



Airfreddy's Flying Stories

Stories That *All Pilots* Can Learn From

Story #5: The Day I learned /Crosswind Landings

THE DAY I LEARNED ABOUTCROSSWIND LANDINGS:I am going to tell you this story because you need to get it in your mind that you are not going to really start learning to fly until you have at least a few hundred hours. Things will not get into your subconscious for this long.

Following is a simple but perfect example of this:

I was done with all of my ratings with the exception of my multi engine flight instructor rating. My old roommate and I used to come down to Phoenix on the weekends. I had some friends from New York that were going to Arizona State University. This one time we decided to fly. We were hot shot pilots right? We ended up renting a Turbo 182 RG and went down to Phoenix for the weekend. On Saturday we flew some friends up to the Grand Canyon and Sedona and returned early that afternoon. Later we met two lady friends that we had been meeting with the past few times we were in Phoenix and headed up to Las Vegas for the rest of the weekend.

The trip went fine and we ended back up in Phoenix on Monday morning and then headed back to the bay area in California. After about a three hour flight we finally contacted the airport in Palo Alto where we were landing. There was a strong direct crosswind, probably at about 25 knots. We came in and got to the touchdown point. The wheels got on the ground and the nose of the plane was trying to turn to the left and the left wing was coming up. I thought I had the plane

under control, but it just kept getting worse. My buddy who was a flight instructor was in the right seat. The plane kept going out of control and my buddy finally just gave the control column a little whack turning the wheel to the left. The plane straightened out and that was it. He made some comment to me but I don't remember what it was. If I was in the right seat I would have done the same thing, so what was going on?

Yes it was my brain. My brain was still trying to drive a car. The nose of the plane was going left so my natural instinct was to turn to the right. As a result things were getting worse. My brain had not turned on the light bulb yet. After that it went on but up until that point it didn't. I had about 350 hours at the time and I was flying everyday. This is one of the reasons why I tell people you are really not going to know how to fly until you have 400 to 500 hours as it takes time for your brain to feel at home. This is a perfect example of why you need that many hours. If my buddy hadn't been there, I may have gone off the runway. Yes, I knew better than that. In fact I just passed a flight test to teach people this exact same thing.

Flying is unnatural especially if you have been driving for 10 years. This is funny but when I get a 16 year old student who does not know how to drive yet it is not a problem because their brain picks up how to fly first. I am not sure, but I wouldn't be surprised if they had problems learning to drive after flying.

Now I use the line;" Stop driving the car, you are in a plane ".That is everyone's first reaction and it takes a long time to break that habit, A lot longer than you will think, especially if you don't fly that much after you get your certificate.



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