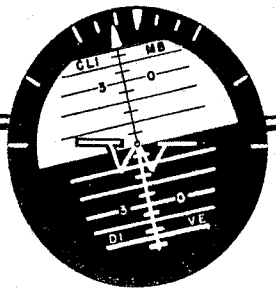
INSTRUMENT CORNER



Holding Entries Made Simple (or how to beat the checkride blues)

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The views expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily reflect Aviation School policy. The author is a National Guard instructor pilot on special assignment to the Aviation Center

IMAGINE YOURSELF on an instrument checkride. You are about halfway through the ride and feeling rather proud of your performance. In fact, you only have one last approach and a holding procedure left (probably to be completed back at the home plate) and you will be recertified good-to-go for another year.

Then all of a sudden it happens without warning! Something that is feared by some and dreaded by many. Your check pilot issues you a completely unanticipated and fairly off-the-wall holding clearance at the worst possible fix he could find. You figure you have only 3 or 4 minutes before you reach the fix and time to plan is at a premium. Your thoughts stray to your opinions on unrealistic holding clearances, cocky check pilots and how to remain calm.

Does this sound familiar? If so, then read on because you are going to learn about a technique for holding entries that is super easy and virtually foolproof. It is so easy that you do not even need to visualize the holding pattern or your relative position within the holding pattern. (The only technique I know to be easier is to refuse the clearance—which has been tried on occasion.) This technique works at NAVAIDs (navigational aids) or intersections and automatically takes into account the effects of wind.

The only requirement for this technique to work properly is that you must be heading (or tracking if you prefer) *directly* to the fix. Then all you need to know are three items:

- The outbound course.
- Whether the holding pattern is right or left turns.

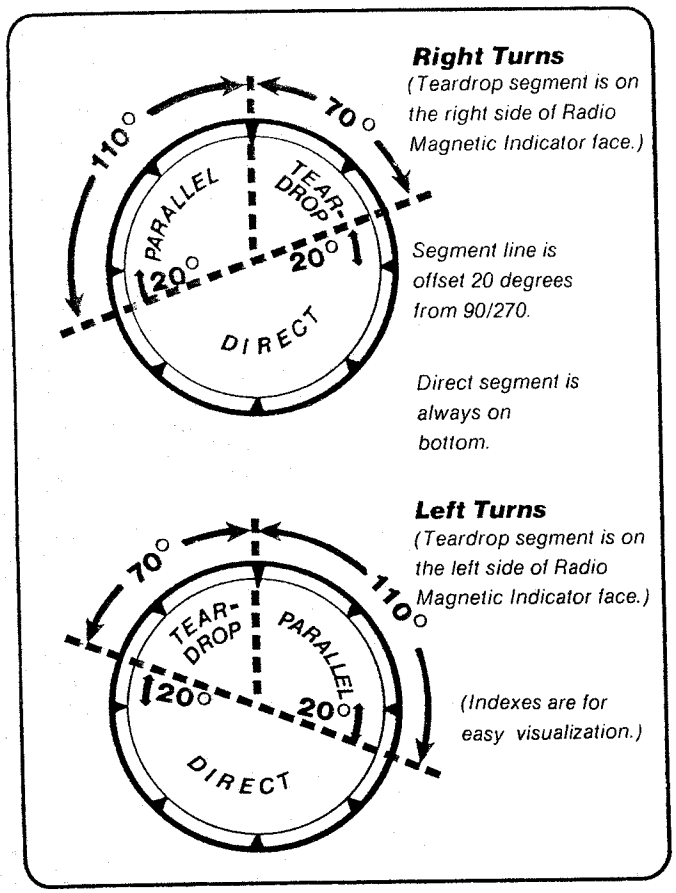

FIGURE 1: RMI Segment Procedure.

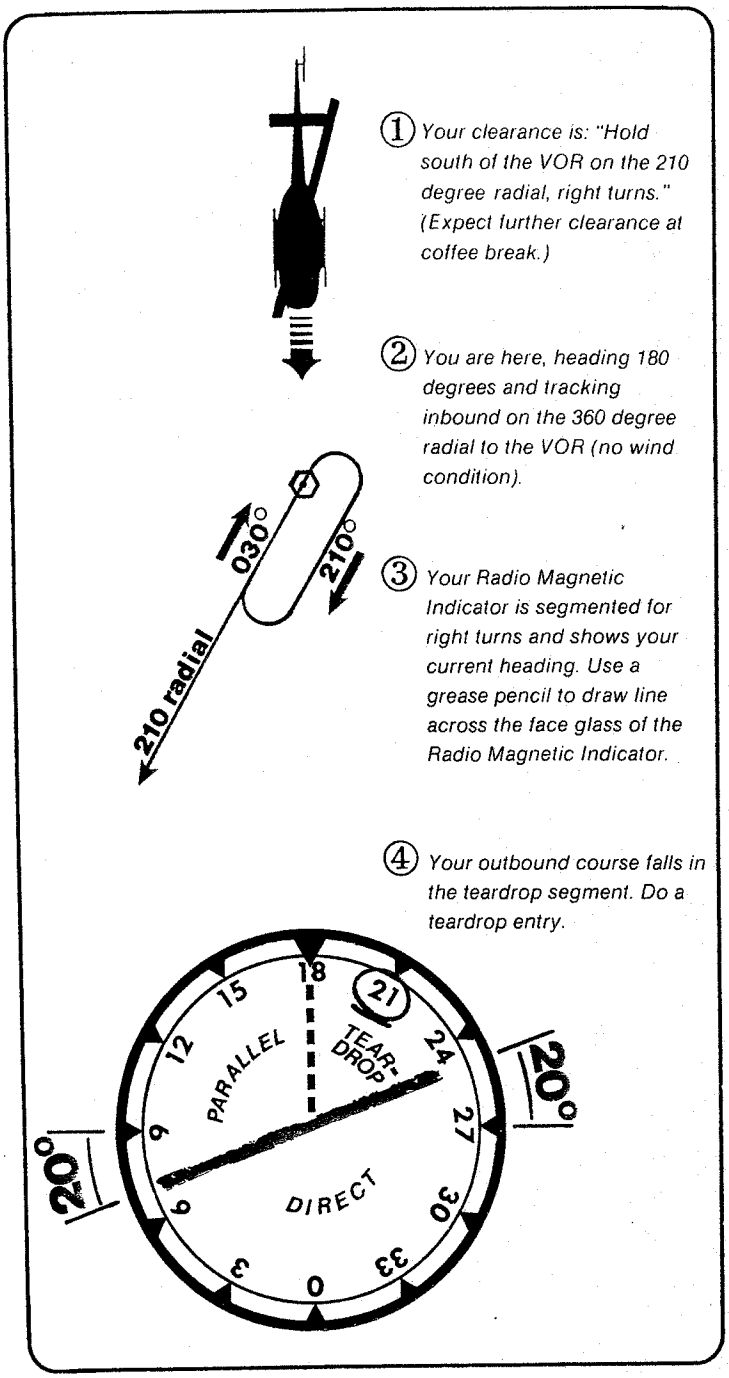

FIGURE 2: Example.

• The procedure for segmenting the radio magnetic indicator (RMI).

Now, the way this works is simple. After you receive a holding clearance, mentally segment the face of the RMI. (Some folks draw a line across the face glass of the RMI with a grease pencil when first learning this technique.) Each segment represents a specific entry procedure (i.e., either teardrop, parallel or direct). See figure 1—RMI Segment Procedure. Next, locate the outbound course on the RMI compass card and note the segment into which the outbound course falls. If the outbound course falls in the teardrop segment then perform a teardrop entry. If it falls in the parallel segment then do a parallel entry, and if it is in the direct segment, do a direct entry.

Review the simplified example in figure 2 and set up some of your own examples on the chalkboard. You will be amazed because it works every time (if it doesn't, recheck your figures because you made a mistake). Master this technique and I guarantee that you will be able to dazzle your check pilot with brilliance, impress your copilot with finesse and win bets at the club.

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