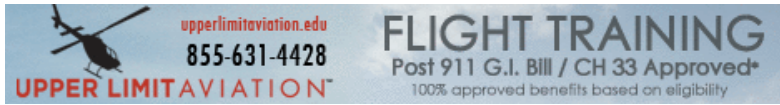


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Our tips on getting the most out of helicopter training

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By Kyle Garrett



Flight training of any sort is a difficult and often expensive undertaking. It is also a collection of some of the most rewarding experiences you will have. For these reasons, it is important that you strive to get the most from your training

experience. As they say, your pilot's license is a license to learn and you should always do what you can to enhance your knowledge. Three easy things you can do early in your training that will improve your training exponentially are fly often, take your written exam early and train to high standards.

Fly Often

The easiest and most fun of the three is to fly often. All it requires is flying as much as you can. That's all there is to it. How will this improve your helicopter flight training? In a number of ways. The primary improvement is that the more you fly the more comfortable you feel. You aren't so stressed and you start to internalize things. Before you know it, preflights that used to take 30 minutes are easily completed in 10 minutes. The secondary improvement, which plays off the first, is that you will require less time to solidify new skills. You will find that you remember more from lesson to lesson and you spend less time trying to "get the feel" for something.

Take the Written Test Early

The second thing you can do that will drastically change your helicopter flight school experience is taking the written exam early. The results are good for 24 calendar months, so you shouldn't run into problems with completing your training in that time. How does this improve your training? Primarily through allowing you to become familiar with the theories behind things you learn in flight training. For example, your ground training will feature a section on cross-country flight planning. After your initial phase of flight training, you will then conduct a number of cross-country flights based on the planning principles you learned in ground school. At its most basic, taking the written early means you will

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already have a basic understanding of everything you need to know for your check-ride. From that point your training will be about perfecting your flying skills.

Train to High Standards

That brings us to the third and likely most difficult thing you can do, training to higher standards. The FAA publishes a practical test standards document for every rating and certificate. These documents specifically detail the standards you must meet in order to pass your practical examination. Essentially, these documents are the outline of the examiner's test. While it is beneficial to know that you can't be held to any higher a standard on the practical examination, or check-ride as it is often called, you shouldn't settle for scraping by. Instead, try to over-achieve. For example, if the test standards call for hitting an altitude within 100 feet, shoot for something like 50 feet. This will allow you a wider margin for error on the day of your exam.

As you can see, these three tips are relatively easy to understand, but they will drastically improve the quality of your training. At the very least, applying them during your training certainly won't hurt you. Fly as often as you can, strive to meet higher standards, and get your written exam done early. That's all it takes to really excel during your time at any helicopter flight school.

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