

Long Mynd Soaring Club

Skills – Setting Goals

By Judith Mole and Geoff Minshull

Why set goals?

Setting goals improves you as a pilot and gives you something fun to do each flying day. It encourages you to stretch yourself, helps you learn new skills, and the better pilot you become, the more rewarding – and safer – flying is.

Everything you want to do in flying is really a set of little steps you need to practice, in order to do the bigger things – e.g. being able to land safely is a pre-requisite to being able to go XC.

What sort of goals should you set?

Make them achievable – aiming to win the XC league just after you've qualified as a CP is a very nice fantasy, but unlikely to happen (unless you really are a sky god in the making!).

Daily goals could include:

- flying further along the ridge than you have been before
- 3 top landings
- 3 good slope landings
- do a perfect HG nil wind landing
- flying for x amount of time
- getting to 100'/500'/1000'/cloudbase 3 times today
- 3 forward launches
- half an hour ground handling
- fly 15 minutes without a vario
- be able to find the parachute handle without looking
- practice using the speedbar/VG
- fly out as far as possible from the ridge and get back and up again

A season's or year's goals could include

- Significantly improve your HG nil wind and top landings
- Complete the tasks for the pilot exam
- Do a cross country flight

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- Fly 3 new sites
- Learn more about meteorology
- Master certain rapid descent techniques
- Get x amount of hours a year
- Pass the next level of pilot qualification
- Enter x km in the XC league
- Enter comps

How to set your goals

Think about what you need to improve and what would be good to be better at. Think about where you want to be in a month/year/5 years and plan accordingly. You need to look at who you are as a pilot and set realistic goals, but regardless of where you are in your flying career, you can use goal setting to further your flying skills. You might need to go back to basics to achieve higher goals. For example, one of my goals this year is to work towards getting my AP. To do that I need to do an SIV course. To do the SIV course (other than book it and pay for it) I need to set myself the following daily goals:

- Learn to fly my new glider (launch/landing/flying characteristics)
- Practise pulling some lines (I don't usually do this, but it would be good to know what it feels like before the course)
- Practise being able to find my parachute without looking
- Practise my forward launches (I have a load of metal in my arm, so I need to practice this with every glider, otherwise it hurts!)
- Watch some videos on how to do wingovers, etc.

How do you keep track, and see if you've met your goals?

Write it down! Keep the piece of paper and check how you did at the end of the period you set goals for. Write it down in your log book and track your progress through your log book.