



A PROFICIENCY CHECKLIST

1. Preflight

- Used POH preflight checklist including the following:
- Checked all control hinges and actuation systems
- Checked more than oil level under cowling. Looked for oil leaks, exhaust leaks, cracked exhaust flanges/pipes, baffle condition, motor mount cracks and the firewall condition.
- Removed and stowed control locks
- Checked tiedowns
- Reviewed loading for center-of-gravity considerations
- Visually checked fuel levels
- Used checklist for starting
- Checked all passengers' seat belts and explained how to fasten *and* release them
- Briefed passengers on emergency exit procedures
- Briefed passengers to aid in traffic spotting

2. Taxiing

- Checked clearance around prop before starting wing clearance
- Centerlined taxiway
- Positioned aircraft during run up to allow other aircraft to pass and so as not to blast other aircraft

3. Pre-Takeoff

- Used checklist
- Visually checked controls, left and right sides
- Door locks checked
- Passenger seat belt checked
- Checked for traffic on downwind, base, final
- Runway traffic checked

- Any necessary radio calls were made and traffic confirmed

4. Takeoff

- Power increased smoothly and not jammed in
- Aircraft stayed on centerline regardless of wind
- Nosewheel lifted clear and shallow attitude was held until the aircraft lifted off rather than forcibly rotating off
- P-factor/torque/crosswind corrections were reapplied at liftoff so centerline flight was maintained

5. Climb

- Centerline was held regardless of any crosswind
- Ball was centered
- Climb pitch attitude was stable and appropriate for speed
- Pre-selected Best Rate or Best Angle Speed was held plus/minus three knots (PTS is plus 10, minus 5 knots, which is unacceptable)
- Made proper clearing turns, as needed for traffic avoidance, while leaving the pattern

6. Cruise conditions

- Leveled out pitch first, followed by power second
- Power set plus/minus 25 rpm. Plus/minus zero preferred.
- Continually scanned for traffic in all directions, including behind the wings
- Maintained selected altitude plus/minus 25-50 feet
- Maintained heading within plus/minus 3 degrees
- Turned smoothly and coordinated with ball in center at all times

7. General coordination

- Entered turns smoothly with rudder and aileron together
- Didn't drag either rudder or aileron while in turn
- Didn't extend opposite aileron prior to rudder during roll-out

8. Downwind

- Entered at 45 degrees to downwind or in way appropriate to position, not straight in or in non-standard manner
- Cleared traffic in all directions
- Spaced on traffic ahead
- Held prescribed pattern altitude plus/minus 30-50 feet (PTS says +/- 100 feet, far too approximate)
- Plus/minus zero preferred. Distance from runway consistent with airplane type with ability to reach the runway, if the engine quits, taken into consideration.
- Ground track was parallel to runway regardless of wind

9. Approach

- Began at same distance from runway, altitude, speed every time
- Configuration changed (flaps, etc.) initial power changes in same place
- Pitch attitude held constant with POH approach speed plus/minus 3 knots (PTS is minus 5, plus 10 knots. Again, too approximate.)
- Size of pattern and placement of base leg minimum distance consistent with type of airplane flown
- Glideslope control via flaps, slips or power aimed at specific point, e.g. numbers, etc., on runway

10. Landing

- Touchdown on, or 400 feet past predetermined point (agree with PTS)
- Held off for minimum speed at the touchdown
- Touched down on mains
- Held nose wheel off as long as it was practical
- On centerline
- No drift in crosswind
- Fuselage aligned with centerline in crosswind (side slip)

This all seems rudimentary, barely even Aviation 101. However, it will be the rare pilot that rates solid 5s all the way down the line. But, if our score card includes very many 1s or 2s, perhaps it's time to re-evaluate our approach to flying, consider a little dual instruction or at least have a stern talk with ourselves the next time we strap in. The subject of that talk should be how to change our "good enough" attitude. That's important because it only takes a little rust to turn good enough into *not* good enough. P&P