

## Chapter 4

# Slow Flight, Stalls, and Spins



### INTRODUCTION

The maintenance of lift and control of an airplane in flight requires a certain minimum airspeed. This critical airspeed depends on certain factors, such as gross weight, load factors, and existing density altitude. The minimum speed below which further controlled flight is impossible is called the stalling speed. An important feature of pilot training is the development of the ability to estimate the margin of safety above the stalling speed. Also, the ability to determine the characteristic responses of any airplane at different airspeeds is of great importance to the pilot. The student pilot, therefore, must develop this awareness in order to safely avoid stalls and to operate an airplane correctly and safely at slow airspeeds.

### SLOW FLIGHT

Slow flight could be thought of, by some, as a speed that is less than cruise. In pilot training and testing, however, slow flight is broken down into two distinct elements: (1) the establishment, maintenance of, and maneuvering of the airplane at airspeeds and in configurations appropriate to takeoffs, climbs, descents, landing approaches and go-arounds, and, (2) maneuvering at the slowest airspeed at which the airplane is capable of maintaining controlled flight without indications of a stall—usually 3 to 5 knots above stalling speed.

### FLIGHT AT LESS THAN CRUISE AIRSPEEDS

Maneuvering during slow flight demonstrates the flight characteristics and degree of controllability of an airplane at less than cruise speeds. The ability to determine the characteristic control responses at the lower airspeeds appropriate to takeoffs, departures, and landing approaches is a critical factor in stall awareness.

As airspeed decreases, control effectiveness decreases disproportionately. For instance, there may be a certain loss of effectiveness when the airspeed is reduced from 30 to 20 m.p.h. above the stalling speed, but there will normally be a much greater loss as the airspeed is further reduced to 10 m.p.h. above stalling. The objective of maneuvering during slow flight is to develop the pilot's sense of feel and ability to use the controls correctly, and to improve proficiency in performing maneuvers that require slow airspeeds.

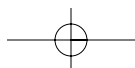
Maneuvering during slow flight should be performed using both instrument indications and outside visual reference. Slow flight should be practiced from straight glides, straight-and-level flight, and from medium banked gliding and level flight turns. Slow flight at approach speeds should include slowing the airplane smoothly and promptly from cruising to approach speeds without changes in altitude or heading, and determining and using appropriate power and trim settings. Slow flight at approach speed should also include configuration changes, such as landing gear and flaps, while maintaining heading and altitude.

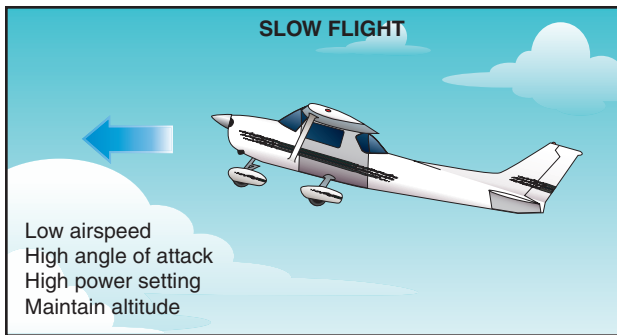
### FLIGHT AT MINIMUM CONTROLLABLE AIRSPEED

This maneuver demonstrates the flight characteristics and degree of controllability of the airplane at its *minimum* flying speed. By definition, the term “flight at minimum controllable airspeed” means a speed at which any further increase in angle of attack or load factor, or reduction in power will cause an immediate stall. Instruction in flight at minimum controllable airspeed should be introduced at reduced power settings, with the airspeed sufficiently above the stall to permit maneuvering, but close enough to the stall to sense the characteristics of flight at very low airspeed—which are sloppy controls, ragged response to control inputs, and difficulty maintaining altitude. Maneuvering at minimum controllable airspeed should be performed using both instrument indications and outside visual reference. It is important that pilots form the habit of frequent reference to the flight instruments, especially the airspeed indicator, while flying at very low airspeeds. However, a “feel” for the airplane at very low airspeeds must be developed to avoid inadvertent stalls and to operate the airplane with precision.

To begin the maneuver, the throttle is gradually reduced from cruising position. While the airspeed is decreasing, the position of the nose in relation to the horizon should be noted and should be raised as necessary to maintain altitude.

When the airspeed reaches the maximum allowable for landing gear operation, the landing gear (if equipped with retractable gear) should be extended and all gear down checks performed. As the airspeed reaches the maximum allowable for flap operation, full flaps





**Figure 4-1. Slow flight—Low airspeed, high angle of attack, high power, and constant altitude.**

should be lowered and the pitch attitude adjusted to maintain altitude. [Figure 4-1] Additional power will be required as the speed further decreases to maintain the airspeed just above a stall. As the speed decreases further, the pilot should note the feel of the flight controls, especially the elevator. The pilot should also note the sound of the airflow as it falls off in tone level.

As airspeed is reduced, the flight controls become less effective and the normal nosedown tendency is reduced. The elevators become less responsive and coarse control movements become necessary to retain control of the airplane. The slipstream effect produces a strong yaw so the application of rudder is required to maintain coordinated flight. The secondary effect of applied rudder is to induce a roll, so aileron is required to keep the wings level. This can result in flying with crossed controls.

During these changing flight conditions, it is important to retrim the airplane as often as necessary to compensate for changes in control pressures. If the airplane has been trimmed for cruising speed, heavy aft control pressure will be needed on the elevators, making precise control impossible. If too much speed is lost, or too little power is used, further back pressure on the elevator control may result in a loss of altitude or a stall. When the desired pitch attitude and minimum control airspeed have been established, it is important to continually cross-check the attitude indicator, altimeter, and airspeed indicator, as well as outside references to ensure that accurate control is being maintained.

The pilot should understand that when flying more slowly than **minimum drag speed ( $LD_{MAX}$ )** the airplane will exhibit a characteristic known as “**speed instability**.” If the airplane is disturbed by even the slightest turbulence, the airspeed will decrease. As airspeed decreases, the total drag also increases resulting in a further loss in airspeed. The total drag continues to rise and the speed continues to fall. Unless more power is applied and/or the nose is lowered, the speed will continue to decay right down to the stall. This is an extremely important factor in the

performance of slow flight. The pilot must understand that, at speed less than minimum drag speed, the airspeed is unstable and will continue to decay if allowed to do so.

When the attitude, airspeed, and power have been stabilized in straight flight, turns should be practiced to determine the airplane’s controllability characteristics at this minimum speed. During the turns, power and pitch attitude may need to be increased to maintain the airspeed and altitude. The objective is to acquaint the pilot with the lack of maneuverability at minimum speeds, the danger of incipient stalls, and the tendency of the airplane to stall as the bank is increased. A stall may also occur as a result of abrupt or rough control movements when flying at this critical airspeed.

Abruptly raising the flaps while at minimum controllable airspeed will result in lift suddenly being lost, causing the airplane to lose altitude or perhaps stall.

Once flight at minimum controllable airspeed is set up properly for level flight, a descent or climb at minimum controllable airspeed can be established by adjusting the power as necessary to establish the desired rate of descent or climb. The beginning pilot should note the increased yawing tendency at minimum control airspeed at high power settings with flaps fully extended. In some airplanes, an attempt to climb at such a slow airspeed may result in a *loss* of altitude, even with maximum power applied.

Common errors in the performance of slow flight are:

- Failure to adequately clear the area.
- Inadequate back-elevator pressure as power is reduced, resulting in altitude loss.
- Excessive back-elevator pressure as power is reduced, resulting in a climb, followed by a rapid reduction in airspeed and “mushing.”
- Inadequate compensation for adverse yaw during turns.
- Fixation on the airspeed indicator.
- Failure to anticipate changes in lift as flaps are extended or retracted.
- Inadequate power management.
- Inability to adequately divide attention between airplane control and orientation.

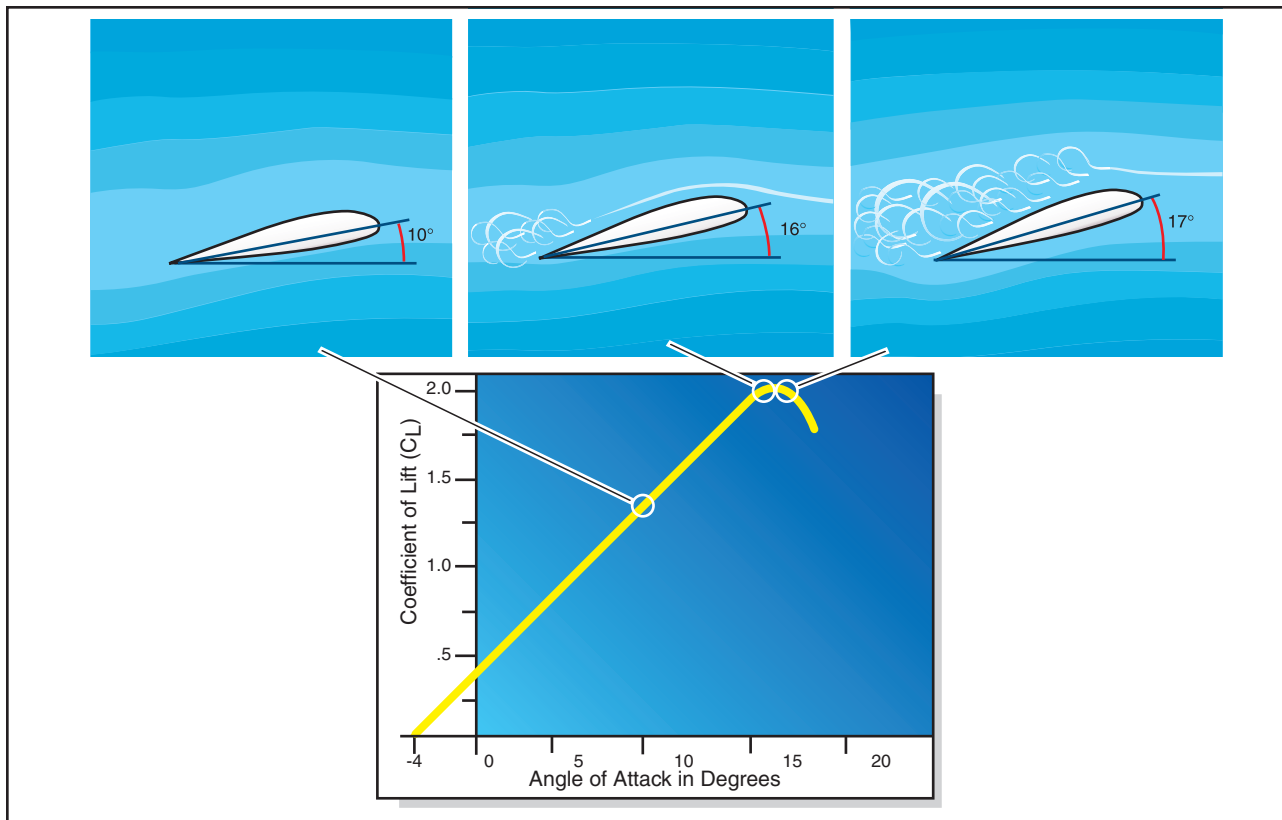


Figure 4-2. Critical angle of attack and stall.

## STALLS

A stall occurs when the smooth airflow over the airplane's wing is disrupted, and the lift degenerates rapidly. This is caused when the wing exceeds its critical angle of attack. This can occur at any airspeed, in any attitude, with any power setting. [Figure 4-2]

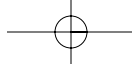
The practice of stall recovery and the development of awareness of stalls are of primary importance in pilot training. The objectives in performing intentional stalls are to familiarize the pilot with the conditions that produce stalls, to assist in recognizing an approaching stall, and to develop the habit of taking prompt preventive or corrective action.

Intentional stalls should be performed at an altitude that will provide adequate height above the ground for recovery and return to normal level flight. Though it depends on the degree to which a stall has progressed, most stalls require some loss of altitude during recovery. The longer it takes to recognize the approaching stall, the more complete the stall is likely to become, and the greater the loss of altitude to be expected.

### RECOGNITION OF STALLS

Pilots must recognize the flight conditions that are conducive to stalls and know how to apply the necessary corrective action. They should learn to recognize an approaching stall by sight, sound, and feel. The following cues may be useful in recognizing the approaching stall.

- Vision is useful in detecting a stall condition by noting the attitude of the airplane. This sense can only be relied on when the stall is the result of an unusual attitude of the airplane. Since the airplane can also be stalled from a normal attitude, vision in this instance would be of little help in detecting the approaching stall.
- Hearing is also helpful in sensing a stall condition. In the case of fixed-pitch propeller airplanes in a power-on condition, a change in sound due to loss of revolutions per minute (r.p.m.) is particularly noticeable. The lessening of the noise made by the air flowing along the airplane structure as airspeed decreases is also quite noticeable, and when the stall is almost complete, vibration and incident noises often increase greatly.
- Kinesthesia, or the sensing of changes in direction or speed of motion, is probably the most important and the best indicator to the trained and experienced pilot. If this sensitivity is properly developed, it will warn of a decrease in speed or the beginning of a settling or mushing of the airplane.
- Feel is an important sense in recognizing the onset of a stall. The feeling of control pressures is very important. As speed is reduced, the resistance to pressures on the controls becomes progressively less. Pressures exerted on the controls tend to become movements of the control surfaces. The



lag between these movements and the response of the airplane becomes greater, until in a complete stall all controls can be moved with almost no resistance, and with little immediate effect on the airplane. Just before the stall occurs, buffeting, uncontrollable pitching, or vibrations may begin.

Several types of stall warning indicators have been developed to warn pilots of an approaching stall. The use of such indicators is valuable and desirable, but the reason for practicing stalls is to learn to recognize stalls without the benefit of warning devices.

### FUNDAMENTALS OF STALL RECOVERY

During the practice of intentional stalls, the real objective is not to learn how to stall an airplane, but to learn how to recognize an approaching stall and take prompt corrective action. [Figure 4-3] Though the recovery actions must be taken in a coordinated manner, they are broken down into three actions here for explanation purposes.

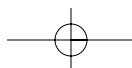
First, at the indication of a stall, the pitch attitude and angle of attack must be decreased positively and

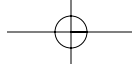
immediately. Since the basic cause of a stall is always an excessive angle of attack, the cause must first be eliminated by releasing the back-elevator pressure that was necessary to attain that angle of attack or by moving the elevator control forward. This lowers the nose and returns the wing to an effective angle of attack. The amount of elevator control pressure or movement used depends on the design of the airplane, the severity of the stall, and the proximity of the ground. In some airplanes, a moderate movement of the elevator control—perhaps slightly forward of neutral—is enough, while in others a forcible push to the full forward position may be required. An excessive negative load on the wings caused by excessive forward movement of the elevator may impede, rather than hasten, the stall recovery. The object is to reduce the angle of attack but only enough to allow the wing to regain lift.

Second, the maximum allowable power should be applied to increase the airplane's airspeed and assist in reducing the wing's angle of attack. The throttle should be promptly, but smoothly, advanced to the maximum allowable power. The flight instructor



Figure 4-3. Stall recognition and recovery.





should emphasize, however, that power is not essential for a safe stall recovery if sufficient altitude is available. Reducing the angle of attack is the only way of recovering from a stall regardless of the amount of power used.

Although stall recoveries should be practiced without, as well as with the use of power, in most actual stalls the application of more power, if available, is an integral part of the stall recovery. Usually, the greater the power applied, the less the loss of altitude.

Maximum allowable power applied at the instant of a stall will usually not cause overspeeding of an engine equipped with a fixed-pitch propeller, due to the heavy air load imposed on the propeller at slow airspeeds. However, it will be necessary to reduce the power as airspeed is gained after the stall recovery so the airspeed will not become excessive. When performing intentional stalls, the tachometer indication should never be allowed to exceed the red line (maximum allowable r.p.m.) marked on the instrument.

Third, straight-and-level flight should be regained with coordinated use of all controls.

Practice in both power-on and power-off stalls is important because it simulates stall conditions that could occur during normal flight maneuvers. For example, the power-on stalls are practiced to show what could happen if the airplane were climbing at an excessively nose-high attitude immediately after takeoff or during a climbing turn. The power-off turning stalls are practiced to show what could happen if the controls are improperly used during a turn from the base leg to the final approach. The power-off straight-ahead stall simulates the attitude and flight characteristics of a particular airplane during the final approach and landing.

Usually, the first few practices should include only approaches to stalls, with recovery initiated as soon as the first buffeting or partial loss of control is noted. In

this way, the pilot can become familiar with the indications of an approaching stall without actually stalling the airplane. Once the pilot becomes comfortable with this procedure, the airplane should be slowed in such a manner that it stalls in as near a level pitch attitude as is possible. The student pilot must not be allowed to form the impression that in all circumstances, a high pitch attitude is necessary to exceed the critical angle of attack, or that in all circumstances, a level or near level pitch attitude is indicative of a low angle of attack. Recovery should be practiced first *without* the addition of power, by merely relieving enough back-elevator pressure that the stall is broken and the airplane assumes a normal glide attitude. The instructor should also introduce the student to a secondary stall at this point. Stall recoveries should then be practiced with the addition of power to determine how effective power will be in executing a safe recovery and minimizing altitude loss.

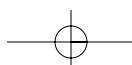
Stall accidents usually result from an inadvertent stall at a low altitude in which a recovery was not accomplished prior to contact with the surface. As a preventive measure, stalls should be practiced at an altitude which will allow recovery no lower than 1,500 feet AGL. To recover with a minimum loss of altitude requires a reduction in the angle of attack (lowering the airplane's pitch attitude), application of power, and termination of the descent without entering another (secondary) stall.

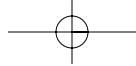
### USE OF AILERONS/RUDDER IN STALL RECOVERY

Different types of airplanes have different stall characteristics. Most airplanes are designed so that the wings will stall progressively outward from the wing roots (where the wing attaches to the fuselage) to the wingtips. This is the result of designing the wings in a manner that the wingtips have less angle of incidence than the wing roots. [Figure 4-4] Such a design feature causes the wingtips to have a smaller angle of attack than the wing roots during flight.



Figure 4-4. Wingtip washout.





Exceeding the critical angle of attack causes a stall; the wing roots of an airplane will exceed the critical angle before the wingtips, and the wing roots will stall first. The wings are designed in this manner so that aileron control will be available at high angles of attack (slow airspeed) and give the airplane more stable stalling characteristics.

When the airplane is in a stalled condition, the wingtips continue to provide some degree of lift, and the ailerons still have some control effect. During recovery from a stall, the return of lift begins at the tips and progresses toward the roots. Thus, the ailerons can be used to level the wings.

Using the ailerons requires finesse to avoid an aggravated stall condition. For example, if the right wing dropped during the stall and excessive aileron control were applied to the left to raise the wing, the aileron deflected downward (right wing) would produce a greater angle of attack (and drag), and possibly a more complete stall at the tip as the critical angle of attack is exceeded. The increase in drag created by the high angle of attack on that wing might cause the airplane to yaw in that direction. This adverse yaw could result in a spin unless directional control was maintained by rudder, and/or the aileron control sufficiently reduced.

Even though excessive aileron pressure may have been applied, a spin will not occur if directional (yaw) control is maintained by timely application of coordinated rudder pressure. Therefore, it is important that the rudder be used properly during both the entry and the recovery from a stall. The primary use of the rudder in stall recoveries is to counteract any tendency of the airplane to yaw or slip. The correct recovery technique would be to decrease the pitch attitude by applying forward-elevator pressure to break the stall, advancing the throttle to increase airspeed, and simultaneously maintaining directional control with coordinated use of the aileron and rudder.

### **STALL CHARACTERISTICS**

Because of engineering design variations, the stall characteristics for all airplanes cannot be specifically described; however, the similarities found in small general aviation training-type airplanes are noteworthy enough to be considered. It will be noted that the power-on and power-off stall warning indications will be different. The power-off stall will have less noticeable clues (buffeting, shaking) than the power-on stall. In the power-off stall, the predominant clue can be the elevator control position (full up-elevator against the stops) and a high descent rate. When performing the power-on stall, the buffeting will likely be the predominant clue that provides a positive indication of the stall. For the purpose of airplane

certification, the stall warning may be furnished either through the inherent aerodynamic qualities of the airplane, or by a stall warning device that will give a clear distinguishable indication of the stall. Most airplanes are equipped with a stall warning device.

The factors that affect the stalling characteristics of the airplane are balance, bank, pitch attitude, coordination, drag, and power. The pilot should learn the effect of the stall characteristics of the airplane being flown and the proper correction. It should be reemphasized that a stall can occur at any airspeed, in any attitude, or at any power setting, depending on the total number of factors affecting the particular airplane.

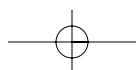
A number of factors may be induced as the result of other factors. For example, when the airplane is in a nose-high turning attitude, the angle of bank has a tendency to increase. This occurs because with the airspeed decreasing, the airplane begins flying in a smaller and smaller arc. Since the outer wing is moving in a larger radius and traveling faster than the inner wing, it has more lift and causes an overbanking tendency. At the same time, because of the decreasing airspeed and lift on both wings, the pitch attitude tends to lower. In addition, since the airspeed is decreasing while the power setting remains constant, the effect of torque becomes more prominent, causing the airplane to yaw.

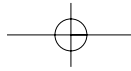
During the practice of power-on turning stalls, to compensate for these factors and to maintain a constant flight attitude until the stall occurs, aileron pressure must be continually adjusted to keep the bank attitude constant. At the same time, back-elevator pressure must be continually increased to maintain the pitch attitude, as well as right rudder pressure increased to keep the ball centered and to prevent adverse yaw from changing the turn rate. If the bank is allowed to become too steep, the vertical component of lift decreases and makes it even more difficult to maintain a constant pitch attitude.

Whenever practicing turning stalls, a constant pitch and bank attitude should be maintained until the stall occurs. Whatever control pressures are necessary should be applied even though the controls appear to be crossed (aileron pressure in one direction, rudder pressure in the opposite direction). During the entry to a power-on turning stall to the right, in particular, the controls will be crossed to some extent. This is due to right rudder pressure being used to overcome torque and left aileron pressure being used to prevent the bank from increasing.

### **APPROACHES TO STALLS (IMMINENT STALLS)—POWER-ON OR POWER-OFF**

An imminent stall is one in which the airplane is approaching a stall but is not allowed to completely





stall. This stall maneuver is primarily for practice in retaining (or regaining) full control of the airplane immediately upon recognizing that it is almost in a stall or that a stall is likely to occur if timely preventive action is not taken.

The practice of these stalls is of particular value in developing the pilot's sense of feel for executing maneuvers in which maximum airplane performance is required. These maneuvers require flight with the airplane approaching a stall, and recovery initiated before a stall occurs. As in all maneuvers that involve significant changes in altitude or direction, the pilot must ensure that the area is clear of other air traffic before executing the maneuver.

These stalls may be entered and performed in the attitudes and with the same configuration of the basic full stalls or other maneuvers described in this chapter. However, instead of allowing a complete stall, when the first buffeting or decay of control effectiveness is noted, the angle of attack must be reduced immediately by releasing the back-elevator pressure and applying whatever additional power is necessary. Since the airplane will not be completely stalled, the pitch attitude needs to be decreased only to a point where minimum controllable airspeed is attained or until adequate control effectiveness is regained.

The pilot must promptly recognize the indication of a stall and take timely, positive control action to prevent a full stall. Performance is unsatisfactory if a full stall occurs, if an excessively low pitch attitude is attained, or if the pilot fails to take timely action to avoid excessive airspeed, excessive loss of altitude, or a spin.

### FULL STALLS POWER-OFF

The practice of power-off stalls is usually performed with normal landing approach conditions in simulation

of an accidental stall occurring during landing approaches. Airplanes equipped with flaps and/or retractable landing gear should be in the landing configuration. Airspeed in excess of the normal approach speed should not be carried into a stall entry since it could result in an abnormally nose-high attitude. Before executing these practice stalls, the pilot must be sure the area is clear of other air traffic.

After extending the landing gear, applying carburetor heat (if applicable), and retarding the throttle to idle (or normal approach power), the airplane should be held at a constant altitude in level flight until the airspeed decelerates to that of a normal approach. The airplane should then be smoothly nosed down into the normal approach attitude to maintain that airspeed. Wing flaps should be extended and pitch attitude adjusted to maintain the airspeed.

When the approach attitude and airspeed have stabilized, the airplane's nose should be smoothly raised to an attitude that will induce a stall. Directional control should be maintained with the rudder, the wings held level by use of the ailerons, and a constant-pitch attitude maintained with the elevator until the stall occurs. The stall will be recognized by clues, such as full up-elevator, high descent rate, uncontrollable nosedown pitching, and possible buffeting.

Recovering from the stall should be accomplished by reducing the angle of attack, releasing back-elevator pressure, and advancing the throttle to maximum allowable power. Right rudder pressure is necessary to overcome the engine torque effects as power is advanced and the nose is being lowered. [Figure 4-5]

The nose should be lowered as necessary to regain flying speed and returned to straight-and-level flight

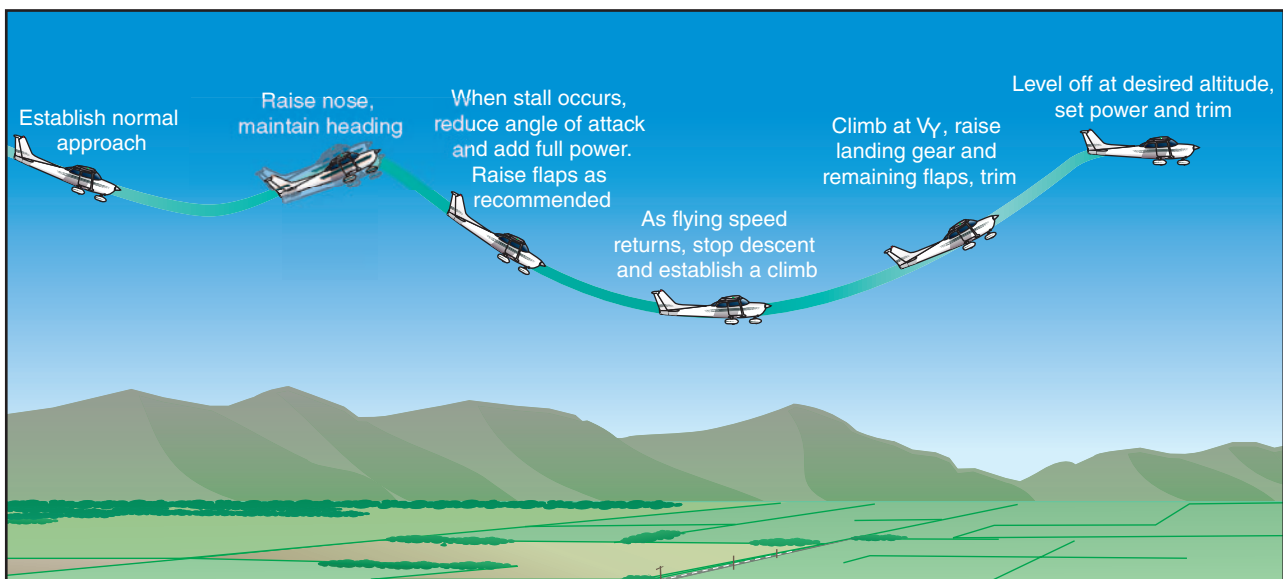
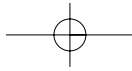


Figure 4-5. Power-off stall and recovery.





attitude. After establishing a positive rate of climb, the flaps and landing gear are retracted, as necessary, and when in level flight, the throttle should be returned to cruise power setting. After recovery is complete, a climb or go-around procedure should be initiated, as the situation dictates, to assure a minimum loss of altitude.

Recovery from power-off stalls should also be practiced from shallow banked turns to simulate an inadvertent stall during a turn from base leg to final approach. During the practice of these stalls, care should be taken that the turn continues at a uniform rate until the complete stall occurs. If the power-off turn is not properly coordinated while approaching the stall, wallowing may result when the stall occurs. If the airplane is in a slip, the outer wing may stall first and whip downward abruptly. This does not affect the recovery procedure in any way; the angle of attack must be reduced, the heading maintained, and the wings leveled by coordinated use of the controls. In the practice of turning stalls, no attempt should be made to stall the airplane on a predetermined heading. However, to simulate a turn from base to final approach, the stall normally should be made to occur within a heading change of approximately  $90^\circ$ .

After the stall occurs, the recovery should be made straight ahead with minimum loss of altitude, and accomplished in accordance with the recovery procedure discussed earlier.

Recoveries from power-off stalls should be accomplished both with, and without, the addition of power, and may be initiated either just after the stall occurs, or after the nose has pitched down through the level flight attitude.

## FULL STALLS POWER-ON

Power-on stall recoveries are practiced from straight climbs, and climbing turns with  $15$  to  $20^\circ$  banks, to simulate an accidental stall occurring during takeoffs and climbs. Airplanes equipped with flaps and/or retractable landing gear should normally be in the takeoff configuration; however, power-on stalls should also be practiced with the airplane in a clean configuration (flaps and/or gear retracted) as in departure and normal climbs.

After establishing the takeoff or climb configuration, the airplane should be slowed to the normal lift-off speed while clearing the area for other air traffic. When the desired speed is attained, the power should be set at takeoff power for the takeoff stall or the recommended climb power for the departure stall while establishing a climb attitude. The purpose of reducing the airspeed to lift-off airspeed before the throttle is advanced to the recommended setting is to avoid an excessively steep nose-up attitude for a long period before the airplane stalls.

After the climb attitude is established, the nose is then brought smoothly upward to an attitude obviously impossible for the airplane to maintain and is held at that attitude until the full stall occurs. In most airplanes, after attaining the stalling attitude, the elevator control must be moved progressively further back as the airspeed decreases until, at the full stall, it will have reached its limit and cannot be moved back any farther.

Recovery from the stall should be accomplished by immediately reducing the angle of attack by positively

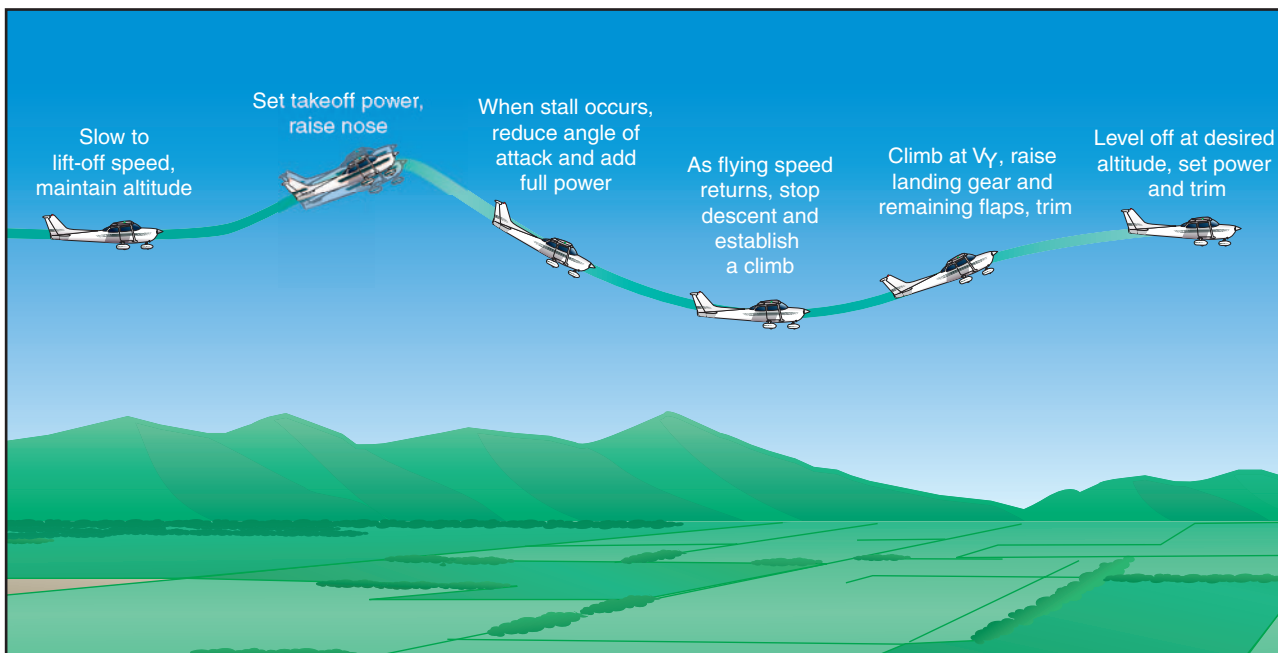
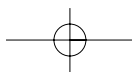
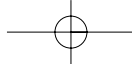


Figure 4-6. Power-on stall.





releasing back-elevator pressure and, in the case of a departure stall, smoothly advancing the throttle to maximum allowable power. In this case, since the throttle is already at the climb power setting, the addition of power will be relatively slight. [Figure 4-6]

The nose should be lowered as necessary to regain flying speed with the minimum loss of altitude and then raised to climb attitude. Then, the airplane should be returned to the normal straight-and-level flight attitude, and when in normal level flight, the throttle should be returned to cruise power setting. The pilot must recognize instantly when the stall has occurred and take prompt action to prevent a prolonged stalled condition.

### SECONDARY STALL

This stall is called a secondary stall since it may occur after a recovery from a preceding stall. It is caused by attempting to hasten the completion of a stall recovery before the airplane has regained sufficient flying speed. [Figure 4-7] When this stall occurs, the back-elevator pressure should again be released just as in a normal stall recovery. When sufficient airspeed has been regained, the airplane can then be returned to straight-and-level flight.

This stall usually occurs when the pilot uses abrupt control input to return to straight-and-level flight after a stall or spin recovery. It also occurs when the pilot fails to reduce the angle of attack sufficiently during stall recovery by not lowering pitch attitude sufficiently, or by attempting to break the stall by using power only.

### ACCELERATED STALLS

Though the stalls just discussed normally occur at a specific airspeed, the pilot must thoroughly understand

that all stalls result solely from attempts to fly at excessively high angles of attack. During flight, the angle of attack of an airplane wing is determined by a number of factors, the most important of which are the airspeed, the gross weight of the airplane, and the load factors imposed by maneuvering.

At the same gross weight, airplane configuration, and power setting, a given airplane will consistently stall at the same indicated airspeed if no acceleration is involved. The airplane will, however, stall at a higher indicated airspeed when excessive maneuvering loads are imposed by steep turns, pull-ups, or other abrupt changes in its flightpath. Stalls entered from such flight situations are called “accelerated maneuver stalls,” a term, which has no reference to the airspeeds involved.

Stalls which result from abrupt maneuvers tend to be more rapid, or severe, than the unaccelerated stalls, and because they occur at higher-than-normal airspeeds, and/or may occur at lower than anticipated pitch attitudes, they may be unexpected by an inexperienced pilot. Failure to take immediate steps toward recovery when an accelerated stall occurs may result in a complete loss of flight control, notably, power-on spins.

This stall should never be practiced with wing flaps in the extended position due to the lower “G” load limitations in that configuration.

Accelerated maneuver stalls should not be performed in any airplane, which is prohibited from such maneuvers by its type certification restrictions or Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) and/or Pilot’s Operating Handbook (POH). If they are permitted, they should be performed with a bank of approximately 45°, and in no case at a speed greater

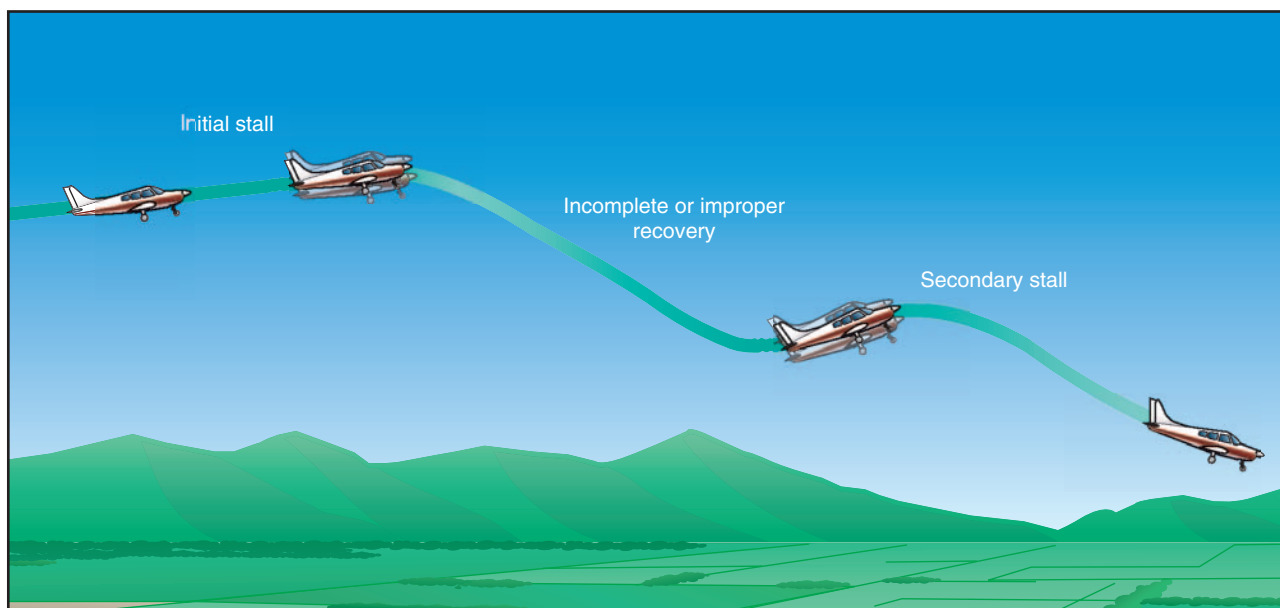
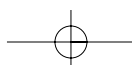
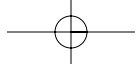


Figure 4-7. Secondary stall.





than the airplane manufacturer's recommended airspeeds or the design maneuvering speed specified for the airplane. The design maneuvering speed is the maximum speed at which the airplane can be stalled or full available aerodynamic control will not exceed the airplane's limit load factor. At or below this speed, the airplane will usually stall before the limit load factor can be exceeded. Those speeds must not be exceeded because of the extremely high structural loads that are imposed on the airplane, especially if there is turbulence. In most cases, these stalls should be performed at no more than 1.2 times the normal stall speed.

The objective of demonstrating accelerated stalls is not to develop competency in setting up the stall, but rather to learn how they may occur and to develop the ability to recognize such stalls immediately, and to take prompt, effective recovery action. It is important that recoveries are made at the first indication of a stall, or immediately after the stall has fully developed; a prolonged stall condition should never be allowed.

An airplane will stall during a coordinated steep turn exactly as it does from straight flight, except that the pitching and rolling actions tend to be more sudden. If the airplane is slipping toward the inside of the turn at the time the stall occurs, it tends to roll rapidly toward the outside of the turn as the nose pitches down because the outside wing stalls before the inside wing. If the airplane is skidding toward the outside of the turn, it will have a tendency to roll to the inside of the turn because the inside wing stalls first. If the coordination of the turn at the time of the stall is accurate, the airplane's nose will pitch away from the pilot just as it does in a straight flight stall, since both wings stall simultaneously.

An accelerated stall demonstration is entered by establishing the desired flight attitude, then smoothly, firmly, and progressively increasing the angle of attack until a stall occurs. Because of the rapidly changing flight attitude, sudden stall entry, and possible loss of altitude, it is extremely vital that the area be clear of other aircraft and the entry altitude be adequate for safe recovery.

This demonstration stall, as in all stalls, is accomplished by exerting excessive back-elevator pressure. Most frequently it would occur during improperly executed steep turns, stall and spin recoveries, and pullouts from steep dives. The objectives are to determine the stall characteristics of the airplane and develop the ability to instinctively recover at the onset of a stall at other-than-normal stall speed or flight attitudes. An accelerated stall, although usually demonstrated in steep turns, may actually be encountered any time excessive back-elevator pressure

is applied and/or the angle of attack is increased too rapidly.

From straight-and-level flight at maneuvering speed or less, the airplane should be rolled into a steep level flight turn and back-elevator pressure gradually applied. After the turn and bank are established, back-elevator pressure should be smoothly and steadily increased. The resulting apparent centrifugal force will push the pilot's body down in the seat, increase the wing loading, and decrease the airspeed. After the airspeed reaches the design maneuvering speed or within 20 knots above the unaccelerated stall speed, back-elevator pressure should be firmly increased until a definite stall occurs. These speed restrictions must be observed to prevent exceeding the load limit of the airplane.

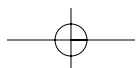
When the airplane stalls, recovery should be made promptly, by releasing sufficient back-elevator pressure and increasing power to reduce the angle of attack. If an uncoordinated turn is made, one wing may tend to drop suddenly, causing the airplane to roll in that direction. If this occurs, the excessive back-elevator pressure must be released, power added, and the airplane returned to straight-and-level flight with coordinated control pressure.

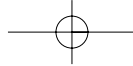
The pilot should recognize when the stall is imminent and take prompt action to prevent a completely stalled condition. It is imperative that a prolonged stall, excessive airspeed, excessive loss of altitude, or spin be avoided.

### **CROSS-CONTROL STALL**

The objective of a cross-control stall demonstration maneuver is to show the effect of improper control technique and to emphasize the importance of using coordinated control pressures whenever making turns. This type of stall occurs with the controls crossed—aileron pressure applied in one direction and rudder pressure in the opposite direction.

In addition, when excessive back-elevator pressure is applied, a cross-control stall may result. This is a stall that is most apt to occur during a poorly planned and executed base-to-final approach turn, and often is the result of overshooting the centerline of the runway during that turn. Normally, the proper action to correct for overshooting the runway is to increase the rate of turn by using coordinated aileron and rudder. At the relatively low altitude of a base-to-final approach turn, improperly trained pilots may be apprehensive of steepening the bank to increase the rate of turn, and rather than steepening the bank, they hold the bank constant and attempt to increase the rate of turn by adding more rudder pressure in an effort to align it with the runway.





The addition of inside rudder pressure will cause the speed of the outer wing to increase, therefore, creating greater lift on that wing. To keep that wing from rising and to maintain a constant angle of bank, opposite aileron pressure needs to be applied. The added inside rudder pressure will also cause the nose to lower in relation to the horizon. Consequently, additional back-elevator pressure would be required to maintain a constant-pitch attitude. The resulting condition is a turn with rudder applied in one direction, aileron in the opposite direction, and excessive back-elevator pressure—a pronounced cross-control condition.

Since the airplane is in a skidding turn during the cross-control condition, the wing on the outside of the turn speeds up and produces more lift than the inside wing; thus, the airplane starts to increase its bank. The down aileron on the inside of the turn helps drag that wing back, slowing it up and decreasing its lift, which requires more aileron application. This further causes the airplane to roll. The roll may be so fast that it is possible the bank will be vertical or past vertical before it can be stopped.

For the demonstration of the maneuver, it is important that it be entered at a safe altitude because of the possible extreme nosedown attitude and loss of altitude that may result.

Before demonstrating this stall, the pilot should clear the area for other air traffic while slowly retarding the throttle. Then the landing gear (if retractable gear) should be lowered, the throttle closed, and the altitude maintained until the airspeed approaches the normal glide speed. Because of the possibility of exceeding the airplane's limitations, flaps should not be extended. While the gliding attitude and airspeed are being established, the airplane should be retrimmed. When the glide is stabilized, the airplane should be rolled into a medium-banked turn to simulate a final approach turn that would overshoot the centerline of the runway.

During the turn, excessive rudder pressure should be applied in the direction of the turn but the bank held constant by applying opposite aileron pressure. At the same time, increased back-elevator pressure is required to keep the nose from lowering.

All of these control pressures should be increased until the airplane stalls. When the stall occurs, recovery is made by releasing the control pressures and increasing power as necessary to recover.

In a cross-control stall, the airplane often stalls with little warning. The nose may pitch down, the inside wing may suddenly drop, and the airplane may continue to roll to an inverted position. This is usually the beginning of a spin. It is obvious that close to the ground is no place to allow this to happen.

Recovery must be made before the airplane enters an abnormal attitude (vertical spiral or spin); it is a simple matter to return to straight-and-level flight by coordinated use of the controls. The pilot must be able to recognize when this stall is imminent and must take immediate action to prevent a completely stalled condition. It is imperative that this type of stall not occur during an actual approach to a landing, since recovery may be impossible prior to ground contact due to the low altitude.

The flight instructor should be aware that during traffic pattern operations, any conditions that result in overshooting the turn from base leg to final approach, dramatically increases the possibility of an unintentional accelerated stall while the airplane is in a cross-control condition.

### ELEVATOR TRIM STALL

The elevator trim stall maneuver shows what can happen when full power is applied for a go-around and positive control of the airplane is not maintained. [Figure 4-8] Such a situation may occur during a go-around procedure from a normal landing approach

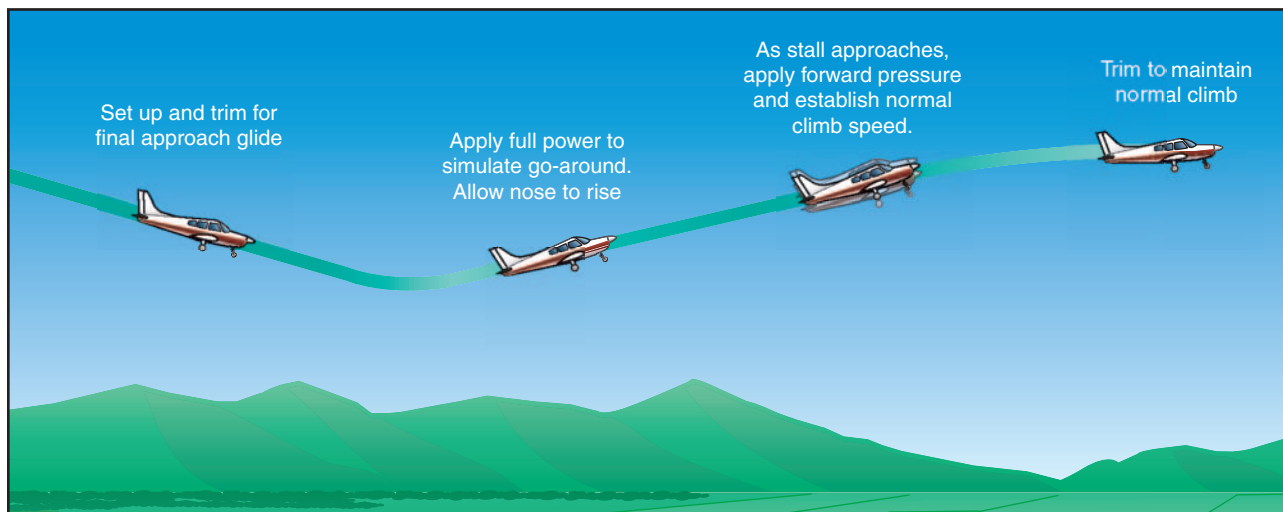
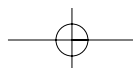
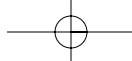


Figure 4-8. Elevator trim stall.





or a simulated forced landing approach, or immediately after a takeoff. The objective of the demonstration is to show the importance of making smooth power applications, overcoming strong trim forces and maintaining positive control of the airplane to hold safe flight attitudes, and using proper and timely trim techniques.

At a safe altitude and after ensuring that the area is clear of other air traffic, the pilot should slowly retard the throttle and extend the landing gear (if retractable gear). One-half to full flaps should be lowered, the throttle closed, and altitude maintained until the airspeed approaches the normal glide speed. When the normal glide is established, the airplane should be trimmed for the glide just as would be done during a landing approach (nose-up trim).

During this simulated final approach glide, the throttle is then advanced smoothly to maximum allowable power as would be done in a go-around procedure. The combined forces of thrust, torque, and back-elevator trim will tend to make the nose rise sharply and turn to the left.

When the throttle is fully advanced and the pitch attitude increases above the normal climbing attitude and it is apparent that a stall is approaching, adequate forward pressure must be applied to return the airplane to the normal climbing attitude. While holding the airplane in this attitude, the trim should then be adjusted to relieve the heavy control pressures and the normal go-around and level-off procedures completed.

The pilot should recognize when a stall is approaching, and take prompt action to prevent a completely stalled condition. It is imperative that a stall not occur during an actual go-around from a landing approach.

Common errors in the performance of intentional stalls are:

- Failure to adequately clear the area.
- Inability to recognize an approaching stall condition through feel for the airplane.
- Premature recovery.
- Over-reliance on the airspeed indicator while excluding other cues.
- Inadequate scanning resulting in an unintentional wing-low condition during entry.
- Excessive back-elevator pressure resulting in an exaggerated nose-up attitude during entry.

- Inadequate rudder control.
- Inadvertent secondary stall during recovery.
- Failure to maintain a constant bank angle during turning stalls.
- Excessive forward-elevator pressure during recovery resulting in negative load on the wings.
- Excessive airspeed buildup during recovery.
- Failure to take timely action to prevent a full stall during the conduct of imminent stalls.

## SPINS

A spin may be defined as an aggravated stall that results in what is termed “autorotation” wherein the airplane follows a downward corkscrew path. As the airplane rotates around a vertical axis, the rising wing is less stalled than the descending wing creating a rolling, yawing, and pitching motion. The airplane is basically being forced downward by gravity, rolling, yawing, and pitching in a spiral path. [Figure 4-9]

The autorotation results from an unequal angle of attack on the airplane’s wings. The rising wing has a decreasing angle of attack, where the relative lift increases and the drag decreases. In effect, this wing is less stalled. Meanwhile, the descending wing has an

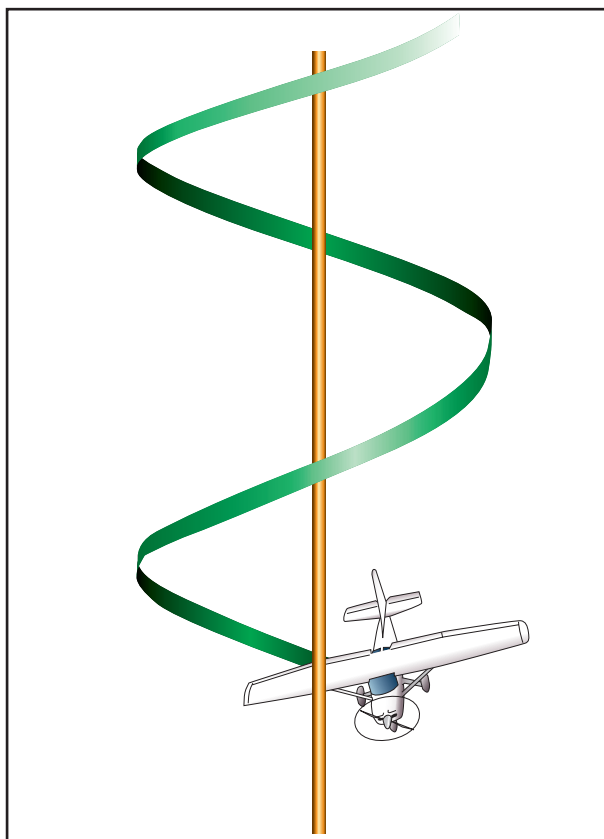
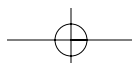
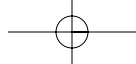


Figure 4-9. Spin—an aggravated stall and autorotation.





increasing angle of attack, past the wing's critical angle of attack (stall) where the relative lift decreases and drag increases.

A spin is caused when the airplane's wing exceeds its critical angle of attack (stall) with a sideslip or yaw acting on the airplane at, or beyond, the actual stall. During this uncoordinated maneuver, a pilot may not be aware that a critical angle of attack has been exceeded until the airplane yaws out of control toward the lowering wing. If stall recovery is not initiated immediately, the airplane may enter a spin.

If this stall occurs while the airplane is in a slipping or skidding turn, this can result in a spin entry and rotation in the direction that the rudder is being applied, regardless of which wingtip is raised.

Many airplanes have to be forced to spin and require considerable judgment and technique to get the spin started. These same airplanes that have to be forced to spin, may be accidentally put into a spin by mishandling the controls in turns, stalls, and flight at minimum controllable airspeeds. This fact is additional evidence of the necessity for the practice of stalls until the ability to recognize and recover from them is developed.

Often a wing will drop at the beginning of a stall. When this happens, the nose will attempt to move (yaw) in the direction of the low wing. This is where use of the rudder is important during a stall. The correct amount of opposite rudder must be applied to keep the nose from yawing toward the low wing. By maintaining directional control and not allowing the nose to yaw toward the low wing, before stall recovery is initiated, a spin will be averted. If the nose is allowed to yaw during the stall, the airplane will begin to slip in the direction of the lowered wing, and will enter a spin. An airplane must be stalled in order to enter a spin; therefore, continued practice in stalls will help the pilot develop a more instinctive and prompt reaction in recognizing an approaching spin. It is essential to learn to apply immediate corrective action any time it is apparent that the airplane is nearing spin conditions. If it is impossible to avoid a spin, the pilot should immediately execute spin recovery procedures.

### SPIN PROCEDURES

The flight instructor should demonstrate spins in those airplanes that are approved for spins. Special spin procedures or techniques required for a particular airplane are not presented here. Before beginning any spin operations, the following items should be reviewed.

- The airplane's AFM/POH limitations section, placards, or type certification data, to determine if the airplane is approved for spins.

- Weight and balance limitations.
- Recommended entry and recovery procedures.
- The requirements for parachutes. It would be appropriate to review a current Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 91 for the latest parachute requirements.

A thorough airplane preflight should be accomplished with special emphasis on excess or loose items that may affect the weight, center of gravity, and controllability of the airplane. Slack or loose control cables (particularly rudder and elevator) could prevent full anti-spin control deflections and delay or preclude recovery in some airplanes.

Prior to beginning spin training, the flight area, above and below the airplane, must be clear of other air traffic. This may be accomplished while slowing the airplane for the spin entry. All spin training should be initiated at an altitude high enough for a completed recovery at or above 1,500 feet AGL.

It may be appropriate to introduce spin training by first practicing both power-on and power-off stalls, in a clean configuration. This practice would be used to familiarize the student with the airplane's specific stall and recovery characteristics. Care should be taken with the handling of the power (throttle) in entries and during spins. Carburetor heat should be applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

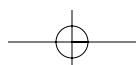
There are four phases of a spin: **entry**, **incipient**, **developed**, and **recovery**. [Figure 4-10 on next page]

### ENTRY PHASE

The entry phase is where the pilot provides the necessary elements for the spin, either accidentally or intentionally. The entry procedure for demonstrating a spin is similar to a power-off stall. During the entry, the power should be reduced slowly to idle, while simultaneously raising the nose to a pitch attitude that will ensure a stall. As the airplane approaches a stall, smoothly apply full rudder in the direction of the desired spin rotation while applying full back (up) elevator to the limit of travel. Always maintain the ailerons in the neutral position during the spin procedure unless AFM/POH specifies otherwise.

### INCIPIENT PHASE

The incipient phase is from the time the airplane stalls and rotation starts until the spin has fully developed. This change may take up to two turns for most airplanes. Incipient spins that are not allowed to develop into a steady-state spin are the most commonly used in the introduction to spin training and recovery techniques. In



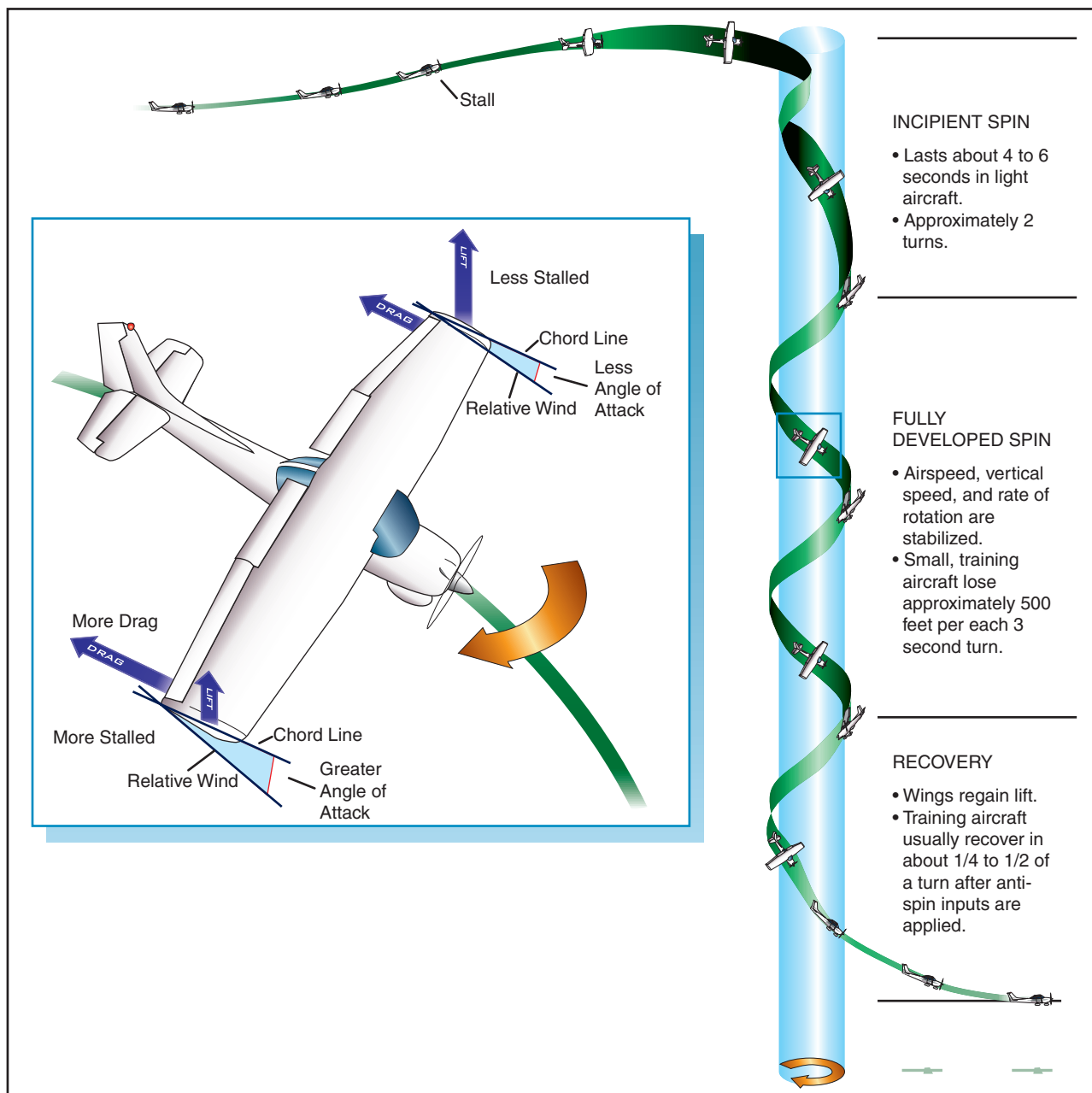
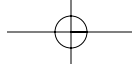


Figure 4-10. Spin entry and recovery.

this phase, the aerodynamic and inertial forces have not achieved a balance. As the incipient spin develops, the indicated airspeed should be near or below stall airspeed, and the turn-and-slip indicator should indicate the direction of the spin.

The incipient spin recovery procedure should be commenced prior to the completion of 360° of rotation. The pilot should apply full rudder opposite the direction of rotation. If the pilot is not sure of the direction of the spin, check the turn-and-slip indicator; it will show a deflection in the direction of rotation.

#### DEVELOPED PHASE

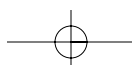
The developed phase occurs when the airplane's angular rotation rate, airspeed, and vertical speed are

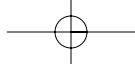
stabilized while in a flightpath that is nearly vertical. This is where airplane aerodynamic forces and inertial forces are in balance, and the attitude, angles, and self-sustaining motions about the vertical axis are constant or repetitive. The spin is in equilibrium.

#### RECOVERY PHASE

The recovery phase occurs when the angle of attack of the wings decreases below the critical angle of attack and autorotation slows. Then the nose steepens and rotation stops. This phase may last for a quarter turn to several turns.

To recover, control inputs are initiated to disrupt the spin equilibrium by stopping the rotation and stall. To accomplish spin recovery, the manufacturer's





recommended procedures should be followed. In the absence of the manufacturer's recommended spin recovery procedures and techniques, the following spin recovery procedures are recommended.

**Step 1—REDUCE THE POWER (THROTTLE) TO IDLE.** Power aggravates the spin characteristics. It usually results in a flatter spin attitude and increased rotation rates.

**Step 2—POSITION THE AILERONS TO NEUTRAL.** Ailerons may have an adverse effect on spin recovery. Aileron control in the direction of the spin may speed up the rate of rotation and delay the recovery. Aileron control opposite the direction of the spin may cause the down aileron to move the wing deeper into the stall and aggravate the situation. The best procedure is to ensure that the ailerons are neutral.

**Step 3—APPLY FULL OPPOSITE RUDDER AGAINST THE ROTATION.** Make sure that full (against the stop) opposite rudder has been applied.

**Step 4—APPLY A POSITIVE AND BRISK, STRAIGHT FORWARD MOVEMENT OF THE ELEVATOR CONTROL FORWARD OF THE NEUTRAL TO BREAK THE STALL.** This should be done immediately after full rudder application. The forceful movement of the elevator will decrease the excessive angle of attack and break the stall. The controls should be held firmly in this position. When the stall is "broken," the spinning will stop.

**Step 5—AFTER SPIN ROTATION STOPS, NEUTRALIZE THE RUDDER.** If the rudder is not neutralized at this time, the ensuing increased airspeed acting upon a deflected rudder will cause a yawing or skidding effect.

Slow and overly cautious control movements during spin recovery must be avoided. In certain cases it has been found that such movements result in the airplane continuing to spin indefinitely, even with anti-spin inputs. A brisk and positive technique, on the other hand, results in a more positive spin recovery.

**Step 6—BEGIN APPLYING BACK-ELEVATOR PRESSURE TO RAISE THE NOSE TO LEVEL FLIGHT.** Caution must be used not to apply excessive back-elevator pressure after the rotation stops. Excessive back-elevator pressure can cause a secondary stall and result in another spin. Care should be taken not to exceed the "G" load limits and airspeed limitations during recovery. If the

flaps and/or retractable landing gear are extended prior to the spin, they should be retracted as soon as possible after spin entry.

It is important to remember that the above spin recovery procedures and techniques are recommended for use only in the absence of the manufacturer's procedures. Before any pilot attempts to begin spin training, that pilot must be familiar with the procedures provided by the manufacturer for spin recovery.

The most common problems in spin recovery include pilot confusion as to the direction of spin rotation and whether the maneuver is a spin versus spiral. If the airspeed is increasing, the airplane is no longer in a spin but in a spiral. In a spin, the airplane is stalled. The indicated airspeed, therefore, should reflect stall speed.

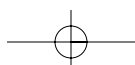
## INTENTIONAL SPINS

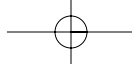
The *intentional spinning* of an airplane, for which the spin maneuver is not specifically approved, is NOT authorized by this handbook or by the Code of Federal Regulations. The official sources for determining if the spin maneuver IS APPROVED or NOT APPROVED for a specific airplane are:

- Type Certificate Data Sheets or the Aircraft Specifications.
- The limitation section of the FAA-approved AFM/POH. The limitation sections may provide additional specific requirements for spin authorization, such as limiting gross weight, CG range, and amount of fuel.
- On a placard located in clear view of the pilot in the airplane, **NO ACROBATIC MANEUVERS INCLUDING SPINS APPROVED**. In airplanes placarded against spins, there is no assurance that recovery from a fully developed spin is possible.

There are occurrences involving airplanes wherein spin restrictions are *intentionally* ignored by some pilots. Despite the installation of placards prohibiting intentional spins in these airplanes, a number of pilots, and some flight instructors, attempt to justify the maneuver, rationalizing that the spin restriction results merely because of a "technicality" in the airworthiness standards.

Some pilots reason that the airplane was spin tested during its certification process and, therefore, no problem should result from demonstrating or practicing spins. However, those pilots overlook the fact that a normal category airplane certification only requires the airplane recover from a one-turn spin in not more than one additional turn or 3 seconds,





whichever takes longer. This same test of controllability can also be used in certificating an airplane in the Utility category (14 CFR section 23.221 (b)).

The point is that 360° of rotation (one-turn spin) does not provide a stabilized spin. If the airplane's controllability has not been explored by the engineering test pilot beyond the certification requirements, prolonged spins (inadvertent or intentional) in that airplane place an operating pilot in an unexplored flight situation. Recovery may be difficult or impossible.

In 14 CFR part 23, "Airworthiness Standards: Normal, Utility, Acrobatic, and Commuter Category Airplanes," there are no requirements for investigation of *controllability* in a true spinning condition for the Normal category airplanes. The one-turn "margin of safety" is essentially a check of the airplane's controllability in a delayed recovery from a *stall*. Therefore, *in airplanes placarded against spins there is absolutely no assurance whatever that recovery from a fully developed spin is possible under any circumstances*. The pilot of an airplane placarded against intentional spins should assume that the airplane may well become uncontrollable in a spin.

## WEIGHT AND BALANCE REQUIREMENTS

With each airplane that is approved for spinning, the weight and balance requirements are important for safe performance and recovery from the spin maneuver. Pilots must be aware that just minor weight or balance changes can affect the airplane's spin recovery characteristics. Such changes can either alter or enhance the spin maneuver and/or recovery characteristics. For example, the addition of weight in the aft baggage compartment, or additional fuel, may still permit the airplane to be operated within CG, but could seriously affect the spin and recovery characteristics.

An airplane that may be difficult to spin intentionally in the Utility Category (restricted aft CG and reduced weight) could have less resistance to spin entry in the Normal Category (less restricted aft CG and increased weight). This situation is due to the airplane being able to generate a higher angle of attack and load factor. Furthermore, an airplane that is approved for spins in the Utility Category, but loaded in the Normal Category, may not recover from a spin that is allowed to progress beyond the incipient phase.

Common errors in the performance of *intentional* spins are:

- Failure to apply full rudder pressure in the desired spin direction during spin entry.
- Failure to apply and maintain full up-elevator pressure during spin entry, resulting in a spiral.
- Failure to achieve a fully stalled condition prior to spin entry.
- Failure to apply full rudder against the spin during recovery.
- Failure to apply sufficient forward-elevator pressure during recovery.
- Failure to neutralize the rudder during recovery after rotation stops, resulting in a possible secondary spin.
- Slow and overly cautious control movements during recovery.
- Excessive back-elevator pressure after rotation stops, resulting in possible secondary stall.
- Insufficient back-elevator pressure during recovery resulting in excessive airspeed.

