



## ***Successful Landings***

Over the years of flying and teaching people to fly, I have ended up with two ways of more consistently landing a plane with calm winds and crosswind.

I recognize that there are many ways to "approach" the subject, so here are just a few methods that have helped at my flying field.

One of the biggest things I have found is that many people "stop flying" the airplane once it's approaching or over the threshold. There seems to be a tendency that once the plane is over the runway, you want to leave well enough alone and not keep flying the plane towards the center line. The fact is that, as is the case with full-scale planes, you should never stop flying towards the center line. The closer you can get the plane to the center line, the greater the chance that the landing will be successful; your margin of safety is greater than if you let the plane land too far off. You probably don't have an actual center line, so you will have to imagine one.

In addition to the plane flying over the center line, the nose of the plane has to be lined up with the runway (the plane has to be longitudinally lined up), otherwise you are going to have a very hard landing with a lot of side load on the landing gear. I have found that this is the biggest challenge both for me and students. Of course, this is where the rudder comes in.

Here are two ways to deal with putting in the required rudder input. I have personally found that it's too hard to see what the airplane is doing if it's too far from the runway. Maybe it's my eyesight.

The method that has worked best for me and my students is to fly the plane toward the center line but don't worry about lining up the nose until you can **clearly** see the airplane. Usually this will be when the plane is over the threshold or even closer to you in the pilot box. Depending on one's eyesight, you may even have to wait until the plane is almost ready to touchdown before you kick the nose around with the rudder to line up with the runway

Another thing that has worked is really a little bit of a trick, but it seems to work for most people, and that is to actually put in rudder **trim** (actual trim, not the main stick) well before landing. I'll teach folks to put in a decent amount of rudder trim on the down-wind leg of the approach.

One thing that can be useful in this regard is to do a slow flyby over the runway and see how much rudder trim it takes to keep the nose lined up with the runway. Now you will know how many clicks of rudder trim it will take to get to nose lined up with the runway when you are landing, and you can add the trim on the downwind leg.

Of course, this is not an exact science; the wind is going to change as you are landing, but if you can get the nose reasonably lined up you have a better chance of the landing being a success.

The next time you're out flying give it a shot. Just remember the basics: keep flying the airplane towards the center line even after you're over the runway, and get that nose lined up with the runway using rudder.

I know there are other techniques, so send me an email and I will pass it along once we get our blog post set up. Next week I hope!

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Happy landings! and best regards,  
Rich