

IMPROVE YOUR FLYING SKILLS AND MAKE LANDINGS LESS STRESSFUL

By Rex Geivett & Jerry Houser

General

PROCEDURE TURN PATTERN

BY JEFF LASTOFKA

I'D RECOMMEND PRACTICING THE PATTERN SHOWN BELOW (AN OVERHEAD VIEW LOOKING DOWN AT THE RUNWAY) AT LEAST A FEW TIMES ON EACH FLIGHT UNTIL IT BECOMES EASY FOR YOU. AT FIRST IT WON'T BE NEARLY AS EASY AS IT SOUNDS.



THE IDEA IS TO FLY THIS PATTERN SMOOTHLY, AT MEDIUM SPEED AND CONSTANT ALTITUDE. YOU GO STRAIGHT, LEFT TO RIGHT, PARALLEL TO THE RUNWAY, MAKE A 90 DEGREE LEFT TURN, THEN A 270 DEGREE RIGHT TURN AND BACK ALONG THE SAME PATH THE OTHER DIRECTION. AT THE OTHER END YOU GO RIGHT 90, THEN LEFT 270. MAKE THE TURNS SMOOTH, SAME SHALLOW BANK, CONSTANT ALTITUDE, SAME RADIUS... IT'S NOT EASY.

IF THE RUNWAY'S NOT TOO BUSY, YOU CAN MOVE THE PATTERN OVER TO FLY RIGHT DOWN THE RUNWAY. GREAT PRACTICE FOR LANDINGS. ONCE YOU CAN DO THIS PATTERN BOTH WAYS SMOOTHLY YOU'LL FIND IT AMAZINGLY EASY TO LINE UP FOR A LANDING, BECAUSE IT'S JUST A MODIFICATION OF WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING, SO YOU CAN CONCENTRATE ON THE GLIDE ANGLE AND FLARE, BECAUSE YOU'RE ALREADY COMFORTABLE LINING UP.

IF THERE'S A BREEZE, AND YOU WANT TO KEEP THE TURNS THE SAME SIZE, YOU'LL WANT TO USE A FLATTER BANK ON THE UPWIND SIDE OF THE TURN AND A STEEPER BANK ON THE DOWNWIND SIDE. MAKES SENSE, RIGHT? ON THE DOWNWIND SIDE THE WIND IS PUSHING YOU OUT AWAY FROM THE TURN'S CENTER, SO A STEEPER BANK ANGLE WILL WORK AGAINST THAT. THEN YOU WANT TO DO THE OPPOSITE ON THE UPWIND SIDE.

THERE MIGHT BE A NAME FOR THIS PATTERN. DOGBONE? WATERWINGS? I THINK I'D CALL IT PROCEDURE TURN PATTERN. WHATEVER. IT WILL BE A WORKOUT AND IT WILL PAY OFF BIG TIME IN YOUR ABILITY TO MAKE THE AIRPLANE GO IN A SPECIFIC DIRECTION AT A SPECIFIC PLACE, WHICH IS SOMETHING MOST PILOTS DON'T PRACTICE ENOUGH. AND IT'S MORE INTERESTING THAN A SIMPLE OVAL OR RECTANGULAR TRAFFIC PATTERN.