



Things to focus on during your first solo hours:

1. OBSTACLE CLEARANCE

Taxi slowly. If there are any obstacles, such as a vehicle or another aircraft, you should simply wait for them to clear. Also, consider if it is safer to turn around and choose a different path. If the obstacle is immobile and will be stationary for a long period of time, you'll have to be absolutely certain that there is wingtip clearance before attempting to pass by. How can we determine this? Consider the type of plane you're in; A high-wing airplane can actually overlap its wing above the nose of most smaller single-engine airplanes, as well as the wing of a low-wing aircraft, such as a piper or Grumman. If the sun is nearly overhead, the shadow of your wing will be a gauge as to how close your wing will come to an obstacle. Bear in mind- these tips are rough tools to help you. They will NOT guarantee obstacle clearance. Plan to be overly-cautious. When in doubt, stop the airplane and consider shutting down. If your airplane even barely touches an obstacle, the cost can be astronomical. It is not worth taking this risk if you determine that obstacle clearance is uncertain.

2. DEALING WITH ATC

When you begin a solo flight, you should advise ground control/ tower that you are a solo student- for example: "McCollum ground, N653KB at superior with information Charlie, request taxi for pattern work, student solo". This will let the tower know that they should minimize any unusual or uncommon instructions to you, if at all possible.

When dealing with ATC, remember- Do NOT accept instructions that you do not feel that you are ready to safely comply with. If the tower were to ask you to perform a 360 degree turn on final approach, you should advise that you are unable. Such a maneuver is difficult to perform safely, even for senior pilots. You should advise the tower that you are 'unable- student solo', and request to perform a go-around. If there is ANY situation where ATC has instructed you to do something that you are unclear about, tell them so. They are there to assist YOU- not the other way around.

3. ABORTED TAKEOFFS

Remember this- If anything unusual or distracting occurs before or during the takeoff roll, plan to abort. Takeoff and landing are the most critical phases of flight, you need not complicate them by accepting distractions. For example- you add power for takeoff, and the engine is running slightly rough, perhaps a sparkplug has fouled. ABORT. Do not accept this condition, do not attempt to correct it, just abort the takeoff- reduce power to idle, and stop the plane. The same goes for anything- birds on the runway, you drop your checklist, your seat moves out of adjustment...anything that happens to distract you is grounds for an aborted takeoff. All you need do is tell the tower that you had to abort takeoff, and they will simply ask if you wish to taxi back for another attempt or not.

4. TOUCH-AND-GO'S

It is Superior Flight School's determination that students should not be performing touch-and-go's during their first 5 hours of solo operations. As mentioned above, takeoffs and landings are each complicated and critical situations. They should not initially be conducted back-to-back as one operation. Pattern work will consist of full-stop landings, with a taxi back to the active runway, and they should be requested as such from the tower.

5. GO-AROUND'S

Just as described in aborted takeoffs, a go-around should be immediately begun ANY time something unexpected or distracting occurs on final approach, even as late as the landing flare. Examples of such situations might include birds in the landing area, unexpected traffic, unexpected crosswinds, or ANY situation that causes you to make unusual power, pitch or banking adjustments to normalize your approach. Do NOT force the plane or yourself to land in ANY compromised condition. Go around, and sort it out.

6. TAXI PRECAUTIONS

As you already know, taxi speed should be kept to a brisk walking pace. Another important safety factor, however, is your taxi operations *after* landing. While decelerating on the runway, be certain to maintain runway centerline at all times. If you have landed off-centerline, maneuver the plane back to centerline, do not settle for the left or right side. Prior to beginning a turn onto a taxiway intersection, use the brakes to slow down the airplane *before* beginning the turn. You should slow the airplane enough on the centerline so that you do not need to use brakes at all during the turn to the taxiway. Also, make sure that the airplane's tires never leave the pavement. The only time you should ever taxi into the grass is for an emergency situation, such as avoiding an aircraft or vehicle.