

COMPENSATING FOR WIND

The reasons we perform ground-reference maneuvers? To polish our turning technique for one; to ensure we can fly the airplane while paying attention to our position for another; correcting for wind drift for a third. With the turns-around-a-point maneuver depicted at right, the idea is to inscribe a perfect circle over the ground.

If there's any wind at all, trying to fly that perfect circle requires constantly changing the bank angle. When the airplane is flying directly downwind, groundspeed is greatest, and a steeper bank angle/rate of turn are required. It follows, then, that an upwind heading—where groundspeed is lowest—demands the shallowest bank/slowest turn rate.

The point or object selected for this maneuver should be prominent and easily seen, but small enough to present precise reference.

Enter the maneuver on a downwind heading to one side of the selected point and at a distance equal to the desired radius of

turn. Common errors include failure to recognize wind drift, using a bank angle—too shallow or too steep—resulting in a drift toward/away from the point, failure to coordinate the turns, failure to maintain altitude and/or a failure to divide attention inside and outside the airplane. If you get confused, or it's not working, break it off and try again.

