



First Flights Considerations

By this point, even those who hadn't practiced on a simulator no doubt feel prepared to fly, and are definitely more prepared than most people before their first flights. If you had the advantage of sim experience, the agenda during your first flights will be to repeat the exercises that you practiced on the simulator. If you developed proficiency on the sim, it won't take long to achieve the same level of success in the real world. Therefore, the point of practicing these exercises has less to do with learning how to fly, and more to do with establishing confidence and the foundation to launch into trying new things, such as maneuvering a camera equipped multirotor.

When choosing a place to fly, realize that the heli will almost certainly use up more airspace than you think it will. Thus, try to choose an area that is larger than you think you'll need just to be safe. It would also be smart to review the regulations on where drones can be legally flown. Your first flying site should be free of obstacles, people, and especially power lines (and thus avoid becoming a news story). Put another way, don't fly over or near anything that would not enable you to immediately land the heli in an emergency. Also keep in mind that air currents moving around trees and buildings can prove disruptive to smaller helis, so avoid flying in the vicinity of large objects unless the air is relatively still.

Regarding whether to train off of grass/carpet or hard surface, both have their advantages and disadvantages: Grass/carpet provides some cushion during rough landings whereas hard surfaces such as concrete offer none. On the other hand, a multirotor's landing skids will tend to slide more easily across concrete if the heli is drifting sideways at touchdown, whereas grass will snag the heli and tip it over if the touchdown isn't perfectly vertical. Tipping over a small lightweight multirotor probably won't cause any damage, but there will almost certainly be damage(\$\$) if it occurs with a larger multirotor. Therefore, all things considered, there might be a slight advantage to learning to fly a small multirotor off of more forgiving short grass or carpet, whereas a flat hard surface might work better when flying a larger multirotor.

The next step to improve your odds of success is to initially fly on a calm day. While some manufacturers' claim that their small entry level helis can be flown in moderate winds, it can prove quite challenging. Thus, despite those optimistic claims, flying strictly 3 or 6-axis multirotors in anything but very light winds should be avoided. Larger GPS equipped multirotors handle wind much better, but it is still recommended that you avoid flying in wind until you get a few successful flights under your belt.

