

Having been a verrrry long time member of this club and wanting to lay out a concept for an individual wanting to learn to fly RC as a hobby, I feel there is a need to have info available as to the efficient way for a prospective pilot to make his goal happen. This article is to articulate that pathway and hopefully culminate with the pilot learning to fly with a minimum of time and cost, allowing him to go forward into this great hobby.

#1 Find a club. Learning to fly on your own is at best problematical, and at least expensive and discouraging. At Space City, we welcome new members of any proficiency, and as we have designated flight instructors and extremely helpful members, we feel that our club offers the opportunity for learning to fly, as well as maintain and/or build your aircraft. Come out to the field and meet the flyers. Tell us your skill level, and we will assist in any manner, including a hands-on flying demo with either your plane or the club trainer. Yes, we do have a club trainer and buddy system that will allow you to fly immediately, in order that you can experience the hobby prior to spending a lot of money. If you need assistance, ASK. Talk to any instructor and try to determine compatibility. You want to have a competent instructor, not a drill sergeant, Remember, he is volunteering his time to help you learn to fly. Respect that, but usually, he gets as much out of teaching, as you do out of learning. So listen to his experience.

#2 Get advice from a club member or instructor prior to buying your first radio, plane, equipment, engine etc. In general, a .40 - .60 size trainer ARF (almost ready to fly) kit is the best bet, but there are many choices, not all of them best for your situation. I personally like the .60 size and the larger size plane (70" wing) makes it easier to see at a distance. If you can't see the plane, you can't fly it. Hobby shops exist to sell, and the advice given by one of the kids working there is usually suspect, depending on their skill level. This is not the time to start out with a P51 warbird, just because you like the way it looks. Trainers react slower to stick inputs, and tend to recover to a neutral attitude, allowing you more time to react to what the plane is doing. You want an airframe to learn on, not crash the first time you touch the sticks. Remember the radio and engine will transition to your next airplanes, so keep that in mind as well. 2.4 mhz is the new way to go for radios, and choices are many, so get advice from the guy who has been dealing with it for a while, your new instructor or experienced club member. Used equipment is generally available, but expect to spend approximately \$500 as an initial investment for all new.

#3 Simulators are a valuable tool in learning the basics of flying RC and are generally able to shorten the time needed to solo your airplane. However, there is no better training than actually flying in all weather conditions. Get the sim if you can afford it, but remember that it is the instructor and the buddy cord that will save your airplane from multiple crashes as you gain real in the air experience. Above all, have your plane checked out by an experienced pilot prior to its first flight. It is very difficult to correct reversed ailerons at 200 feet in the air and 40 mph. Believe me, I know from experience.

#4 In order to be a club member, you will need to join the AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics), as nearly all clubs are sanctioned and require membership. This also includes the secondary liability insurance coverage plus a great monthly magazine to keep you up to speed on what is happening in the model world. \$52/year and worth every penny. Our club dues are a

\$50 initiation fee and \$200/year dues due on 9/30 each year. Junior memberships are available for \$5/yr additional if the parent is a full member. This gives you access to all field facilities at any time, plus the support of the members in your quest to enjoy this hobby, and a safe place to fly your model without interference. Our flyers range from warbirds to helicopters, pattern flyers, racers. We have them all and that keeps it interesting to all.

#5 When you start the training process with your instructor, remember that he is the volunteer, so try to make it a great experience for him as well. Be on time to sessions, and above all LISTEN. When he works with you on certain skills, there is a reason for that. You are there to learn, not to dictate or strike out on your own. We are all there to have fun and enjoy the hobby. As your skills improve, it will prove to immensely more enjoyable, particularly when you achieve that first landing or solo flight.

#6 Support your club in any way you can. Space City RC pays an individual to maintain the grounds completely, so all support is voluntary. Work parties, fly-in events, meets, all require help from the members to pull off, so be available to help when you can. It all leads to the total experience that this hobby brings through the fellowship and even competition at a friendly level.

#7 Do not get discouraged. I know that the 8 year old kid who has been playing video games since age 2 will learn to fly in 1/3 the time it will take you and I. Flying will soon become instinctive to you, and will not involve as much knee shaking and mental breakdowns, particularly if you will commit to practice regularly, and move into the comradeship and enjoyable experiences that this hobby will bring. We have a new web page, as you have noticed. Hopefully it will give you some insight into us and get you out to the field, and meet the members. I know we are looking forward to meeting you. Thanks,