

## COPING WITH SPATIAL DISORIENTATION

According to the FAA's *Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge* (FAA-H-8083-25A), "Prevention is usually the best remedy for spatial disorientation. Unless a pilot has many hours of training in instrument flight, flight should be avoided in reduced visibility or at night when the horizon is not visible. A pilot can reduce susceptibility to disorienting illusions through training and awareness, and learning to rely totally on flight instruments."

That publication's suggestions for coping with spatial disorientation include, "Be physically tuned for flight into reduced visibility. That is, ensure proper rest, adequate diet, and, if flying at night, allow for night adaptation. Remember that illness, medication, alcohol, fatigue, sleep loss, and mild hypoxia are likely to increase susceptibility to spatial disorientation."

If you're lucky, you'll never experience spatial disorientation's effects, much less in the cockpit. If you want to know what it feels like, you can experience spatial disorientation in a Barany Chair, as depicted in the image at right during a demonstration for a group of high school students at Laughlin Air Force Base.

