



# RETURN-TO-FLIGHT PROFICIENCY PLAN

## WELCOME BACK TO THE SKIES

The AOPA Air Safety Institute is proud to partner with Hartzell Propeller, Inc., to bring you this guide to help you regain proficiency, which degrades progressively the longer you remain inactive. Expect a different level of performance from where you left off, based on the period of time you have not flown.

This framework is designed to guide you through a clear step-by-step approach to refreshing your knowledge and sharpening skills. We know you're eager to get back into the cockpit, so let's get started!

### STEP 1:

Whether you're a VFR or IFR pilot, ASI recommends starting your journey back to the skies with a review of the following videos arranged by phase of flight from preflight to landing.

- [Seasons of Safety: The Awakening – Coming out of Hibernation](#)
- [Takeoffs and Landings: Normal Takeoff](#)
- [Engine Out: From Trouble to Touchdown](#)
- [Collision Avoidance: See, Sense, Separate](#)
- [Margins of Safety: Avoiding Traffic Pattern Stalls](#)
- [Safety Tip: Greasing the Landing](#)
- [Takeoffs and Landings: Crosswind Landings](#)

### STEP 2:

Simulate a flight from takeoff to landing. How? First, review the pilot's operating handbook sections for normal and emergency procedures for your aircraft. Use these checklists while you "chair fly" the flight using normal procedures taking off, flying the pattern, and landing. Then follow up with emergency procedures. Have a desktop flight training device or flight simulator? Use it to hone your skills further before getting back to flying.

### STEP 3:

If you're a VFR pilot, refresh your knowledge of aircraft systems, aircraft performance, pilot technique, and emergencies using the [Positive Aircraft Control ground discussion](#) in ASI's Focused Flight Review program. If you're an IFR pilot, supplement your review with the [Instrument Proficiency ground discussion](#).

### STEP 4:

At the airport, reacquaint yourself with your airplane and avionics. Do a walkaround and preflight as you normally would. Then, sit in the cockpit and simulate engine start, takeoff, flying the pattern, and landing, using the checklists from engine start to shut down. Touch switches and knobs as if you were actually flying. Next you might simulate flying some basic maneuvers. Don't forget to fly the avionics as well. The best way? Connect your airplane to ground power, so you can practice entering and modifying flight plans. Finally, pay extra attention to the checklist's boldfaced items so you can instantly recall them when needed.

### STEP 5:

Consider that you may be legally "current" but not proficient. Before you take passengers, regain your proficiency and your confidence. Go up with another pilot who can act as PIC or, if it's been an extended period, go up with a qualified and proficient flight instructor. Fly the maneuvers in the [Positive Aircraft Control flight profile](#), which includes essential maneuvers for honing your takeoffs and landings, simulated emergency procedures, stalls, slow flight, steep turns, and more. If you're an IFR pilot, supplement your refresher by reviewing the maneuvers and procedures outlined in the [Instrument Proficiency flight profile](#).

### STEP 6:

Stay sharp, stay proficient. Once you've knocked off the rust, be sure to stay proficient by flying and training regularly—find new ways to expand your skills by earning a new certificate or rating, or by transitioning to a different category or class of aircraft. Further your knowledge—check out the variety of safety topics and material at [www.airsafetyinstitute.org](http://www.airsafetyinstitute.org).

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## HAVEN'T FLOWN IN MORE THAN 12 MONTHS?

The AOPA Air Safety Institute recommends a full flight review with an instructor using any of the flight profiles in ASI's [Focused Flight Review](#) program. If you haven't flown in more than two years, we'd recommend adding AOPA's [Rusty Pilots](#) online course to your proficiency plan for a thorough review of critical knowledge areas.

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