

Building Stall Confidence

The book learning necessary to understand stalls isn't hard. Somewhat more difficult, however, is both applying that knowledge in the cockpit and learning how and when the airplane is going to respond before, during and after the stall. Here are some basic suggestions pilots can use to familiarize—or re-familiarize—themselves with stalls:

SLOW FLIGHT

Flying slowly—behind the power curve, where additional power is required to maintain level flight—is a great way to become more confident with stalls. For one, the time spent in slow flight helps us learn how much additional control input is required to keep the airplane's attitude where we want it while the sights and sounds are closer to what we'll experience when practicing stalls. For another, most stall practice involves some slow flight, as we approach the stall itself.

LANDINGS

Done correctly, a normal landing gets us close to or at a power-off stall every time. The chief difference is altitude. If you're having trouble with stalls at altitude, performing a series of landings in which full flaps are deployed and the stall warning system is activated will give you substantial experience with the look, feel and sounds the airplane makes when approaching the stall.

PRACTICE

Just do it: Go flying and practice some stalls. Take a safety pilot with you if you feel uncomfortable doing it solo, but there's really very little substitute for some hands-on experience. Start with a power-off stall, progress to partial power-on and then move to where you have full-power in at the break.

GET SOME DUAL

When practicing stalls, there's really no substitute for grabbing your favorite instructor and going out for an hour or so of them. An ideal occasion is your flight review, but you really don't need a special reason—just the desire to learn more about them and perfect your technique.