recommended flight scenario for your first flight. If it is a single seat ultralight, he will explain the differences you will encounter, especially what you will feel on take-off, in-flight control response and landing. If there is a period of time between completion of training and you getting your aircraft, it is highly recommended that you schedule a short re-familiarization flight with your instructor just prior to you attempting your first flight in your aircraft.

Step 6: The Next 50 Hours

At this point, you are a pilot. With the ability to fly an aircraft safely, and to make good, safe decisions. In the next 50 hours you will develop the habits and style that will likely continue for the rest of your flying days. It's this critical time that you will become a safe competent pilot, or a safety hazard in the air. This transition is entirely up to you. Make the most of what you learned and build on it. You will enjoy many hours of the pure enjoyment of the freedom of flight.