



Minimum Controllable Airspeed Checklist

SELECT AND “CLEAR” AN APPROPRIATE AREA.

You want to ensure you have adequate altitude in case of a stall/spin and that you’re away from other traffic.

ADJUST PITCH WITH ENTHUSIASM

Without an adequate nose-up pitch input as power is reduced, you’ll see an altitude loss. That’s not a good way to start this demonstration, since it’s really difficult to climb back to your chosen altitude when behind the power curve. It’s best to start at the correct altitude and stay there.

BUT NOT TOO MUCH

Excessive back-elevator pressure as power is reduced will result in a climb. If you’re doing this correctly, pitch and power will be actively coordinated to establish the airplane in a steady state of equilibrium where it’s neither climbing, descending or accelerating.

COORDINATE ALL THE CONTROLS

Don’t forget the rudder while you’re focused on maintaining heading and altitude. You’ll probably need a lot of it—and some rudder trim, too, if you have it—to maintain heading and keep things coordinated.

USE ALL THE FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS

Fixating on the airspeed indicator, for instance, usually means your altitude is off. You probably can use the natural horizon to maintain pitch and heading, but the flight instruments will help you judge the quality of your maneuver (and how many times you need to do this).

ANTICIPATE THE FLAPS’ EFFECTS

The wing’s generated lift can change dramatically as flaps are extended and retracted. Doing things slowly and incrementally while using the pitch trim makes it easier and more professional.

INADEQUATE POWER MANAGEMENT

You may need full power, depending on the airplane and conditions, like weight or temperature. Be sure to monitor engine gauges to prevent overheating. You’re justified in breaking off the maneuver if things get too hot.

DON’T FIXATE

As always, you need to divide your attention between the task at hand, including heading, altitude and airspeed, plus monitor the engine gauges, look for traffic and deal with your instructor’s well-intentioned distractions.