

Compensate For The Airplane

I recall a trick I learned during my initial training, and one I taught early in my flying career, that somewhere along the way I'd forgotten: Every 500 feet of climb (perhaps every 1000 feet in more powerful airplanes), make a five-degree heading change to the right, get the nose of the airplane out of the way and clear the airspace ahead. Then make a 10-degree turn to the left, clear the right side of the nose, and finally turn back on course. Use the same strategy during descent to clear the airspace ahead and below. Done quickly, these little S-turns don't take you off ground track, but they do let you see the airspace otherwise obscured by the airframe in a climb or descent.

Similarly, if you flew high-wing trainers, I'm sure you were originally taught to "pick up a wing" to check for traffic before entering a turn. For example, before turning left, bank a little to the right to be able to see the airspace into which you'll turn. Only after checking for traffic, roll past level and bank into the turn—which will obscure that side of your airplane even more.

On final, or when turning to it from base, we also need to compensate when flying a low-wing airplane. Look closely at the final approach corridor before turning final. Once on final, in either a high-or low-wing, use the trick described above to help eliminate your blind spot.

