

Horsham & District Radio Control Model Club

Learning to fly a radio controlled model aircraft

Part seven - Learning to Land

Do not try to learn to land until you have mastered the flying and take-off. These will have progressed your piloting skills up to the level where you are fully in control of the plane throughout both these phases. Before attempting to try a landing, let your instructor talk you through a few landings. Listen to what he says, but ask if you have any queries.

When you are both ready to tackle the first landing, says so before the start of the flight. If your instructor agrees you are ready to attempt one, then at least you know and you won't suddenly start to panic, will you! Practice lining the plane up and over flying the strip. It doesn't really matter if you don't land on the strip, but it is advisable to try to land reasonably close. At the end of the day, a safe controlled landing 50 metres away, is far better than an 'arrival' in the centre of the strip. At least the former will allow you to have another attempt later!

After 4 or 5 overflights it should be looking good. When you're ready call 'LANDING' and perform a rectangular approach and land in the centre of the strip. Easy really - (However if you want a bit more information read on!)

Start by over flying the strip at approximately 100 feet and into wind, Slow the model so that it will keep airspeed into wind and still be controllable in level flight. Turn left 90 degrees (or right depending on your field layout - I'll assume a left hand turn). Maintain level flight. At approximately 50 -100 metres out turn left again another 90 degrees. The model should now be travelling down wind, on a line parallel to where you intend to land this is a good time to reduce power and start descending. Remember to keep the airspeed up to avoid stalling.

The next turn is probably the hardest one to judge, turn through 90 degrees and head back to your line up point. The model should now be at about 30- 50 feet. The final turn needs to be done accurately, once you've turned; ensure you are heading directly towards where you intend to land. If not, try small adjustments now, before you get any lower. At the same time you should reduce power until the engine is going fast enough to keep airspeed, but slow enough to enable you to line it up. This is where practice helps!

The final approach should be uneventful. Keep flying speed, reduce height, and land into wind. The best advice is to keep the wings level, and not to panic. If the model is caught by the wind, try to correct it as calmly as possible. If you get it wrong, open the throttle and go round again, but above all if it doesn't look good, fly round for a few seconds, before attempting another landing. Even if you get it right first time, you'll have to practice this quite a bit, before it becomes second nature.