



BY TOM BENENSON

Don't Quit Stalling

REMEMBER EARLY IN MY training for my Private certificate, Jack Secor, my instructor, suggested that, while I was out doing my solo flights, rather than just flying around enjoying myself, I could use the time more productively to do some slow flight and practice stall recoveries. That practice and subsequent frequent refresher training have held me in good stead.

In the almost 50 years that I've been flying, I have never unintentionally stalled an airplane. I came close — once. It was at Morristown (New Jersey) Municipal Airport, where I was training in the Cessna 150. I was in the pattern doing touch-and-goes. As

the angle of attack (AOA) and got the wing happy again. With everything under control, I reported the gear looked down. But what was more important, I had learned how easily a distraction can get you into trouble.

According to the FAA, almost a third of all fatal accidents during the last 10 years occurred during maneuvering flight. The definition of maneuvering flight isn't limited to buzzing, aerobatics, formation flying, aerial work and stalls and spins, but is any type of flying close to the ground including pattern work.

In order to pass the knowledge exam — and the practical for the private and

many pilots, unless the instructor conducting a flight review requires them to perform stalls, never intentionally stall an airplane after earning their private certificate. (The biennial flight review requires only an hour of ground and an hour of flight with the tasks at the discretion of the instructor. It doesn't require any exposure to stalls.)

I've heard that during flight reviews stalls are sometimes glossed over with the excuse of preventing damage to the engine or airframe. Often there's less emphasis on basic airmanship during a review in order to focus on instrument procedures or the latest avionics.

Just as a show of hands, how many of you have actually gone out and practiced stalling your airplane? How many of you do stalls only during your biennial flight review? How many of you have not done a stall in years?

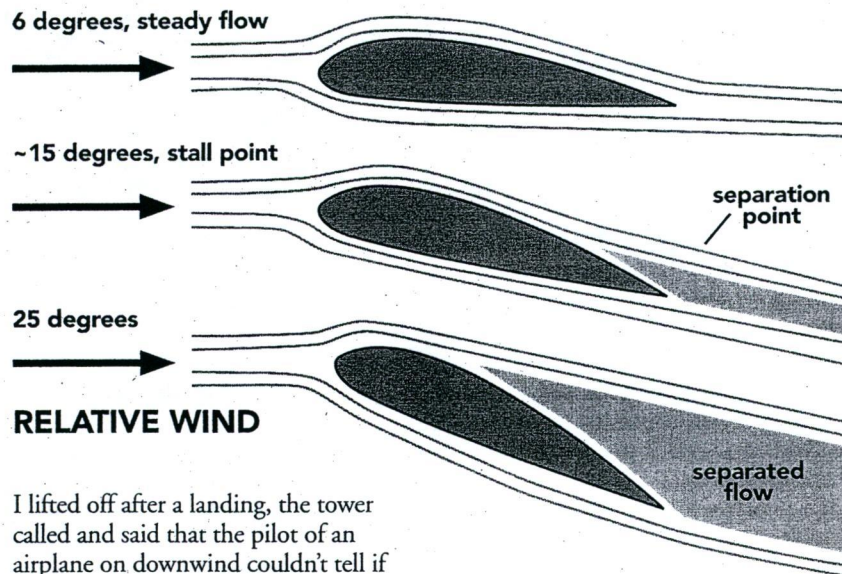
When was the last time, with sufficient altitude, you held the control wheel fully aft after the stall break to see what would happen?

OK, here's an easier question. When was the last time you practiced slow flight?

If in reading this, you're developing an uncomfortable feeling in the gut, then you really do need to understand exactly what's happening when an airplane stalls and get some hands-on experience in stalls and stall recovery.

Have you ever watched from the ground as someone practiced stalls? The airplane noses up and then gently dips down. The airplane by pitching down is actually attempting to recover from the stall on its own, and in most airplanes used for training, if you continue to hold back pressure, the airplane will begin to recover and then pitch up and stall again.

When the wing stalls, the airflow over the wing is disturbed, and as it flows over the horizontal stabilizer it no longer puts as much downward



RELATIVE WIND

I lifted off after a landing, the tower called and said that the pilot of an airplane on downwind couldn't tell if his gear was down or not. The controller asked if I could make a climbing turn and come up under and behind the airplane to see if the gear appeared down. Could I! So I did. But as I was banking and climbing, I was fixated on the gear of the other airplane. Suddenly, luckily, I became aware of the turbulence that foreshadows a stall. With the practice Jack had insisted on, I quickly lowered the nose, reduced

the commercial — you need to understand or at least be able to regurgitate the book explanation of what happens when the airplane stalls. The Practical Test Standards for both the Private and Commercial certificates require a demonstration of recoveries from both the power-off and power-on stalls.

That's fine as far as it goes, but from anecdotal evidence I've learned that