

Chapter 5: Before You Fly You Must Walk Around

At my flight school, the student starter kit comes in a black nylon bag bursting with books and tools. I felt spoiled and excited to have an organized package ready for me. I spent After spending \$800.00 on the learning materials and ground school lessons, that can be (done at the club or online), I felt spoiled and excited to have an organized package ready for me. I try not to eye the club shirts on the rack, but inevitably one goes will go home with me. Teachers are the ones who usually do all the prep work, so being a student felt fun.

The kneeboard I found inside the embroidered bag fast becomes my best friend. It wraps around your left knee and secures references, writing tools, and a notepad (or tablet computer) for quick access to flight notes, —a vital tool to be carried onto the plane. I also sprung for my own set of headphones, which I personalized with sparkly stickers, that now live in the flight bag, that I personalized with sparkly stickers.

Among the books, is a slender hardcover book; the incredibly important, Pilot's Logbook. Pilots record time, and flight details in their logbook's forms and tables to figure out different kinds of air time.

So, wWith my pristine flight bag tucked under a coffee table, I sat in the lounge, going over scheduling, booking of planes, and planning for my first solo flight in approximately 10 weeks, then Then it's time for the walk around with my very own flight instructor.

I now had great appreciation for what goes into preparing a commercial aircraft for takeoff. You have to

Commented [JG1]: If important to mention embroidery, suggest expanding in first para "...comes in a black nylon bag embroidered with X and bursting with..."

Commented [JG2]: Always left, or do left-handed people wrap it around their right knee? In which case, "around the knee opposite your writing hand" would work well.

Commented [JG3]: Please correct or clarify if the kneeboard was more complex (or simpler) than my additions.

Commented [JG4]: Perhaps add the cost of headphones (to further explain cost of lessons) and if/how they're special for flying?

Commented [JG5]: The bag came "bursting" with books and tools—could you please add one or two more tools it came with beside the kneeboard (that you didn't spring for extra)?

Commented [JG6]: Could you please add and explain a couple of the instructional books, maybe on scheduling or booking planes to tie into para below?

Commented [JG7]: Please accept if you like the explanation or change to suit your view.

- call and check the web for weather conditions;

- prepare a complex flight plan;
- fill out log books;
- calculate weight and balance;
- walk around the plane TWICE doing checks;

And at any point something can cause a delay.

Amelia Amy takes me through the walk around counter-clockwise. First of all, she checks the lights, then every nook and cranny:, raising and lowering, pulling, peering, and prodding. You don't want anything to fall off in the air.

My dad taught me how to use a dipstick add oil to our cars, so I'm prepared for that task for the plane when necessary. The wings are the fuel tanks, so you have to hop on up to the footholds to reach the red cap unless you are tall enough to reach the caps from the ground and I'm not anyway near that tall. You untwist the cap, put in the wooden dowel to double-check the amount in each wing. You have to be quick to read them before the gas evaporates in the wind or heat. Most schools/rentals use clear plastic tubes you put your finger over the top in order to seal the gas sample into the tube but, my flight school has the vintage wooden dowels:

Under each wing is a nipple that you stick a metal prong into, and "milk" gas into a cup with the prong attached to it and examine the blue fuel for any contaminants.(Some students call it a tit.) For example, any water that may have got into the fuel falls to the bottom, as

would anything else, like bits of rust. After you scrutinize the cup, you throw the fuel on the ground; an offering to the runway deities for a safe flight.

Commented [JG8]: These two detailed paragraphs should be moved/combined into Chapter 8 "Fueling Up" for word count and flow.

When we finish the walk-walk-around procedures, she shows me how to walk safely amongst the plane and helicopter traffic. We go back to the briefing room, past the stimulators and other student-instructor pairs in conference. There, sShe uses an adorable ,miniature, metal, yellow miniature plane to give me a lecture on attitude and movement of aircraft.

Finally, with my mind full of instructions, we head back to the plane and into the sky!

Commented [JG9]: Is this what happened? If you flew, please add a paragraph here about the first official flight as a student. If you stayed on the ground, please delete this and correct or explain the clause "and still high on post-flight adrenaline" in next para.

After my first official flying lesson, and still high on post-flight adrenaline, I go back to my -six-year-old hybrid car with the mashed-in dented front passenger door -still high on post-flight adrenaline. The car badly needs bodywork after I had to turn sharply to avoid a pedestrian, who ran in front of me when exiting a downtown parkade. That's almost as scary as a bird flying into a plane. However, } I'm waiting to fix it when until I finish my flight

Commented [JG10]: Okay intro? But change "flying lesson" to "ground school lesson" (or wording to suit) if you delete the "post-flight adrenaline" clause.

training to fix it. —I'm putting off all expenses possible until training is done. (I'm going to get pretty sick of seeing that dent.) W and when I see bargain flights advertised, I will marvel at the novelty of other people flying me places for such little money.)

Commented [JG11]: Cut as extraneous to point (but yes, scary!)

On the drive home from the airfield through congested Lower Mainland traffic, I practice the radio-call signs in the phonetic alphabet on-using the license plates ahead of me; 123 Alpha Zulu DellaDelta, 635 Bravo Lina-Lima Foxtrot, etc., for the day when I need to talk toradio the tower. As I crawl towards yet another bottle-necked bridge, I look forward to heading back to the skies again in a week, and think about the exercises I'll be doing before

my solo, like stalls, spins, and spirals. At first, they sounded scary but now I feel that a squeal of joy begin to bubbles up. I anticipate what it will feel like in the stable training aircraft with my veteran pilot/instructor "safety net" to guide me for this thrill of a safety net.

Wish me luck and hope to see you out there. I already have one friend taking an intro flight—more fun to fly with a co-pilot. She's a chick over 50 too.

However, it's weeks later before I come back for a lesson, as it's wiser for me to get my medical certificate before I start training. At my age, I don't want to be disappointed to find that I'm not able to continue due to a medication, medical problem, or condition.

I don't have to wait too long to see an Aviation-aviation doctor in the city. T and the doctor is brilliant. I do well with all of it the exam, including the lengthy colour blindness test, until it comes to the vision test. It's not surprise to me that I can't make out any letters on the eye chart without my glasses, but the doctor tries to help me; h. He's so kind, so I let him know tell him; I know I'm not Commercial-commercial pilot material without corrective eye surgery; e. Even then I'd still need to wear glasses. I have no intention of going down that path—this is for pure fun.

There's no delay in getting my certificate and this is where I get, which is a huge break:

Some some student pilots have to wait for up to six months to get their certificates when the demand is high, and e. The wait was even longer in the US during and after the government shutdown, where when anything that had to pass through the Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) got stalled. As soon as my certificate arrives in May, I can book a my next lesson.

Wish me luck and hope to see you out there!. Flying is more fun with a co-pilot. I already have one friend taking an intro flight—more fun to fly with a co-pilot. S—she's a chick over 50 too.

Commented [JG12]: Can or will? "Wiser to" above implies seeing the AME early was voluntary not required.

Commented [JG13]: Okay? Unless at this point you have only flown with Amy for your intro flight and not during this experience?