

Power-Set Configuration-Checked Approach-Stabilized Checks-Complete

Here you are, ready to take your good old friend for another ride into the wild blue yonder. You open the hangar doors and there she is, eager to satisfy your desire take to the skies. You have known each other for a long time and you are ultimately familiar with her quirks and how to satisfy them. You take off, take a look at the local area and safely return to the airfield. Working your way down final, you adjust pitch and power while chasing aim point and airspeed. Finally, after crossing the fence, you bring the power back. You hold it off while some excess airspeed slowly bleeds in ground effect. Soon, you are rewarded with a smooth touchdown 1,500 feet down the 4,400 feet runway. Wonderful! Then, every two years, the biannual flight review and the task of having to demonstrate various types of landings approaches. You are held to a standard usually neglected, because available runway length by far exceeds runway requirements. You have become lazy in your approach of flying your aircraft according to the POH.

To get back on track, I suggest an in-depth review of your POH regarding normal, crosswind, soft and short field landings. Jot down the specific configurations and airspeeds. Armed with that knowledge, spend some time in the practice area. Note the required pitch and power settings for level flight at your pattern airspeeds and then establish the recommended configurations and airspeeds for the desired VVI during a simulated final approach. You now have a frame work for your specific aircraft's performance. This desired performance can be consistently duplicated by simply establishing the correct configuration, pitch and power settings. Changes in gross weight and density altitude will require some minor adjustment to the target power settings but in the end, you will have more time to evaluate your approach, to clear,

to process position reports and an overall higher level of situational awareness. Less time is spent chasing parameters.

Google Earth is a great tool to establish some good visual references for short field landings. Look at your home field and use the "ruler" to measure distances between intersecting taxiways or other, easily identifiable ground references. Select a "simulated landing distance" that is reasonable for your airplane. Keep in mind that the data published in you POH was established by Test Pilots with new airplanes under optimal conditions. Trying to duplicate this performance is unrealistic (double it).

Should you feel uncomfortable doing this by yourself, take along a fellow CFI to get some quality practice. This could also be a golden opportunity to participate in the "Wings" program and fulfilling some of the flight requirements towards your proficiency wings.

Another way of freeing up valuable time in the cockpit is to perform required cockpit checks in "Flows". A "Flow" performs all necessary checks for a particular phase of flight by arranging all required items in a logical and efficient manner. Visualize what needs to be done and then arrange the items from "left to right" or "top to bottom" on the panel or any other way that makes sense to you. Follow up with your checklist to confirm everything was accomplished. In this way, the checklist remains a "checklist" and not a "to do" list.

Flows can be used to accomplish checks, briefing and setting up nav aids for instrument approaches, programing your GPS, and even setting up your radios. The important thing to remember is to consistently do it the same way every time. Doing so will build solid habit patterns and reduce the possibility of missing required checks.

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