

Remember This Stuff?

If you earned your instrument rating in the pre-GPS days, you almost certainly had the “Four Ts” drilled into you. Crossing a fix, you would make these checks:

TURN

Turn the aircraft to a new heading as needed

TIME

Start a timer so you’ll know when you crossed the fix, and when to do whatever comes next

TUNE

Change the OBS setting as needed for the next course segment. This sometimes was taught as “Twist,” not “Tune.”

TALK

Make any required or recommended radio transmission.

Some CFI-Is teach a fifth T (Throttle, to make any necessary power change), and even a sixth T (Tires, reminding the pilot of a retractable gear airplane to decide whether extending the landing gear is called for at that point).

Although not every “T” requires action each time you cross a fix, running through all four (or five or six) will prompt you to make any changes necessary at that particular fix. GPS navigation makes the Twist and (arguably) the Time moot, and teaching “the Ts” isn’t as prevalent in instrument instruction any more. Regardless, it’s a good idea to get in the habit of running through the Ts any time you cross a waypoint or fix, just in case there’s something you do need to be doing at that point. And, it will help you if the day the waypoints die ever comes, and you’ve got to complete your IFR trip using VOR navigation.

