

BODY OF OPINION

As noted in this article's main text, I sent a poll to 100 experienced pilots. I was interested to learn that by chance all said they are Certificated Flight Instructors, about half describing themselves as "active" CFIs (I'd arbitrarily made 10 hours dual given in 2011 as the measure of an "active" instructor). Only two said they are FAA or designated pilot examiners (the people who give checkrides); nine of the 100 are active tailwheel instructors. Here are the questions I posed, and the pilots' responses (respondents could pick more than one answer to each question).

Why do you feel pilots should learn to perform slips?

To supplement the use of flaps to increase the angle of descent on final approach:	85%
Slips are useful in making power-off emergency landings:	85%
To learn to compensate for crosswinds in normal landings:	77%
Only because slips are a required maneuver on FAA Practical Tests:	0%
Other:	27%

- Slips are necessary in any aircraft not having flaps or flaps that are relatively ineffective.
- Learning to do slips, both forward and side slips, makes a much better stick and rudder pilot than just doing them enough to pass an FAA check ride.
- [Pilots should learn slips] to identify when a slip has been introduced unintentionally.
- I like to teach high-drag, go fast for high-angle descents (too high on final), since most pilots are not aggressive with slips, but don't mind going fast. The disadvantage to going fast is floating due to the extra speed.
- [Slips are] a tool that should be understood, [pilots] should know what to expect in each airframe, and use when appropriate.
- [Slips are] for approaches in aircraft that do not have flaps.
- For accurate aircraft glidepath control and runway placement.

The consensus is that learning slips is a good exercise for learning the control of feel of the airplane, that slips are a tool to help with glidepath control and accuracy landings, and that slips are standard operating procedure for airplanes that do not have flaps—many antique airplanes and perhaps a few Light Sport designs.

Do you perform slips in your normal operations?

Occasionally as needed, but not as a normal practice:	54%
Yes, slips are Standard Operating Procedure for me:	31%
Yes, but not on most landings:	15%
I almost never perform slips in non-instructional flight:	11%
Other:	27%

- In all aircraft I use slips routinely to perform crosswind landings. But as far as increasing descent rate (whether in normal or emergency operations) it depends on the aircraft. In taildraggers, slips are very effective for increasing the angle of descent, in part because the rudders are proportionally larger (or more effective) in these airplanes. In [more advanced aircraft] slips are not nearly as effective in increasing descent angle. Much more effective techniques include lowering the gear and flaps and diving at max flap speed, and pushing the propeller control all the way forward. Slips only increase descent rate very slightly when compared with these techniques and should be used only after the other techniques have been used first.
- I always slip to a landing as I have no flaps on [my] Cub. I seldom use slips in [larger airplanes] except in a strong crosswind.
- [Slips are] useful when appropriately applied at [an] appropriate altitude to deal with strong crosswind. Always consider aircraft limitations!
- I have one airplane with no flaps and about 50% of my descents and landings in the airport pattern involve a slip. I use slips in [flap-equipped airplanes] for crosswind operations.