

Getting Disoriented

Many pilots have never experienced spatial disorientation and don't understand its effects. Absent use of a training device like a USAF Barany chair pictured at right, the FAA has helpfully recommended certain maneuvers for pilots who want the experience in a controlled situation. As the FAA notes, a "pilot should not attempt any of these maneuvers at low altitudes, or in the absence of an instructor pilot or an appropriate safety pilot." Here are two of the maneuvers.



CLIMBING WHILE ACCELERATING

With the pilot's eyes closed, the safety pilot maintains approach airspeed while straight-and-level for several seconds, and then accelerates, also while straight and level. The usual illusion experienced will be that the aircraft is climbing.

REVERSAL OF MOTION

While straight and level with the pilot's eyes closed, the safety pilot smoothly and positively rolls the aircraft to approximately a 45-degree bank attitude while maintaining heading and pitch attitude. The usual illusion is a strong sense of rotation in the opposite direction.