

Now you're thinking, 101 secrets, that's a lot. How many things do I need to do or think about to land my airplane?

Landings are when you need to concentrate the most on what the airplane is doing and making the airplane go where you want it to go. I'm not going to use all 101 secrets here mainly because they don't all apply. Such as landing on a slope, and using the runway numbers through the windshield to control your glide slope, or even about warning your passengers about moving around during the landing. Or having your radios tuned to the correct ATC frequency before getting in the pattern. You know; stuff like that.

What I have done is to apply those that would help you to place your airplane in the pattern at our RC field as if it were the real, full-scale pattern. Over the years I have used these helpful articles to better myself and to help me make the landing look much better and hit the runway as many times as I can. Give these a try and see if there aren't any of these secrets that can help you.

1. Have a plan: Don't let the airplane determine your approach. Plan out your landing well in advance. Maybe two or three circuits around the pattern before you make the landing.

2. Visualize the flight path: Think ahead of the airplane and imagine your flight path as a narrow rectangular tunnel with the runway at the end.

3. Keep your downward approach consistent: Put your airplane in the same place every time.

4. Fluctuations in speed are wasting precious altitude and energy.

5. Deploying flaps at too fast of a speed only messes up your trim and you can't keep steady throttle settings.

6. Don't wrestle with it; you make the airplane land.

(I call it "flying your airplane and not letting the airplane fly you!")

7. Think centerline: Form a routine where you put the airplane on the centerline of the runway every time.

8. Don't chase the airspeed: Wind gusts can cause air speed fluctuations. Don't chase them; average out the fluctuations by holding the nose attitude steady.

9. Have a go-around point selected: Designate a place on the runway as your touchdown area. If you don't make it, go around. Don't make a bad situation worse.

10. Don't forget to flare: When you are short on final, be thinking of the flare before you touchdown.

11. Make small power changes: It's always best to make small power changes when needed rather than being behind a change and then having to play catch up.

12. Correct flight-path changes immediately: Either speed or position or whatever—if it isn't right, fix it. Don't let needed corrections pile up.

13. Plan ahead: This is very important. Compare where the airplane will go if you don't change anything to where it will go if you do. If they don't match, make it match.

14. Don't fly the pattern too fast: If you fly at a reduced speed, you lessen the chance of missing the runway.

15. Practice approaches: Spend a couple of flights just doing touch-and-gos or complete landings and then take off again. This will help you to get the "feel" for the runway.

16. Think about the rudder as centerline control: Use the rudder to keep the nose ahead of the tail, independent of the ailerons.

17. Adjust for the crosswind before the flare: Use the rudder to keep the nose and tail on the centerline and use ailerons to kill the crosswind.

18. Adjust the landing pattern for the size of the airplane: Small airplanes need smaller patterns. Big and fast airplanes need more room.

19. Don't let the nose land first: If you have tri-gear, hold the flare so you land on the mains first.

20. Don't try to save a bad bounce: Go around and try again.

21. Break the glide then set up the flare: On approach, don't fly into the runway and flare, it will bounce.

22. After a crosswind landing, don't relax the ailerons: Keep the ailerons into the wind until you stop. And use the rudder to stay on the centerline of the runway.

You might be thinking that these hints are not needed when you go out to fly that Pizazz or FunTiger or Ultrastik and that's okay. These airplanes are designed to do tight maneuvers and fly radically and fly slow with small amounts of wind, that's why we like them. But they too can be landed on the runway every time using these hints. It surely helps when you fly the scale or heavy wing loaded airplanes. You might even be able to step up to the next level of airplane with these hints.

See you at the field.