March Pro-Tip: The Importance of Go-Arounds
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For this month's pro tip, I would like to discuss a topic that is easily overlooked, but an important maneuver for all MGAV pilots to master: the Go-Around. The go-around is a vital tool in a pilot's bag of tricks to help make them a safe, competent aviator. Like many other skills, the best way to maintain proficiency in them is through regular practice.

For many people, the go-around is often introduced after they have started to learn landings. Our instructors taught us if things weren't looking right we could go around. In reality, we should be looking at it from the opposite perspective: we **are** going around **unless** our approach looks absolutely perfect. This mentality forces us to be fully prepared to go-around on every approach and landing. Our goal should be to achieve a stabilized approach no later than 500 feet AGL as recommended by the training materials on Cirrus Approach and the interactive Flight Operations Manual (iFOM).

"A VFR approach is considered stabilized when all of following criteria are met: Proper airspeed, Correct flight path, Correct aircraft configuration for phase of flight, Appropriate power setting for aircraft configuration, Normal angle and rate of descent, and only minor corrections are required to correct deviations. A go-around must be executed if the above conditions are not met and the aircraft is not stabilized by 500 feet AGL."

A go-around should not be thought of as an emergency maneuver. If practiced regularly they can become a routine maneuver. Doing so allows us to react calmly and correctly when performed unexpectedly and helps prevent abrupt overcorrections which can lead to aircraft damage and/or loss of control.

A go-around can be executed at any point on the approach to land if we are not stabilized or if it just doesn't feel right. Making the decision to go-around early makes the maneuver more routine and less stress-inducing. However, there may be times when we find ourselves going around unexpectedly, such as when we encounter wind shear. This may occur close to the ground or in some cases, after the aircraft has touched the ground briefly. This is referred to as a balked landing or rejected landing. This situation can be very challenging as the aircraft is typically in a low-energy state with reduced control effectiveness. While our instinct may be to react abruptly, our control inputs must be smooth, firm, and deliberate to maintain positive aircraft control throughout.

Let's walk through the steps of a typical go-around along with the aerodynamic forces that are present as we execute it. Throughout the execution of a go-around, we should be focused primarily on visual references outside of the cockpit. Once the decision has been made to go-around, the first thing we need to do is to put the nose of the aircraft on the horizon and keep it there as we smoothly apply full power. The application of full power from idle should be accomplished no quicker than 3 seconds (Count: one one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand). Most pilots will initially react by pitching the nose above the horizon. However, we only want to bring the nose to the horizon. If the aircraft was trimmed properly for the approach, the nose of the plane will want to come up on its own, and we will need to hold a great deal of forward pressure on the side stick to keep the nose on the horizon until we have readjusted the trim.

Additionally, we will need to apply enough right rudder to prevent the nose from yawing to the left. If we apply the power smoothly, the rudder input should also be smooth and firm to maintain proper coordination. This is where routine practice will help prevent overcontrolling. Once again, our focus must be OUTSIDE. If the wings are level, we can use outside references to determine how much rudder input is necessary. When the proper amount of rudder input is applied, there will be no sideways motion of the nose. If your visual references are moving to the right, the plane is yawing left and more right rudder is required. We need to smoothly increase right rudder pressure until the movement stops. If your visual references are moving to the left, the plane is yawing right and LESS right rudder is required. In that case, we need to smoothly reduce right rudder pressure until the movement stops. This is an exercise that can be practiced at a safe training altitude to gain mastery. I recommend covering the flight instruments or dimming the screens while practicing this to assure that your focus is outside of the cockpit.

Once the power has been applied and the descent has been arrested, the next step is to begin “cleaning up the airplane” by raising the flaps to 50%. As the airplane begins to gain speed, we can raise the nose to a normal climb attitude. Once a positive rate of climb has been established, all obstacles are cleared, and the appropriate airspeed has been reached, 85 knots in the SR20 or 90 knots for the SR22, we can raise the flaps to 0%. As the plane continues to gain speed, we will need to continue adjusting the trim for a normal climb.

Additionally, if we are going around due to another aircraft on the runway, we want to offset from the runway centerline to allow us to maintain visual separation from the other aircraft. Typically, it is best to offset to the right to give us a clear view of the runway and aircraft on the left side of the plane.

Lastly, it is imperative that we wait until the airplane is safely climbing away from the ground and we have a moment to breathe before we attempt to communicate our intentions to ATC or local traffic. This is our absolute last priority. Remember these words to live by: **Aviate, Navigate, Communicate!**