

STABILIZED APPROACH?

Much of the advice on improving landings eventually gets around to recommending a “stabilized approach.” Some interpret this to mean setting power and airplane configuration once, abeam the numbers on downwind, and not touching it again until the flare. That’s more like a hands-off approach, and isn’t what’s recommended.

Instead, the idea of a stabilized approach applies to the final segment of the pattern, when the airplane should indeed be stabilized and configured for landing. Do it this way instead:

- **Once the turn to final is completed, assess your position relative to the intended touchdown point. Too high? Pull off 100 rpm, or an inch of manifold pressure. Too low? Save the last notch of flaps and level the nose. A touch of power might be needed, too.**
- **If you’re trending high or low, it could be a temporary thing, depending on the headwind and the airplane’s deceleration. Make small corrections, using coordinated pitch and power.**
- **If you’re still jockeying pitch and/or power within 500 feet of the runway, you’re not stabilized. Consider going around and trying again.**