

Travel Trends

Save Time And Money: Fly Yourself

(NAPSA)—Americans of all ages and stages of life have become airplane pilots. If you've ever dreamed of joining them, there could be good news for you.

First, whether you use it for business or for pleasure, having your own pilot's license can help you avoid the costly delays, annoying restrictions and risk of lost luggage that can come with having to take commercial flights.

Next, it can be easier to achieve than many people realize. Here are a few of the myths that can keep people grounded and the facts that may let them soar:

Myth: I don't have the time and money.

Fact: While learning to fly isn't quick or inexpensive, you can set your own pace and pay as you go. The total cost generally runs from \$5,000 to \$9,000, depending on the type of pilot certificate. The FAA sets flight-hour minimums for each certificate. Training for a private pilot certificate typically takes between 40 and 70 hours, which can be spread over several months to a year or more.

Myth: Once I get my certificate, I can't afford to buy an aircraft.

Fact: Most pilots don't. As with cars, there are plenty of options, from renting to leasing to fractional ownership (think timeshare for an airplane). Find the option that suits you and fly with it.

Myth: I'm too young or too old.

Fact: There's no minimum or maximum age requirement for taking lessons. But you do have to be at least 16 before you can solo an airplane (14 for a glider) and 17 before you can be issued a pilot certificate. A student pilot doesn't mean you have to be young in age,



Learning to fly can give you your very own time machine, taking you places in much less time—and with far fewer headaches—than other forms of travel.

just young at heart. One group, United Flying Octogenarians, is only for pilots 80 or older.

Myth: I won't pass the medical requirements.

Fact: You don't have to have superpowers to be a pilot. Don't have perfect vision? It's all right to wear contacts or glasses. Color blind? No problem, you can still fly during the day. Missing arms? That's okay, fly with your feet. Don't believe it? Check out Jessica Cox, the first person without arms to obtain a pilot certificate. Also visit AbleFlight.org for more information on learning to fly with physical disabilities.

Myth: It's too hard to begin.

Fact: Getting started is easy. Visit www.LetsGoFlying.com, an initiative of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association—the world's largest civil aviation association—for a wealth of information on learning to fly and a database of more than 3,500 flight schools.