

I have just earned my PPL - Here's my tips from the last 9 months.

Keep ahead with the theory. Its not hard, just comprehensive.

You will save yourself many hundreds by learning and understanding your theory early. If you don't your flying will hit a plateau beyond which you won't pass because you can't predict what the aircraft is about to do. Learn the theory early.

Read up on the lesson several times before you fly it.

Take any right hand seat ride you can with any other experienced pilots.

Be wary of flying schools who won't let you keep your log book - although in the early stages it should be left with them.

Get a supportive enthusiastic instructor, remember you are hiring him/her so you decide who you pay to teach you. You don't learn well being yelled at or belittled then sack him/her, if they keep giving you a different Instructor each time, then change schools. An Instructor should be your friend, not just a teacher. If you're unhappy with something SPEAK UP! To the Chief Flying Instructor if necessary. You can always try other schools, aircraft, just take your logbook.

Ask, ask, ask until you know what it is all about. 50 questions a day is not excessive!

Remember there is more to flying than just the syllabus. Its called "Airmanship".

Don't be afraid to ask for extra tuition, some schools don't like you doing more hours than the syllabus prescribes but you do it until you feel happy and competent at it.

Don't take risks - ask again and again if necessary.

Don't break rules - The Rules are the Rules !!

Practice, Practice, Practice, even on the ground, go over it in you mind (its cheaper!) - pretend your car is a plane - practice checklists in it !

Make friends with Aircraft Engineers, you will learn more about preflight and care of planes than from your instructor.

Join a flying club - you may get lots of additional rides, experience, cheaper aircraft hire, social activities, etc. You may also meet aircraft owners who will be more inclined to hire their aircraft to you when you've got more experience if they know you and have flown with you.

After the PPL (and some experience) join in some fly-aways, or weekends away. There you'll meet more pilots and make more friends. Then in a year or two, go for other ratings to enhance your skill, Night, Retractable, etc.

The weather will be your worst enemy, the Instructor will become your next best friend.....

Aerobatics is a real buzz if you can afford it and can keep current. Do at least one short flight – with an Instructor, just for fun, you've earned it!

Only one in 657 Australians hold a PPL licence. Welcome to the club.

Anne R. December 2001