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I could probably have bought stocks, or property, or bonds. And I guess I could have made a hobby out of watching paint dry too... Instead, I went and got my pilot's licence.

So, why learn to fly?

“...a lot of people would be a lot better people if they put themselves through the process...”

1. It's a hard feeling to top

I've never stopped to add up how much money I've thrown into the air over the years. I assume it's a lot. I've never seriously thought about how else I could've used the cash either.

So now, even though I have a business, a mortgage, a beautiful wife and kids – all of which keeps me from flying – there's not a day I don't remember that I hold a pilot's licence, and that I earned it all by myself. It's a hard feeling to top.

If you love aviation, being able to sit at the pointy end of a plane and make the decisions is its own reward. But the accomplishment adds a lot more than flying to your life. In fact, a lot of people would be a lot better people if they joined a flying club and put themselves through the process.

2. You'll love it

Well, given that you're reading this, and you've come this far, it's pretty safe to assume you will. Don't get all starry-eyed though. Learning to fly will make you cry. Sometimes, it will drive you crazy. Occasionally, it might even scare the hell out of you. And those are all great reasons to stick with it.

3. It will teach you things

It will teach you how to fly of course. That's the general idea. But if you keep your wits about you, flying can also be a doctorate in self discipline. If you're diligent, you'll take away a innate sense of courtesy and caution as a bonus.

That could save you a bunch of trouble down the line, including any number of traffic incidents. Plus flying will teach you patience. Trust me – when you start taking lessons, you'll understand.

4. It will S-T-R-E-T-C-H you

What does it take to fly? You just wiggle the stick, move your feet and look out the window, right? Not likely!

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As you learn to operate an airplane safely, you'll also learn the physics, chemistry, meteorology, navigation, radio telephony, law, mechanical engineering, electrics and more that makes it all work. It's like a degree, but much more diverse. So when you pass your tests, your pride in the achievement will be so much more well-deserved.

5. It will make you special

Not everyone can fly. Most people have several good reasons why they can't. But not you. You'll overcome excuses, inertia, your bank manager and even gravity. You'll earn the right to feel special, because you'll be one of relatively few human beings who can cause an aircraft to rise into the air and then return safely to the earth.

6. It will pay you back, and then some

Learning to fly gives you something that's getting hard to find these days - confidence. When you first fly, you learn to have faith in invisible forces. By your first solo, you've learned to have that faith in yourself. So, far beyond a lift-off, you've made the leap of a lifetime. Flying training teaches you that you can handle things - machines, complex environments, and even the unexpected. That's a life lesson you can use anywhere and everywhere.

7. It will set you FREE

As the saying goes 'a mile of highway will take you a mile, a mile of runway will take you anywhere'. Once you have the skills, you can go wherever your dreams do. Fly to the next county for breakfast, or the next country for a holiday. Plenty of people - including newly minted Day VFR PPLs under 20 and over 50 - have crossed oceans. Even winning the lottery couldn't give you the same combination of liberty and satisfaction.

8. It will make you financially comfortable

No it won't! In fact, your ability to buy extra-tall caramel soy ice lattes on a whim may never recover. You will need some financial savvy to pay for your lessons though. And that could give you an advanced course in budgeting, scheming and self control.

So there's your homework for tonight...

Then you can phone the flying school tomorrow.

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