

# Thomas P. Turner's Mastery of Flight

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## FLYING LESSONS for March 21, 2024

FLYING LESSONS uses recent mishap reports to consider what *might* have contributed to accidents, so you can make better decisions if you face similar circumstances. In most cases design characteristics of a specific airplane have little direct bearing on the possible causes of aircraft accidents—but knowing how your airplane's systems respond can make the difference in your success as the scenario unfolds. So apply these FLYING LESSONS to the specific airplane you fly. Verify all technical information before applying it to your aircraft or operation, with manufacturers' data and recommendations taking precedence. **You are pilot in command and are ultimately responsible for the decisions you make.**

FLYING LESSONS is an independent product of MASTERY FLIGHT TRAINING, INC.

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### This week's LESSONS:

In honor of my hosts this week for the [Australian Beechcraft Society](#) biennial training conference this week in Cowra, New South Wales—my seventh live presentation Down Under, dating back 22 years—this week's LESSONS are inspired by [an Australian Transport Safety Bureau \(ATSB\) accident investigation report](#).

See:

<http://www.abs.org.au>

[https://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation\\_reports/2024/report/ao-2023-016](https://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation_reports/2024/report/ao-2023-016)



### What happened

On the morning of April 6 2023, a chartered GippsAero GA8 Airvan...took off from Geraldton Airport to Rat Island aircraft landing area in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands, Western Australia. A pilot and 6 passengers were on board.



GA8 Airvan (*not the accident aircraft*)

During the landing on runway 18, the aircraft did not stop before the edge of the island and tipped into shallow seawater. The pilot and passengers were uninjured. The aircraft was substantially damaged.

### What the ATSB found

The ATSB found that **the aircraft was unstable during the approach due to excessive height and airspeed**. During the landing, **the aircraft floated for a significant time and touched down approximately halfway down the runway**, with insufficient remaining runway to stop. **While the pilot recognised opportunities to conduct a go-around when they determined they were not on the correct approach profile, this was not conducted.**

Finally, the ATSB found that the pilot was possibly experiencing **fatigue** at a level known to affect human performance, due to a combination of **restricted sleep and insufficient sustenance**.

### What has been done as a result

[The charter operator] has taken safety action to improve pilot landing and **late-stage go-around training** for their single- and multi-engine piston aircraft. An increased oversight program has also been implemented to provide more regular mentoring for junior flight crew.

## Safety message

This incident highlights how an unstable approach can contribute to the risk of a runway excursion. Pilots should be prepared to conduct a go-around if the stabilised approach criteria are not met. ***The later the decision to go-around is made, the more likely that additional hazards will be present for pilots to manage.***

**We've been discussing** go-around procedures in *FLYING LESSONS* for a few weeks, beginning with [the March 7 report](#) and continuing in [last week's Debrief](#). That conversation was prompted by reports of a Beech Musketeer loss of control attempting to go around out of a pilot induced oscillation (PIO), itself the result of a hard landing.

See:

<https://thomaspturner.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024.0307-FLYING-LESSONS.pdf>

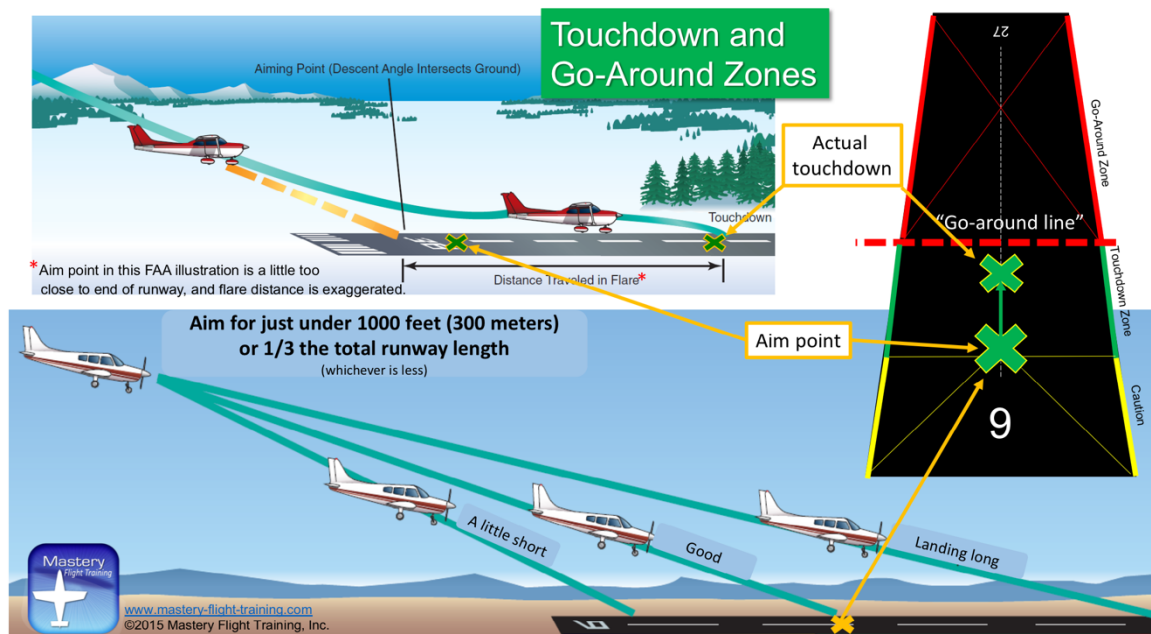
<https://thomaspturner.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024.0314-FLYING-LESSONS.pdf>

**The ATSB report** reminds us not all go-around loss of control (LOC) events result from getting too slow on final approach and “dropping it in.” ***Coming in too fast is just as hazardous.*** The airplane will “float” as it takes time to dissipate the excess airspeed in the flare, even more so because **drag is reduced in ground effect** and that means even more time—and distance—to bleed off speed within about one wingspan of the ground.

**In other words**, it's not a matter of just being at some margin of airspeed above the stall, it's **being at the correct final approach speed** that provides that margin but does not cause the airplane to float and land long.

**As you come down** final approach, consciously evaluate whether you are **on speed, in configuration** (flaps, landing gear as applicable), **on glidepath** to your identified touchdown zone, and **aligned** with the runway centerline. Crossing the threshold, or the last obstacle, or the beginning of the landing area (if it's not a purpose-built aircraft landing surface), if you are not correct in all four of these criteria then go around *immediately*. **Don't try to salvage the landing** if too fast (or too slow), out of landing configuration, above or below glidepath, or out of alignment with the runway.

**Use an aim point** to define a **Touchdown Zone**. If you'll land beyond the touchdown zone you are in [The Go-Around Zone](#). As the name implies, **go around without hesitation**.





**And thanks to these donors in 2024:**

Jim Lara, Joseph Stadelmann, Dixon Smith, Barry Warner, Wayne Mudge, Joseph Vandenbosch, Ian Campbell, Jay Apt, John Kimmons, Derek Rowan, Michael Maya Charles, Ron Horton, Lauren McGavran, Gerald Magnoni, Amy Haig, Rod Partlo, Brent Chidsey, Mard Sasaki-Scanlon, SABRIS Aviation (Dave Dewhirst), Edmund Braly, Joseph Orlando, Charles Lloyd, Michael Morrow, Abigail Dang, Thomas Jaszewski

***NEW THIS WEEK:*** Danny Kao, Gary Garavaglia

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**Pursue Mastery of Flight™**

Thomas P. Turner, M.S. Aviation Safety  
Flight Instructor Hall of Fame Inductee  
2021 Jack Eggspuehler Service Award winner  
2010 National FAA Safety Team Representative of the Year  
2008 FAA Central Region CFI of the Year

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