

The Electric Helicopter Beginner's Guide v15

Toshiyasu Morita

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Toshiyasu Morita

Mark Pearson

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Table of Contents

Preface	xi
1. Things You Should Know	1
1.1. Helicopters require a <i>SIGNIFICANT TIME COMMITMENT</i> to learn to fly	1
1.2. Repairs are expensive	1
1.3. Hovering is difficult to learn	1
2. First Helicopter Selection Guide	2
2.1. Classification of helis used in this guide	3
2.2. Overview of selected machines:	3
2.2.1. Lite Machines Corona	3
2.2.2. Ikarus Fixed Pitch Piccolos (Fun or ECO)	3
2.2.3. Ikarus Collective Pitch Piccolos (CP upgrade/Pro)	4
2.2.4. Ikarus ECO Lite	4
2.2.5. Ikarus ECO 8	5
2.2.6. Ikarus ECO 16	5
2.2.7. Fedra Skylark/Century Hummingbird/GWS Dragonfly	5
2.2.8. JR Voyager E	6
2.2.9. Kyosho Concept EP - discontinued?	6
2.2.10. Mikado Logo 10	6
2.2.11. Mikado Logo 20	7
2.2.12. MS Composit Hornet FP	7
2.2.13. MS Composit Hornet CP	7
2.2.14. MS Composit Hornet II	7
2.2.15. Robbe Eolo-R22	8
2.2.16. Quick Quick EP 10	8
2.2.17. Quick Quick 16 EP	8
2.2.18. Zoom 400/Shogun 400/Zap 400	9
2.2.19. Align T-Rex 450X	9
3. Recommended Beginner Configurations	10
3.1. Beginner Configurations	10
3.1.1. Corona - brushed configuration	10
3.1.2. Corona - brushless configuration	10
3.1.3. FP Piccolo - brushed + Piccoboard	10
3.1.4. FP Piccolo - brushed - separates	11
3.1.5. FP Piccolo - brushless - separates	11
3.1.6. GWS Dragonfly - brushed - separates	11
3.2. Intermediate configurations	12
3.2.1. CP Piccolo or Pro - brushless - separates	12
3.2.2. Logo 10 - brushless	12
3.2.3. ECO 8 - brushed	12
3.2.4. ECO 8 - brushless	12
4. Brushless Motor Upgrade Paths	14
4.1. Corona upgrade paths:	14
4.1.1. Corona motors usable in an ECO 8	14
4.1.2. Corona motors usable in a Eolo	14
4.1.3. Corona motor usable in a Voyager E	15
4.2. Piccolo upgrade paths:	15
5. Helicopter Parts Selection	17
5.1. Gyros	17
5.2. FMA Copilot	20
5.3. Tail (rudder) servo	20
5.4. Swashplate (Cyclic) servos	21

5.4.1. Corona/ECO 8/16 choices:	21
5.4.2. Logo 10 choices:	21
5.4.3. Summary	22
5.5. Receiver	22
5.6. Motor	22
5.6.1. Motor size	22
5.6.2. Motor weight	23
5.6.3. Motor efficiency	23
5.6.4. Shaft diameter and available pinion sizes	23
5.6.5. Cooling options	23
5.6.6. For the Corona	24
5.6.7. For the FP Piccolo:	25
5.6.8. For the CP Piccolo main motor:	25
5.6.9. For the Hummingbird FP/CP, GWS Dragonfly main motor:	26
5.6.10. For Piccolo, Dragonfly, Hummingbird tail motor:	26
5.6.11. For the Hornet CP:	26
5.6.12. For the Zoom 400:	26
5.6.13. For the Align T-Rex	26
5.6.14. For the Voyager E	27
5.6.15. For the Robbe Eolo	27
5.6.16. For the ECO 8:	27
5.6.17. For the ECO 16:	29
5.6.18. For the Logo 10:	29
5.6.19. For the Logo 14:	30
5.6.20. For the Quick EP 10:	30
5.6.21. For the Quick Sweet 16 EP	30
5.6.22. Summary	30
5.7. Pinion	32
5.7.1. Pitch to module conversion:	32
5.7.2. Common pitch equivalents	32
5.7.3. Shaft Sizes	32
5.8. Wire	34
5.9. Battery Connectors	35
5.10. Motor connectors	36
5.11. Main motor ESC	36
5.12. Tail motor ESC	38
5.13. BEC (battery eliminator circuit)	39
5.14. Batteries	40
5.15. Main rotor blades	41
5.16. Mods	41
6. Support Equipment	43
6.1. Pitch gauge	43
6.2. Blade balancer (optional)	43
6.3. Paddle pitch gauge (optional)	43
6.4. Prop balancer (optional)	44
6.5. Tachometer	44
6.6. Ball link pliers	44
6.7. Submini needle nose pliers	45
6.8. Battery Chargers	45
6.9. Digital voltmeter	46
6.10. Transmitter tray	47
7. Simulators	48
7.1. FMS	48
7.2. Piccofly with Game Commander	49
7.3. Easyfly	50
7.4. Aerofly Professional	50
7.5. Aerofly Professional Deluxe	51

7.6. Realfight G2 w/USB Interlink	52
7.7. Realfight G3 w/USB Interlink	53
7.8. Reflex XTR simulator w/USB interface	53
7.9. PreFlight Simulator	55
7.10. Helicopter Simulator for the Mac	55
7.11. Summary	56
8. Transmitters	57
8.1. Hitec Eclipse 7 with 90 CCPM:	58
8.1.1. Hitec Eclipse 7 and yaw rate gyros:	59
8.1.2. Hitec Eclipse 7 bugs:	60
9. Helicopter Construction	61
9.1. General tips for all helicopters:	61
9.1.1. Building	61
9.1.2. Threadlock	61
9.1.3. Gear lubrication	61
9.1.4. Frame assembly	61
9.1.5. Stripped threads	61
9.1.6. Breaking-in motors	61
9.1.7. Carbon dust	62
9.1.8. Capacitors	62
9.1.9. Motor diode	62
9.1.10. Ball links	62
9.1.11. Motor shaft	63
9.1.12. For the Piccolo:	63
9.1.13. For Futaba transmitters:	63
9.1.14. For Futaba transmitters:	64
9.1.15. For JR transmitters:	64
9.1.16. For JR transmitters:	64
9.1.17. Canopy painting	65
9.1.18. Tail servo	65
9.1.19. Grease	65
9.1.20. Mounting component	65
9.1.21. Ball in swashplate	65
9.2. Component Placement:	65
9.3. Specific tips for LMH Corona only:	66
9.4. Specific tips for all Piccolo (Fun/ECO/CP upgrade/Pro):	67
9.5. Specific tips for fixed pitch Piccolo (ECO/Fun) only:	67
9.6. Specific tips for collective pitch Piccolo (CP upgrade/Pro) only:	67
9.7. Specific tips for the MS Composit Hornet II:	68
9.8. Specific tips for Ikarus ECO 8/16 only:	70
9.9. Specific tips for Logo 10 only:	73
9.10. Specific tips for the Gensmantel Micro Heaven:	73
10. Post-Construction/ARF Checklist	75
11. Soldering Technique	77
12. Helicopter and Transmitter Setup	79
12.1. Balancing the heli - forward/aft	79
12.2. Balancing the main rotor blades using the KSJ-528 blade balancer	79
12.2.1. Step one: Matching the CG	79
12.2.2. Step two: Matching the weight	80
12.2.3. Step three: Optimizing tape usage (optional)	80
12.3. Adjusting the blade grip bolts	80
12.4. Flybar paddle setup	81
12.5. FP & CP helicopter swashplate setup part 1 - swashplate type	81
12.6. CP helicopter swashplate setup part 1 - collective setup	81
12.6.1. Servo reversing	82
12.6.2. Servo centering	82
12.6.3. Swashplate leveling	82

12.6.4. Swashplate travel	82
12.7. CP helicopter swashplate setup part 3 - cyclic setup	83
12.7.1. For transmitter mode 2 (US & Europe)	83
12.7.2. For transmitter mode 1 (Asia & Europe)	83
12.8. FP helicopter swashplate setup - cyclic setup	83
12.8.1. For transmitter mode 2 (US & Europe)	84
12.8.2. For transmitter mode 1 (Asia & Europe)	84
12.9. Transmitter Throttle Hold setup	84
12.10. Transmitter Exponential setup	84
12.11. Transmitter Throttle setup	84
12.12. ESC programming	85
12.12.1. Parameters for Castle Creations ESC used as the MAIN motor ESC	85
12.12.2. Parameters for Castle Creations ESC used as the TAIL motor ESC	86
12.12.3. For the Schulze 12.46e and 18.46K ESCs:	86
12.13. Transmitter Throttle Curve setup	87
12.14. Tail rotor pitch servo setup	87
12.14.1. For heading hold gyros:	88
12.14.2. For all helis:	88
12.15. Gyro setup - variable pitch tail rotor	88
12.15.1. GY240 setup:	88
12.15.2. GY401 setup:	89
12.15.3. Non-Futaba Heading Hold gyro setup:	90
12.15.4. Yaw-Rate Gyro setup:	90
12.16. Gyro setup - fixed pitch tail rotor	91
12.16.1. GY240 setup:	91
12.16.2. Yaw-Rate Gyro setup:	93
12.17. Transmitter tail setup - both fixed and variable pitch	93
12.18. Adjusting main blade pitch	93
12.19. Blade tracking - CP helicopters	95
12.20. Blade tracking - FP helicopters	95
13. R/C Heli Rules & Tips	97
13.1. The proper way to carry a heli	97
13.2. Helicopter arming procedure	97
13.3. Helicopter disarming procedure	97
13.4. Do not carry a live heli!	97
13.5. The blades are traveling at high velocity!	98
13.6. Always disconnect the battery when working on the helicopter	98
13.7. Liability insurance	99
14. Learning to Fly an R/C Helicopter	100
14.1. The skills required	100
14.2. Making the learning process easier	100
14.2.1. Hover no higher than eye level	100
14.2.2. Paint your canopy a bright color or leave it white	100
14.2.3. Use white blades	101
14.2.4. Use a heading hold gyro.	101
14.3. Minimize downtime; maximize practice time	101
14.4. Divide the learning process into smaller, easier steps	101
15. Hovering Technique	103
16. Tail-In Hovering	104
16.1. Preparation	104
16.2. Tail-in hovering - Phase 1	104
16.3. Tail-in hovering - Phase 2	107
17. Side-In and Nose-In Hovering Orientations	109
17.1. To translate into a left side-in hover:	109
17.2. To turn into a left side-in hover:	109

18. Additional Orientation Exercises	110
18.1. Introduction	110
18.2. 90 degree yaw	110
18.3. 180 degree yaw	110
18.4. 45 degree nose-in orientations	110
18.5. Single pirouette	111
18.6. Multiple slow pirouettes	111
19. Transmitter Setup for Fast Forward Flight	112
20. Entering & Exiting Fast Forward Flight	113
21. Banked Forward Turns	114
22. Figure Eights	115
23. Backwards Flight	116
24. Banked Backwards Turns	117
25. Backwards Exercises	118
25.1. Backwards remote half circles	118
25.2. Backwards remote full circles	118
25.3. Backwards tail-in figure-eight	118
25.4. Backwards nose-in figure-eight	118
26. How Helicopters Work	119
27. How Gyros Work	120
27.1. The functions of the tail rotor	120
27.1.1. Counter main rotor torque	120
27.1.2. Turn (Yaw) the Helicopter	120
27.1.3. Yaw Stabilization	121
27.2. Yaw rate gyros and how they work	121
27.3. Heading Hold gyros and how they work	122
27.4. The difference between yaw rate and heading hold gyros	122
28. GY-Series Gyro Technical Info	123
28.1. GY401 setup:	123
28.1.1. GY401 direction switch:	123
28.1.2. GY401 DS (digital servo) switch:	123
28.1.3. GY401 Delay trimmer:	123
28.1.4. GY401 Limit trimmer:	124
28.1.5. GY401 Gain setting:	124
28.1.6. GY401 pirouette rate:	125
28.2. GY240 setup:	125
28.2.1. GY240 delay setting (fixed):	125
28.2.2. GY240 limit setting (fixed):	125
28.2.3. GY240 direction switch:	126
28.2.4. GY240 gain trimmer:	126
28.2.5. GY240 pirouette rate:	126
29. Yaw-Rate Gyro Technical Information	127
30. Battery Care & Maintenance	128
30.1. Nickel-cadmium (nicad) batteries:	128
30.2. Nickel-metal-hydride (NiMH) batteries:	128
30.3. Lithium-Polymer (lipo) batteries:	128
30.4. Nicad/NiMH/Lipo Battery disposal:	129
30.5. Solderless power tube (SPT) battery packs:	129
31. Tweaking Helicopter Twitchiness	130
31.1. Reduce the headspeed (CP helis only)	130
31.2. Reduce the swashplate mixing	130
31.3. Increase exponential on aileron/elevator	130
31.4. Add flybar weights	130
32. Your First Major Crash	131
33. Maintenance & Crash Repair	132
33.1. Brushed motors w/carbon brushes	132
33.2. Main rotor shaft bearings	132

33.3. Tail rotor shaft bearings	132
33.4. Tail belt tension	132
33.5. Battery retaining o-rings	132
33.6. Main rotor blades	132
33.7. Corona specific maintenance:	132
33.8. Piccolo specific maintenance:	133
33.9. ECO 8/16 specific maintenance:	133
34. Troubleshooting Common Problems	134
34.1. Motor ESC will not arm, or motor continues to run at zero throttle	134
34.2. Short flight times and/or not enough power	134
34.3. Woodies may be trashed	134
34.4. Heli has excessive vibrations	134
34.5. Heli "glitches" randomly due to radio interference	136
34.6. Heli hovers slightly tilted to the right (or left)	136
34.7. Heli wobbles and is very unstable	136
34.8. The blade tracking is fine at low speeds, but the blade tracking becomes worse at high head speeds.	136
34.9. Tail jerks around when spooling up with HH gyro	136
34.10. Cyclic servos wiggle around	137
34.11. Tail wags (hunts) constantly with HH gyro	137
34.12. Tail swings 30-90 degrees abruptly then rights itself with HH gyro while hovering.	138
34.13. Tail servo responds in one direction only	138
34.14. Heli twitches randomly in roll/pitch/yaw	138
34.15. Excessive tail vibration	138
34.16. Tail drifts as battery discharges	139
34.17. Tail motor runs at low throttle	139
34.18. Motor does not start turning till about 40% throttle	139
35. Useful Equations	140
35.1. Calculating headspeed	140
35.2. Estimating amperage draw	140
36. Electric Helicopter & Parts Vendors	142
37. Terminology	148

List of Tables

4.1. Piccolo Upgrade Motors	15
5.1. Heatsinks	23

Preface

by Toshiyasu Morita (TMorita on the Ezone and Ikarus BBS) and Mark Pearson (MRP on the Ezone and HeliSpot BBS)

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The latest version of the EHBG is available from ehbg.rchomepage.com.

Many thanks to all the people on the Ezone forums and the Ikarus BBS who have posted many helpful messages - many of these tips were taken from these excellent discussion forums!

This was originally a "Heli FAQ" suggested by Fred Bronk, but it grew into much more than a FAQ - so now it's called the Electric Helicopter Beginner's Guide.

This guide assumes some prior R/C experience, such as R/C planes or cars. Therefore, it doesn't explain terms such as "servo" or the correct orientation for servo plugs, etc. If you need these questions answered, I recommend asking in the "Beginner Training Area" on [RC Groups](#).

Be sure to check the terminology section at the end if you encounter terms which you don't know, such as swashplate, collective pitch, etc.



Note

Use this information at your own risk! I make no guarantees as to the validity of any of this information! If in doubt, double-check!

Chapter 1. Things You Should Know

1.1. Helicopters require a **SIGNIFICANT TIME COMMITMENT** to learn to fly

R/C helicopters are not dynamically stable, and they require constant stick input. It's very similar to balancing a marble on a sheet of glass by radio control. In addition to this, the glass can be rotated which then rotates all the directions.

Therefore, it takes a lot of time to develop a good sense of balance and orientation. You will learn much faster if you can dedicate at least a half-hour a day to practicing on a flight simulator.

In addition, helicopters require significant amounts of time to build and isolate/fix various problems like vibration, tail wag, and other problems that will develop.

If you like building and tinkering with things for hours, and enjoy the challenge and satisfaction of learning difficult skills, then this is a great hobby for you.

If you don't like building and tinkering with things for hours and are easily frustrated by learning difficult skills, then you may want to consider another hobby.

1.2. Repairs are expensive

Helicopters crash, and they are somewhat expensive to fix

Some helicopters are more durable than others, and some are much cheaper to fix - these are good trainers. But, you cannot expect to learn to fly without spending some money for repairs. Be sure to allocate some money for repairs.

1.3. Hovering is difficult to learn

Eventually, something will "click" inside your head, and you will "get it". For some people, this occurs all of a sudden and everything makes sense. For other people it seems to be a more gradual process.

Basically, helicopters suck horribly. Then you get your first hover, and it's an incredible head-rush, and you're psyched for a whole week, and you're hooked. :)

Chapter 2. First Helicopter Selection Guide

The things to consider when selecting your first helicopter are:

- Durability
- Price of replacement parts
- Availability of replacement parts
- Size

The reason for this is: when you are learning to hover, you will crash. This is a given. Everyone crashes. When you crash, you do not want to spend a fortune repairing the helicopter, because everyone has limited funds. When you crash, you do not want to wait forever for replacement parts, because every day you spend waiting for a part is a day you are not flying the helicopter, and learning something.

Size is very important, because larger helis are more stable and easier to hover. They have more inertia, so they move slower and they give more warning of their intent. Micro helis are more difficult to hover because they are very skittish and wander off in a new direction with very little warning of their intent. Larger helis are not any easier to fly, though.

If you live in an area like Seattle where it rains almost continuously for nine months of each year, I would recommend a fixed-pitch Piccolo. Otherwise the Lite Machines Corona is the best electric trainer available today. The Corona is very stable and acts like a much larger helicopter, so it is nearly ideal for learning hovering.

To make a plane analogy, the Corona is basically the Slow Stick of r/c helicopters. It has a simple fixed-pitch rotor design which is very durable, and usually receives very little damage (if any) in most beginner crashes.

You may be tempted to buy an aerobatic 3D helicopter for your first helicopter. You should resist this temptation. Think of this plane analogy: if you were an R/C airplane beginner, would it be a good idea for you to buy a hotliner for your first plane?

Be sure to purchase your helicopter from a shop that carries a full line of replacement parts and can ship replacement parts quickly. When you are in are learning to hover it's virtually guaranteed that you will crash a few times, and when you do you will want replacement parts ASAP. Any r/c helicopter for which you cannot buy replacement parts is not properly repairable, and is basically a paperweight.

Also, *GET A SIMULATOR*. Even a free simulator such as FMS will save you at least 100 dollars or so in replacement parts when learning hovering.

Recommended first heli choices:

- Corona (very durable, easier to hover, inexpensive)
- Logo 10 (durable, easier to hover, expensive)
- ECO Piccolo / Piccolo Fun (very durable, hard to hover, inexpensive)
- Century Hummingbird, GWS Dragonfly, Skylark and exact clones (durable, hard to hover, inexpensive)

- Voyager E (durable, easier to hover, expensive)

Not recommended for the first heli, but good for 2nd heli:

- Hornet FP/CP (fragile)
- ECO Lite/8/16 (somewhat fragile)
- Logo 16/20 (expensive)
- Joker / Joker CX (expensive)
- Century Hummingbird Elite FP/CP (high headspeed)
- Century Hummingbird v3 (fragile)

2.1. Classification of helis used in this guide

- *Living room flyer:* These helis are flyable in small indoor areas and also outdoors when completely calm. They are typically fixed pitch helis using wide blades which are efficient at low headspeeds, and weigh up to about 350 grams.
- *Gym flyer:* These helis are flyable in larger indoor areas, and also outdoors when completely calm. They are typically collective pitch helis up to about 500 grams.
- *Backyard flyer:* These helis require a small outdoor field and are flyable in mild winds up to about 8 km/h (5 mph).
- *Large field flyer:* These helis require a larger outdoor field and are flyable in winds up to about 16 km/h (10 mph).

2.2. Overview of selected machines:

2.2.1. Lite Machines Corona

- A very good trainer
- Moderately inexpensive (retail about \$180-\$199)
- Very durable
- Manufacturer is in the US. Parts availability is very good.
- 1250-1500 grams AUW, 610mm rotor diameter, 6-8 cells
- large, moderate headspeed, easy to learn hovering - not indoors in small venues (gym ok)
- Backyard flyer, maybe in gyms

2.2.2. Ikarus Fixed Pitch Piccolos (Fun or ECO)

- Trainer, but harder to learn (probably 50% harder than Corona)
- Inexpensive (Fun retail ~\$90, ECO retail ~\$140)
- Fairly durable but landing gear is flimsy; requires reinforcement for beginners.
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability is good.
- 280 grams AUW, 500mm main rotor diameter, 6-8 cells
- Living room/Gym flyer

The main differences between an ECO Piccolo and a Fun Piccolo are:

- The ECO Piccolo includes six ball bearings for the rotor head, the main shaft, and the tail shaft. The Fun Piccolo includes bushings instead.
- The ECO Piccolo has CF main and tail rotor shafts. The Fun Piccolo has steel main and tail rotor shafts. The steel shafts run smoother than the CF shafts but they are somewhat heavier.
- The ECO Piccolo includes tail motor connectors. The Fun Piccolo includes with no tail motor connectors, and the tail motor wires must be soldered directly to the Piccboard or the ESC wires.
- The ECO Piccolo has a very lightweight tail boom. The Fun Piccolo has a slightly heavier tail boom

2.2.3. Ikarus Collective Pitch Piccolos (CP upgrade/Pro)

- Medium to advanced flyers
- Inexpensive (CP upgrade ~\$99, Pro retail ~\$199)
- Fairly durable except for balsa main rotor blades (68213) pitch arm base(68211) and landing gear.
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability is good.
- 330 grams AUW, 540mm rotor diameter, 8-9 AAA cells
- small, high headspeed. hard to learn hovering
- Gym flyer

2.2.4. Ikarus ECO Lite

- Only for experienced pilots - only does forward flight
- Inexpensive (retail about \$140)
- Somewhat fragile, same weakness as ECO 8.

- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability spotty,
- 1150 grams AUW, 760mm rotor diameter, 6-8 SubC cells
- doesn't hover. Forward flight only.
- Backyard flyer.

2.2.5. Ikarus ECO 8

- Duration flying/slope soaring/moderate aerobatics capable
- Moderately inexpensive (retail about \$180)
- Somewhat fragile - stock (non-hardened) main rotor shaft, feathering shaft and tail rotor shafts bend easily, frame and landing gear not very strong
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability spotty, up to 4 weeks wait time for some parts.
- 1300-1500 grams AUW, 1060mm rotor diameter, 6-12 SubC cells
- Large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering
- Backyard flyer

2.2.6. Ikarus ECO 16

- Moderate to serious aerobatics capable
- Moderately inexpensive (retail about \$250)
- Somewhat fragile- a little more than ECO 8 because using the same parts for heavier helicopter
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability spotty, up to 4 weeks wait time for some parts.
- 2000 grams AUW, 1200mm rotor diameter, 12-20 SubC cells
- Large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering
- Large field flyer

2.2.7. Feda Skylark/Century Hummingbird/GWS Dragonfly

- Trainer, but harder to learn (probably 50% harder than Corona)
- Inexpensive - \$80 for bare heli kit
- Fairly durable, but rotor blades are stiffer? than Piccolo and are more easily destroyed.
- Manufacturer in Taiwan?. Parts availability is good.
- 280 grams AUW, 8 AAA cells

- small, low headspeed, hard to learn hovering,- but can be flown indoors
- Living room, Gym flyer

2.2.8. JR Voyager E

- Trainer/light aerobatics capable
- Expensive (retail about \$400 incl. motor, cannot buy without motor)
- About average durability
- Manufacturer in Japan. Parts availability very good.
- 1500 grams AUW, 965mm rotor diameter, 7 SubC cells
- large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering
- Backyard flyer

2.2.9. Kyosho Concept EP - discontinued?

- Trainer/light aerobatics
- Expensive (retail about \$380 incl motor, cannot buy without motor)
- About average durability
- Manufacturer in Japan. Parts availability ?
- 1500 grams AUW , 912mm rotor diameter, 7 SubC cells
- large, high headspeed. Has weak power due to high disc loading. Flapping head version is very prone to boom strikes.
- Backyard flyer

2.2.10. Mikado Logo 10

- Trainer/moderate aerobatics capable
- Expensive (retail about \$340)
- About average durability
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability okay.
- ~2500 grams AUW, 1150mm rotor diameter, 10-14 SubC cells
- large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering. Outdoors only
- Large field flyer

2.2.11. Mikado Logo 20

- Serious aerobatics capable
- Expensive (retail about \$470)
- About average durability
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability okay.
- >3000 grams AUW, 1340mm rotor diameter, 20-24 SubC cells
- large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering. Outdoors only
- Large field flyer

2.2.12. MS Composit Hornet FP

- Moderate aerobatics capable
- Inexpensive (retail about \$150)
- Fragile
- Manufacturer in Czech Republic. Parts availability okay.
- 280 grams AUW, 490mm rotor diameter, AAA 7-8 cells
- small, low headspeed, hard to learn hovering,- but can be flown indoors
- Gym flyer

2.2.13. MS Composit Hornet CP

- Moderate to serious aerobatics capable
- Inexpensive (retail about \$200)
- Fairly
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability okay.
- 280 grams AUW, 490mm rotor diameter, 7-8 AAA cells
- small, high headspeed, hard to learn hovering,- but can be flown indoors
- Gym flyer

2.2.14. MS Composit Hornet II

- Moderate to serious aerobatics capable
- Inexpensive (retail about \$250)(

- Fragile, but more durable than Hornet FP/CP
- Manufacturer in Germany. Parts availability okay.
- 330 grams AUW, 560mm rotor diameter, 7-8 AAA cells
- small, high headspeed, hard to learn hovering,- but can be flown indoors
- Gym flyer

2.2.15. Robbe Eolo-R22

- Moderate aerobatics capable
- Expensive (retail about \$300)
- About average durability
- Manufacturer in German?, parts availability okay
- 1280g AUW, 810mm rotor diameter, 8 SubC cells
- large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering, outdoors only
- Backyard flyer

2.2.16. Quick Quick EP 10

- Moderate aerobatics capable
- Inexpensive (retail about \$250)
- About average durability
- Manufacturer in USA. Parts availability good?
- ??? grams AUW, 880-950mm rotor diameter, 10-14 SubC cells
- large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering, outdoors only
- Backyard flyer

2.2.17. Quick Quick 16 EP

- Moderate to advanced aerobatics capable
- Expensive (retail about \$400)
- About average durability.
- Manufacturer in USA. Parts availability good?.
- ??? grams AUW, 1060-1080mm rotor diameter, 16-24 SubC cells

- large, high headspeed, easy to learn hovering, outdoors only.
- Backyard flyer

2.2.18. Zoom 400/Shogun 400/Zap 400

- Moderate to advanced aerobatics capable
- Inexpensive (retail about \$200)
- About average durability.
- Manufacturer in Taiwan. Parts availability good.
- 500 grams AUW, 635mm rotor diameter, 3s1p lipos
- small , high headspeed, moderate to learn hovering
- Gym flyer, Backyard flyer

2.2.19. Align T-Rex 450X

- Moderate to advanced aerobatics capable
- Inexpensive (retail about \$160)
- About average durability.
- Manufacturer in Taiwan. Parts availability good.
- 650 grams AUW, 640mm rotor diameter, 3s1p lipos
- small , high headspeed, moderate to learn hovering
- Gym flyer, Backyard flyer

Chapter 3. Recommended Beginner Configurations

These are configurations for beginners, and therefore we tend to recommend inexpensive and mild setups rather than excessively "hot" 3-D setups.



Warning

Do not run R/C car-type "Speed 540" brushed motors (Atomic Force, Fusion 7, etc) on more than 8 cells. Most R/C/ car motors are not designed for more than 8 cells, and running them with more cells will kill the motor after only a few flights.

3.1. Beginner Configurations

3.1.1. Corona - brushed configuration

- Kyosho Atomic Force brushed motor w/stock pinion
- Castle Creations Pegasus 35H or 35P main ESC (older Pegasus 35 has too high LVC)
- 2 Hitec HS-85MGs for cyclic
- 1 Hitec HS-81 for tail
- Futaba GY240 HH gyro
- 4 channel receiver
- 7 or 8 cell CP2400 or RC2400 battery pack

3.1.2. Corona - brushless configuration

- Mega Motors 16/15/3 brushless motor w/stock pinion
- Castle Creations Phoenix 45 main ESC
- 2 Hitec HS-85MGs for cyclic
- 1 Hitec HS-81 for tail
- Futaba GY240 HH gyro
- 4 channel receiver
- 7 or 8 cell CP2400 or RC2400 battery pack

3.1.3. FP Piccolo - brushed + Piccoboard

- Stock Speed 295/310 motor
- Piccoboard or Piccoboard Plus
- 2 HS-55s for cyclic

- GWS or Berg 4-channel receiver
- 7 cell NiCad or 8 cell NiMH battery pack

3.1.4. FP Piccolo - brushed - separates

- Stock Speed 295/310 motor
- 1 Castle Creations Pixie-7P main ESC
- High frequency tail ESC
- 2 HS-55s for cyclic
- Futaba GY240 or CSM LW200 HH gyro
- GWS or Berg 4-channel receiver
- 7 cell NiCad or 8 cell NiMH battery pack

3.1.5. FP Piccolo - brushless - separates

- Hacker B20-36S brushless motor w/8 tooth pinion
- Castle Creations Phoenix 10 main ESC
- High frequency tail ESC
- 2 HS-55s for cyclic
- Futaba GY240 or CSM LW200 HH gyro
- GWS or Berg 4-channel receiver
- 7 cell NiCad or 8 cell NiMH battery pack

3.1.6. GWS Dragonfly - brushed - separates

- Stock motor
- GWS ICS-100E main motor ESC
- High frequency tail ESC
- 2 HS-55s for cyclic
- Futaba GY240 HH gyro
- GWS 4-channel receiver
- 8 cell NiMH battery pack

3.2. Intermediate configurations

3.2.1. CP Piccolo or Pro - brushless - separates

- Hacker B20-31S brushless motor w/8 tooth pinion (for power) or
- Hacker B20-36S brushless motor w/10 tooth pinion (for duration)
- Castle Creations Phoenix 10 main ESC
- Pixie-7P or ICS-50E tail ESC
- 2 HS-50s (or HS-55s) for cyclic
- Futaba GY401 or CSM LW200 HH gyro
- GWS 6-channel receiver
- 8 cell NiCad or NiMH battery pack

3.2.2. Logo 10 - brushless

- Kontronik FUN 600-18 w/15 tooth pinion
- Schulze Future 18.46K + UBEC or SBEC
- 3 HS-85s for cyclic
- HS-81 for tail
- Futaba GY240 or GY401 HH gyro
- 6 channel receiver
- 12 cell NiCad battery pack

3.2.3. ECO 8 - brushed

- Kyosho Magnetic Mayhem Reverse brushed motor
- Castle Creations Pegasus 35
- 3 HS-85MGs for cyclic
- HS-81 for tail
- Futaba GY240 or GY401 HH gyro
- 6 channel receiver
- 8 cell NiCad battery pack (The MMR can run with 10 cells also)

3.2.4. ECO 8 - brushless

Recommended Beginner Configurations

- Hacker B50-18S or Mega Motor 22/20/3H motor
- Schulze Future 12.46e (8 cells)
Schulze Future 18.46K + UBEC or SBEC (10 cells)
- 3 HS-85MGs for cyclic
- HS-81 for tail
- Futaba GY240 or GY401 HH gyro
- 6 channel receiver
- 10 cell NiCad battery pack (will fly on 8 cells brushless, but much better with 10 cells)

Chapter 4. Brushless Motor Upgrade Paths

You may want to choose a brushless motor which is usable in both your first fixed pitch helicopter and your second collective pitch helicopter. This is a little tricky but definitely possible if you plan wisely.

In the following section, 10-12T means 10 tooth to 12 tooth pinion. The lower tooth pinions are for duration, and the higher ones are for power.

4.1. Corona upgrade paths:

There are three possible upgrade paths from the Corona: the ECO 8, the Eolo, and the Voyager E. All of these helicopters can use 3.17mm shaft motors in approximately the same Kv range as the Corona.

4.1.1. Corona motors usable in an ECO 8

This requires choosing a 3.17mm shaft motor with a Kv of about 2400-2600. This results in a mild motor for the Corona, which becomes a power motor when moved to the ECO 8 on 10 cells. If you desire to use a Corona motor which will become a duration ECO 8 motor, then you will need a motor with a lower Kv (about 2200-2400) and use a larger tooth pinion on the Corona.

A motor with 3000 Kv is usable on an ECO 8 with 8 cells, but not really recommended for 10 cells.

4.1.1.1. Hacker C40-10L, Kv = 3000 rpm/V (powerful, but runs hot)

- Corona: 11-12T/8 cells
- ECO 8 : 10T/8 cells

4.1.1.2. Hacker C40-12L, Kv = 2500 rpm/V (powerful, but runs hot)

- Corona: 12-13T/8 cells
- ECO 8 : 12-14T/8 cells, 10-12T/10 cells)

4.1.1.3. Mega Motor 16/25/3, Kv = 1700 rpm/V (mild)

- Corona: 18T/8 cells
- ECO 8: 17T/8 cells, 14T/10 cells

4.1.1.4. Mega Motor 22/20/3HTDS, Kv = 1850 rpm/V (powerful)

- Corona: 15T/8 cells
- ECO 8 : 13-15T/10 cells

4.1.2. Corona motors usable in a Eolo

This requires choosing a 3.17mm shaft motor with a Kv of about 3300. This results in a power motor for both the Corona and the Eolo. The Mega 16/15/3 is fairly mild for both Corona and the Eolo.

4.1.2.1. Mega 16/15/3, Kv = 3000 rpm/V

- Corona: 10T
- Eolo : ?

4.1.2.2. Hacker C40-12S, Kv = 3500 rpm/V

- Corona: 10T
- Eolo : stock pinion

4.1.2.3. Hacker C40-9L, Kv = 3333 rpm/V

- Corona: 10T
- Eolo : stock pinion

The Hacker C40-12S is a little small for the Eolo and is probably not suitable for the Eolo in warmer weather.

4.1.3. Corona motor usable in a Voyager E

This requires choosing a 3.17mm shaft motor with a Kv of about 3700. This results in a power motor for both the Corona and the Voyager. You must be careful to limit the throttle on the Corona because the maximum headspeed of 2000 will be exceeded if the throttle is not limited.

4.1.3.1. Hacker C40-8L, Kv = 3750

- Corona : 10T
- Voyager: stock pinion

4.2. Piccolo upgrade paths:

The FP Piccolo requires a motor with a Kv of about 2500. There are two upgrade paths available: the Piccolo CP kit or the Piccolo Pro, which both require a motor with a Kv of about 3000.

The B20-31S and B20-18L have a Kv that's a little too high for an FP Piccolo so the flight time will be short, but they will be powerful later in a CP Piccolo.

Table 4.1. Piccolo Upgrade Motors

Motor	Kv	FP Pinion	CP Pinion
B20-36S	2500	8T	10T

Brushless Motor Upgrade Paths

Motor	Kv	FP Pinion	CP Pinion
B20-31S	3000	8T	10T
B20-18L	3000	8T	8T

Chapter 5. Helicopter Parts Selection

5.1. Gyros

(See [Chapter 37, Terminology](#) for a definition of [Yaw-Rate Gyro](#) and [Heading Hold Gyro](#) .)

The first question people invariably ask is: "Can I fly a helicopter without a gyro?" The answer is basically no. The helicopter's tail would be too sensitive to random air currents. Before helicopter gyros were invented, the world endurance record for flying a model helicopter was 5.65 seconds by John Burkham in 1969 in the "Super Susie" model.

A heading hold gyro is highly recommended for beginners. There are four reasons for this:

- A heading hold gyro is much easier to configure than a yaw rate gyro. The yaw rate gyro requires the revo mix curve to be set up correctly before learning hovering, and this is tricky to set up for beginners.
- The heading hold gyro will "lock" the tail at one heading rather than just dampening random tail movement. This is very good because you only need to learn two joystick axes initially instead of three. This means you can learn the right joystick first, then learn the left joystick later (for mode 2) instead of trying to learn both joysticks simultaneously. This makes learning hovering much, much, easier.
- The revo mix (required for a yaw rate gyro) will not compensate for the battery voltage dropping as the battery discharges. So, near the end of a flight, you will need to hold some rudder to keep the heli from turning. This makes learning hovering more difficult.
- A yaw rate gyro will require the revo mix to be changed every time the weight or headspeed changes.
 - If you install a modification which changes the heli weight, you will need to readjust the revo mix.
 - If you change the pinion to a different tooth count, you will need to adjust the revo mix.
 - If you have battery packs which are different weights, you will need to adjust the revo mix between packs.

The GY240 is a very popular beginner gyro and is very easy to setup. Also, the GY240 does not require a sensitivity channel and therefore can be used with four-channel radios. However, it does have a very slow pirouette rate and you will eventually outgrow it.



Futaba GY240 gyro

The GY401 is a more advanced gyro with many adjustment options. It requires a dedicated channel for sensitivity adjustment so it requires a radio with at least five channels. Also, the sensitivity is a little tricky to set up properly.

I would recommend purchasing a GY401 unless you have a four-channel radio, in which case you can only use the GY240. The GY240 also works slightly better than the GY401 on micro helis with tail motors, such as the FP Piccolo and clone because the GY240 seems to handle slow tail response better than the GY401.

Most heading hold gyros (other than the Futaba GY series) seem to have drifting problems. This is caused by the gyro's expectation of the rudder "center stick" position being different from the transmitter's center stick position. This can be very frustrating because the one click of the subtrim can be the difference between the heli slowly turning left and the heli slowly turning right.

The Futaba GY series seems to calibrate the center stick position at power-up which eliminates the need to use rudder subtrim. Therefore I highly recommend the GY240 or GY401 for beginners.

The inexpensive Hobbico gyro is NOT recommended for beginners. It is a yaw rate gyro, which makes hovering difficult for beginners. Also, it is very fragile and there are many reports of it breaking on the first heli crash from only 1.5 feet of altitude.

The Piccoboard used on the Piccolo is a single board with the following items:

- Yaw rate gyro (expandable to heading hold on the Plus or Pro)
- Revo mixer
- Main motor ESC (brushed)
- Tail motor ESC (brushed)
- BEC

The older versions of the Piccoboard had extremely fragile gyro sensors and are not recommended for beginners. Supposedly the recent ones are more durable. For more detailed information on the various versions of the Piccoboard, consult Paul Goelz's Piccolo site.

The newer Piccoboard can be upgraded to a Plus by installing a four pin header into the four holes on the PCB.



Piccoboard Plus

The difference between the Piccoboard/Piccoboard Plus and the Pro is the Pro can handle a larger main motor and the BEC capacity is doubled. My guess is the Piccoboard has about a ~7 amp ESC for the main motor, and the Piccoboard Plus has about a ~10 amp ESC for the main motor.

The Piccoboard is not necessary for the Piccolo, and can be replaced by either:

- A yaw rate gyro + two ESCs (w/BEC) (requires revo mixing on transmitter)
- A yaw rate gyro + one ESC (w/BEC) + one TREC ESC w/mixing option (no revo mix required on transmitter for this configuration)
- A heading hold gyro + two ESCs (w/BEC) + transmitter (no revo mix required on transmitter for this configuration)



TREC ESC by Dionysus Designs

The TREC ESC by Dionysus Designs is a special ESC with built-in mixing options. It is a tail motor ESC that can read the throttle signal and do its own revo mixing. It also has many other features such as a 17 point throttle curve, low voltage monitor, etc. and weighs only six grams.

If you use two separate ESCs with their own BECs, don't forget to disable one of the BECs on one of the ESCs otherwise they may "fight" each other and overheat causing a BEC failure. To check for this, power up both ESCs (without motors attached) and see if the BECs of the ESCs run hot.

The GWS PHA-01 mixer board is similar to the Piccoboard, except it is not upgradable to a heading hold gyro. It is not really recommended for microhelis because it is very prone to overheating and will shut down abruptly when it overheats. It will also not re-arm until it cools down which can take 10-15 minutes. If you must use one, be sure to mount it where it will get airflow (NOT inside the cabinet on the side of the heli).

The Century CN2000-4 gyro+mixer board is also similar to the Piccoboard and is also not upgradable to a heading hold gyro.

The Century CNE052 mixer board is similar to a Piccoboard without a gyro (e.g. mixer + dual ESC). You must use a separate gyro with this board.

All of these combo units (Piccoboards, PHA-01, CN2000-4, CNE052) are only usable on sub-micro and microhelis. They will not work on larger helis such as the Corona, ECO 8, Logo 10, etc.

See the section [Chapter 27, How Gyros Work](#) for more information on gyros.

5.2. FMA Copilot

Some people have been using the FMA copilot on their Corona heli. This is a device which will "level" the helicopter for you if you release (center) the cyclic control. It will not work indoors because it needs to see the horizon to work properly. It does not replace a gyro, so you will still need a gyro.

The FMA copilot is nice, but really isn't really necessary unless you are having problems learning hovering. If you have a limited budget, then it is more important to buy a good heading hold gyro than the FMA copilot.

Also, you will likely outgrow the FMA copilot after a few months and remove it whereas you will not outgrow a good heading hold gyro. Therefore I recommend buying a good heading hold gyro first, and purchasing an FMA copilot later if you become frustrated with learning hovering.

5.3. Tail (rudder) servo

The tail servo for a helicopter needs to be very fast to respond quickly to small random tail movements. The tail servo should have a specification of 0.12 sec / 60 degrees of travel or better.

For the Corona, Logo 10, and ECO 8/16, some usable tail servos are:

- Hitec HS-81
- JR DS368 (do not use in DS mode, will burn out)
- Volz Speed-Maxx XP (DS mode compat, will be released about Oct 2003)
- Multiplex Micro BB Speed (DS mode compat)
- Hitec HS-5245MG (DS mode compat)

The Multiplex Micro BB Speed is slightly larger than the HS-81/DS368 so some modification may be required to use it.

For the Logo 10 or larger, the Futaba S9253 is very popular used with the GY401, although the S9253 is rather heavy for the Logo 10.

Some servo mounts will allow you to use high-speed micro servos for the tail pitch servo, such as the Precision Model Products tail servo mount for the ECO 8/16.

The metal gear servos are not recommended for the tail because the metal gear servos wear faster and have more backlash than plastic gear servos, which will result in less precise tail control (with the exception of the Volz Speed-Maxx XP which is specifically designed for tail pitch control)

The slower digital servos (such as the JR DS368, 0.21 sec/60 degrees) do not work well as a tail servo unless the stock servo arms are replaced by extra-long servo arms (Du-bro, Servo City, etc). This sacrifices some precision for extra speed.

JR does not recommend the DS3421 for tail gyros because the servo motor is too small to handle the frequent movement required.

Gyros are sensitive to temperature changes. If your car is warm, the weather is cold and you take your heli out of the car and immediately try to fly, the gyro will not work well. You should allow a few minutes for the gyro temperature to settle before flying.

5.4. Swashplate (Cyclic) servos

Torque, speed, and precision should be considered for swashplate servos.

5.4.1. Corona/ECO 8/16 choices:

The Corona works fine on the stock HS-81 servos, although some people choose to use the HS-85BBs for more torque.

The ECO 8/16 require a servo no taller than 1.1 inches, so this limits servo choices considerably.

- JR 341 (0.22 secs/60 degrees, 32 oz-in)
- JR 351 (0.22 secs/60 degrees, 32 oz-in)
- HS-81 (0.11 secs/60 degrees, 36 oz-in)
- HS-85MG/BB+ (0.16 secs/60 degrees, 42 oz-in)
- GWS Micro 2BBMG (0.17 secs/60 degrees, 75 oz-in)
- Futaba S3102 (0.22 secs/60 degrees, 63 oz-in)
- Volz Micro-Maxx (0.16 secs/60 degrees, 55 oz-in)
- Volz Micro-Maxx XP (0.16 secs/60 degrees, 66 oz-in)
- JR DS368

5.4.2. Logo 10 choices:

The Logo 10 uses servos from 1.1 inches to 1.3 inches tall, so it can use all the servos used in the ECO 8/16 except the servos with less torque are not suitable. Probably 42 oz-in of torque is a reasonable minimum requirement for a Logo 10.

- HS-85MG/BB+ (0.16 secs/60 degrees, 42 oz-in)
- JR 341 (0.23 secs/60 degrees, 42 oz-in)
- JR DS368
- Multiplex Micro BB?

5.4.3. Summary

I've been told the Volz servos are too deep to fit into the Logo 10 frame, so they are supposedly not usable for the Logo 10.

For the Piccolos, the most popular choices seem to be the Hitec HS-50 and the HS-55.

If you use ANY digital servos, see the BEC section for more info.

The HS-81s and HS-85BBs can be upgraded HS-81MGs and HS-85MGs by replacing the plastic gears with the metal gears from the MG version, which are available at many places (Servocity, etc).

5.5. Receiver

If you are using a gyro without remote sensitivity (like the GY240) on a fixed pitch heli, then you only need a four channel receiver (channels 1-4).

If you are using a gyro with remote sensitivity (like the GY401) on a fixed pitch heli, then you need a receiver which can receive channels 1-5.

If you are using a gyro without remote sensitivity (like the GY240) on a collective pitch heli, then you need a receiver which can receive channels 1-4 and channel 6.

If you are using a gyro with remote sensitivity (like the GY401) on a collective pitch heli, then you need a receiver which can receive channels 1-6.

(See the For Futaba transmitters/For JR transmitters section in the helicopter construction section for individual channel assignments.)

For a Piccolo you can use a Piccoboard instead. The Piccoboard is a tiny board with a yaw-rate gyro and two brushed ESCs, one for the main motor and one for the tail motor.

The Piccoboard Plus is the same except it can be upgraded to heading hold with a heading hold module. I haven't tried this, but people have mentioned the GY240 works better than the HH module.

5.6. Motor

There are many, many motors available, but only a few are suitable for each helicopter. This is because the rpm/V or the Kv of the motor is very important due to the fixed gearing ratio of the drive system.

There are five main criteria to consider when choosing a motor:

5.6.1. Motor size

Some motors are too large to fit in the some helicopters. For example, the C50-13L is too large to fit in the ECO 8.

5.6.2. Motor weight

A quick guide to suitable inrunner motors is to allocate 10-15% of the helicopter's AUW to the motor. So, the inrunner motors suitable for an ECO 8 (AUW ~1600 grams) will be between 160-240 grams in weight.

Outrunner motors can be lighter because they are more efficient at dissipating heat. For outrunner motors, it is only necessary to allocate about 7-10% of the helicopter's AUW for the motor.

5.6.3. Motor efficiency

Motor efficiency is important because the power not used to fly the helicopter is wasted as heat. For example, you might compare two motors, one with 80% and 90% efficiency. The difference appears to be only 10%.

In terms of heat generation, the 80% efficient motor will generate almost twice as much heat as the 90% efficient motor. If a helicopter requires 150 watts to hover, then the 90% efficient motor will use 166.7 watts of power and waste 16.7 watts as heat.

The 80% efficient motor will use 187.5 watts of power, and waste 27.5 watts as heat. This generates 65% more heat than the 90% efficient motor. So, motor efficiency is very important because efficient motors run much cooler.

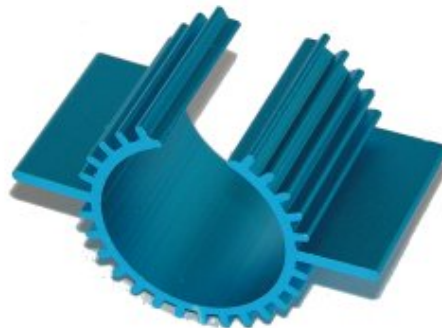
5.6.4. Shaft diameter and available pinion sizes

Theoretically, an Orbit 15-16 (1067 rpm/V) will fly an ECO 8. However, you would need about a 28-30 tooth 5mm pinion, and the largest available 5mm pinion is 24 tooth. So, the available pinion sizes will limit your motor choices.

5.6.5. Cooling options

For inrunner motors, a heatsink or fan is recommended when flying in ambient temperatures over about 70F/21C or when flying for long duration with lithium-ion or lithium-polymer batteries.

The Hacker B20, B40, and B50 heatsinks are probably the most commonly used for helicopters.



GWS style heatsink

Table 5.1. Heatsinks

Motor	Heatsink
20mm diameter motors (Hacker B20, HiMaxx 2015/2025 etc)	Hacker B20 heatsink
23mm diameter motors:	GWS EHS-100 (green color)
24mm diameter motors (Speed 300 motors)	GWS EHS-300 (red color)
28mm diameter motors (Mega 16/x/x, Hacker B40, etc)	Hacker B40 heatsink Hacker B40 heatsink Kontronik KK480 heatsink GWS Speed 400c heatsink (GW/EHS-400) (blue color)
36mm diameter motors (Hacker B50, Kontronik 500/600, etc)	Hacker B50 heatsink Kontronik KK600 heatsink

The Mega 22/20/3H has the shaft extending out the backside for mounting a small fan using a 5mm prop adapter instead of a heatsink. A fan can be made by modifying a Maxx Products MPIACC328. Cut off the top part of the prop adapter so the prop adapter looks like a cylinder with a disc attached. Next, disassemble a small computer fan to extract the fan portion, and epoxy the fan to the top of the prop adapter. Most brushless motors use neodymium magnets. These magnets will lose their magnetization when operated at temperatures over 70C/158F to 120C/248F depending on magnet type. Therefore, it is important to keep the motor temperature below about 150F (by using a heatsink) to avoid demagnetizing the motor magnets.

Some brushless motors use samarium cobalt magnets (Astroflight, etc). These magnets will lose their magnetization above 250C/482F, so overheating is less of a concern with these magnets. The Hacker C40/C50 series is the same as the B40/B50 series except the C40/C50 series has a built-in heatsink so no additional heatsink is necessary. The Hacker B40/B50 series require an additional heatsink available for \$15.

The easiest way to install a Hacker B40/B50 heatsink onto a motor is to use a drill bit that is slightly larger than the gap in the heatsink, and press the base (not the spiral side) of the drill bit into the gap to force it open, then slip the motor inside. This technique works extremely well. To install a B40 heatsink onto a Mega 16/15/3, you should use a 4mm drill bit.

The Hacker B20-xxS/L, Feigao 138084xxS/L, Himaxx HA20xx, and Model Motors MiniAC 1215/xx motors have a "bearing bump" which makes installation in helicopters rather difficult. Maxx Products sells the a motor adapter (ACC3900) which eliminates this problem.

Motors are listed from mild to powerful. Please note that I have no experience with most of these motors therefore the ordering should only be considered a rough guide, and not absolute oracle. In general the lower Kv motors with a larger pinion are milder and better for duration flying, and the higher Kv motors with smaller pinions are better for sport/aerobatic flying.

For more info on motors and pinion sizes, I recommend searching the [RC Groups electric helicopter and micro helicopter forums](#) for people's opinions on various motor and pinion combinations.

5.6.6. For the Corona

Ideal Kv: 2700-3000 rpm/V - Main gear: 102T, 32 pitch

- Graupner Speed 500 Race #6307 (brushed) mild
- Kyosho Atomic Force (brushed) mild
- Astroflight 020 helicopter motor (4 turn) (brushless) ???
- Mega Motor ACn16/15/4 (brushless) mild
- Mega Motor ACn16/15/3 (brushless) mild
- Hacker C40-12S (brushless) powerful
- Mega Motor ACn22/20/3HTDS (brushless, 8 cells/15T)

Note: The Mega Motor and Astroflight motors are very good for duration flights in the Corona. 10+ minute flights are possible with some moderate wind.

5.6.7. For the FP Piccolo:

Ideal Kv: 1800-2000 rpm/V - Main gear: 100T, 0.5 module

- Astro Flight Astro 010 (brushless) mild
- Team Orion Modified Elite (brushed) powerful
- Hacker B20-36S (brushless) (8T pinion) powerful
- Model Motors ACn1215/20 (brushless) powerful

Note: The Astro 010 is very good for long flights.

5.6.8. For the CP Piccolo main motor:

Ideal Kv: 2700-3000 rpm/V - Main gear: 100T, 0.5 module

- Hacker B20-36S (brushless) (10T pinion) mild
- Astro Flight Astro 010/14T (brushless) mild
- Team Orion Modified Elite (brushed) powerful
- Astro Flight Astro 010/10T (brushless) powerful?
- Hacker B20-31S (brushless) (8T pinion) powerful
- Model Motors ACn1215/20 (brushless) powerful
- Hacker B20-20L (brushless)
- Hacker B20-18L (brushless) (8T pinion) powerful

Note: The B20-36S is good for duration flights.

The B20-18L is good for aerobatics.

5.6.9. For the Hummingbird FP/CP, GWS Dragonfly main motor:

Century Hummingbird: 140T, 0.5 module

Others: 0.5 module

- HiMaxx 2015-4100
- Model Motors ACn1215/16 (brushless)

5.6.10. For Piccolo, Dragonfly, Hummingbird tail motor:

Main gear: 0.5 module

- GWS EDF50-2 motor (brushed, can draw >2 amps)
- Feigao 1208436L (brushless)
- Feigao 1208430S (brushless)

5.6.11. For the Hornet CP:

Main gear: 135T, 0.4 module

- HiMaxx HA3026-3600 (brushless)
- Hacker B20-26S (brushless)
- Model Motors ACn1215/16 (brushless)
- Razor Micro Heli V2 (brushless)

5.6.12. For the Zoom 400:

Main gear: 0.5 module

- Himaxx HA2025-4200 (brushless)
- Hacker B20-15L (brushless, 9-10T, 3S LiPo)
- MiniAC 1215/20 (10T, 3S LiPo)
- Eflight Park 400 4200 (8T, 3S LiPo)
- Motor Max Motors 400DH (9T, 3S LiPo)
- Do not use the Chili Pepper 3600 - it burns out

5.6.13. For the Align T-Rex

Main gear: 150T, 0.5 module

- Himax 2025-4200 (8T, 3S LiPo)
- Mega 16/15/3 (13T, 3S Lipo)
- Neumotor 1105/3Y (9T, ?S LiPo)
- Lehner 1020/17 (11T, 3S LiPo)

(Best low-cost choice is currently the Mega 16/15/3)

5.6.14. For the Voyager E

Pinion: ?

- Hacker C40-10T (brushless)
- Hacker C40-8L (brushless)

5.6.15. For the Robbe Eolo

Ideal Kv:

3.17mm shaft motors: 3000-3300 rpm/V

5.00mm shaft motors: 2700-3000 rpm/V

Pinion: 0.7 module

The available pinions are 14-18T for 3.17mm, shafts, and 19-22T for 5mm shafts.

- Hacker C40-9L (brushless) (8 cells/18T)
- Hacker C40-8L (brushless)
- Mega 22/20/2 (brushless)
- Kontronik Twist 3700 (brushless)
- Aveox 27/39/1.5 (brushless)
- Lehner 1930/6 (brushless)

5.6.16. For the ECO 8:

Aerobatic flight - ideal Kv:

3.17 mm shaft motors: 2300-2600 rpm/V

5.00 mm shaft motors: 1800-2000 rpm/V

Duration flight - ideal Kv:

3.17 mm shaft motors: 2100-2300 rpm/V

5.00 mm shaft motors: 1500-1800 rpm/V

Main gear: 180T 0.5 module

The ECO 8 has a 180T main gear, and the available pinions are 10T-18T for 3.17mm shafts, and 13-24T for 5mm shafts

- Magnetic Mayhem (brushed) mild
- Hacker C40-13L (brushless) mild, good for duration
- Aveox 27/30/1.5 (brushless) ???
- Aveox 36/15/1.5 (brushless) ???
- Ikarus X-250-4H (brushless) mild, discontinued
- Hacker C40-14S (brushless, 8 cells/9-10T) mild
- Hacker C40-12L (brushless, 8 cells/12-13T, 10 cells/10-11T)
- Aveox 27/39/1.5 (brushless, 10 cells)
- Aveox 36/15/1.5 (brushless, 10 cells)
- Ikarus H8 (brushless, 8 cells 22-24T, 10 cells 21-24T, 12 cells 20-24T) ???
- Hacker B50-22S (brushless, 10 cells/16T, 12 cells/13T)
- Hacker C50-22S (brushless, 10 cells/16T, 12 cells/13T)
- Hacker B50-18S (brushless, 8 cells/14-19T, 10 cells/13-15T) powerful
- Hacker B50-15L (brushless) powerful
- Hacker C40-10L (brushless) powerful
- Mega Motor ACn22/20/3H (brushless) powerful
- Kontronik 500-19 (brushless) (8-10 cells, 13-15T) powerful
- Hacker B50-13L (brushless) very powerful
- Plettenberg Orbit 15-14 (brushless, 10 cells/24T) powerful
- Lehner Basic 2400 XL (brushless) ???
- Lehner Basic 2800 XL (brushless) ???
- Hacker B50-11L (brushless) insanely powerful(requires very good matched batteries)

5.6.16.1. Best inexpensive motor for ECO 8:

Mega Motor ACn22/20/3H

5.6.16.2. Best overall motors for ECO 8:

Hacker B50-15L

Plettenberg Orbit 15-14 (10 cells/23-24T)

Note: The C50 motors will NOT fit in an ECO frame.

The smaller motors (C40, etc) may overheat in warm weather (70+F) so be careful.

5.6.17. For the ECO 16:

The ECO 16 has the same main gear and pinions as the ECO 8.

- Mega 22/30/4 (brushless, 16 cells, 17-20T)
- Ikarus H16 (brushless, 16 cells, 20-24T)
- Plettenberg Orbit 20-16 (brushless, 16 cells, 22T)
- Mega 22/30/3 (brushless, 16 cells, 13-15T)

5.6.18. For the Logo 10:

5.00 mm shaft motors: 1800-2000 rpm/V

Pinion: old models: 0.5 module, newer models: 0.7 module

The main gear is 200T, and the available pinions are 14-23T for 5mm shafts.

Pinion:0.5 module

- Aveox 36/24/2 (brushless) ???
- Kontronik Fun 600-15 (brushless) powerful
- Hacker C50-15L (5s3p, 13T)(brushless) powerful
- Mega ACn 22/30/3 (brushless) (5s3p, 13T)
- Astro 040 (brushless) ???
- Kontronik Fun 600-15 (brushless) (12 cells, 14-16T)
- Aveox 36/24/2 (brushless)
- Hacker C50-14L (brushless) (5s3p, 13T)
- Hacker C50-13L (brushless) (12 cells, 14T, 14 cells, 13T)
- Kontronik Fun 600-17 (brushless) (12 cells, 15-19T)
- Kontronik Fun 600-18 (brushless) (12 cells, 14-18T)
- Plettenberg Orbit 15-16 (brushless, 1070 rpm/V) ???
- Plettenberg Orbit 15-14 (brushless, 12 cells, 17T) ???
- Mega ACn 22/30/2 TDS (brushless) (6s3p, 10T)

- Hacker B/C50-11L (brushless) super powerful (requires very good matched batteries)

Recommended:

- Plettenberg Orbit 15-14 (12 cells/17-21T)
- Plettenberg Orbit 15-16 (14 cells/17-21T)
- Hacker C50-13L (12 cells/13-17T)

5.6.19. For the Logo 14:

5.00 mm shaft motors: ?

There are two main gears included with the Logo 14: 200T/0.5 module and 140T/0.7 module.

- Hacker C50-13XL (5s4p, 11-13T)
- Hacker C50-14XL (6s3p, 10-12T)
- Hacker C50-15XL (7s3p, 10-11T)
- Hacker C50-16XL (8s3p, 10T)
- Hacker C50-17XL (8s3p, 10-11T)
- Hacker C50-18XL (8s3p, 10-11T)
- Hacker C50-19XL (8s2p, 10-11T)
- Hacker C50-12XL (6s3P, 13T)
- Hacker C50-11XL (5s4p, 13-14T)
- Hacker C50-10XL (5s4p, 13T)
- Plettenberg HP 300/30/A2 Heli (5s4p/15T)

5.6.20. For the Quick EP 10:

The main gear is 120T, and the available pinions are 10-14T for 5mm shafts.

- Aveox 36/20/2 (brushless, 12 cells, 11-12T)

5.6.21. For the Quick Sweet 16 EP

The main gear is 120T, and the available pinions are 10-14T for 5mm shafts.

- Aveox 36/38/3 (brushless, 20 cells, 12-13T)

5.6.22. Summary

If you choose a brushless motor, then an autorotation gear is highly recommended. Most brushless motors have extremely high torque so when the motor spools down, the "braking" effect will be very strong. This will very likely break the main gear teeth if you do not have an autorotation gear. The only exception to this is the Corona; the main gear on it is very tough and can handle a brushless motor without an autorotation gear.

The older sensed Aveox motors (12xx and 14xx series) are only rated to 20,000 rpm, and the JETI motors are only rated to 15,000 rpm. You must be careful not to exceed these rotational speeds otherwise the rotor may eject a magnet (e.g. "throw a magnet"). Therefore, I do not recommend these motors for helicopter use. The better motors such as the newer Aveox, MEGAs, Hackers are typically rated for 50k-70k rpm, which makes them a better choice for helicopter applications.

The Model Motors 2814/10 is not recommended for an ECO 8. The motor seems to have problems with the rotor wobbling and touching the stator windings which burns out both the motor and the ESC. There are also some reports that the magnets are not epoxied very well to the rotor and may shift position. Also, these motors are not very efficient, and run very, very hot when used in a helicopter.

Most of the HiMaxx motors are not very efficient and therefore are not very good for larger helicopters because they generate large amounts of heat. There was one report of an HB 3615-2100 used in an ECO 8, and it became "too hot to touch". The HiMaxx seems to work okay in microhelis such as the Hornet CP and Zoom. The choice of a motor with a proper Kv for a collective pitch helicopter is very important, because most motor ESCs are not efficient when running at much less than 90% throttle. If you run an ESC continuously at low throttle, the ESC will probably overheat. Therefore, you should select a motor + pinion combination that will allow the motor ESC to run at 90-95% throttle for best efficiency.

The Kv choice for a fixed pitch helicopter is less strict because the motor will be operating at partial throttle most of the time. However, the Kv should be high enough to allow hovering at about half throttle and should have enough reserve to allow recovering from mistakes.

Pole counts for motors are unfortunately difficult to find, and are necessary to program some ESCs correctly. Here are the pole counts that I have managed to find:

- Hacker: 2 pole
- Kontronik: 2 pole
- Lehner: 2 pole
- Mega 22/x/x: 6 pole
- Plettenberg: 2, 4, and 6 pole

Also see Tohru Shimizu's helicopter brushless motor page at:
www.dokidoki.ne.jp/home2/tohrus/motorindexE.html



Note

Check the length of your motor mounting screws before mounting!

If they go too deep into the motor they will short out a winding which will damage the motor. Even worse, if you try to run a motor with a shorted winding, it will burn out the ESC. So test the screw length by screwing it into the motor with your fingers before mounting in the frame.

5.7. Pinion

Most helicopter manufacturers supply a range of pinions for their helicopters. You may require pinions with more teeth for some reason. The most common reason is for running outrunner motors which usually have a fairly low Kv and therefore require a pinion with a higher tooth count.

Some helicopters use metric pinions, and some use English pinions.

5.7.1. Pitch to module conversion:

Here is the conversion from English to metric.

module = 25.4 / pitch

5.7.2. Common pitch equivalents

Here is a table with approximate conversions from pitch to module.

There will be extra wear and some inefficiency due to not having an exact match, however this is good enough for most purposes.

- 32 pitch = about 0.8 modul (actually 0.793 module)
- 48 pitch = about 0.5 modul (actually 0.529 module)
- 64 pitch = about 0.4 modul (actually 0.396 module)

5.7.3. Shaft Sizes

There are about six different shaft sizes used in electric helicopters today: 1mm, 1.5mm, 2mm, 2.3mm, 3.17mm, and 5mm.

The 1mm shafts are used by the "N20" style tail motors used in micro helicopters. Wes-Technik stocks 0.5 module brass pinions with 6-15T for this shaft size.

The 1.5mm shafts are used by the GWS IPS-style "performance" tail motors used in micro helicopters. Wes-Technik stocks 0.5 module brass pinions with 7-12T for this shaft size.

The 2mm and 2.3mm (3/32 inch) shafts are used by main motors on the micro helicopters, such as the Piccolo, Dragonfly, Hummingbird, etc. The 2mm bore pinions are easy to find, but the 2.3mm bore pinions are much more difficult to find.

List follows of 2mm and 2.3mm bore pinions usable in micro helis, w/ss means "with setscrew":

5.7.3.1. HPI Racing Micro RS4 steel pinions w/ss (2mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 9T (Tower Hobbies LXBGE5)
- 10T (Tower Hobbies LXBGE6)
- 11T (Tower Hobbies LXBGE7)
- 12T (Tower Hobbies LXBGE8)
- 13T (Tower Hobbies LXBGE9)

5.7.3.2. Duratrax Micro Street Force aluminum pinions w/ss (2mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 9T (Tower Hobbies LXFNC5)
- 11T (Tower Hobbies LXFNC6)
- 13T (Tower Hobbies LXFNC7)

5.7.3.3. Kyosho @12 steel pinion w/ss (2mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 7T (Kyosho AZW002-07, Tower Hobbies LXGPF2)
- 8T (Kyosho AZW002-08, Tower Hobbies LXGPF3)
- 9T (Kyosho AZW002-09, Tower Hobbies LXGPF4)

5.7.3.4. AlignRC T-rex metal pinions w/ss (2mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 11T, 13T, 15T (HZ021)

5.7.3.5. AlignRC T-rex metal pinions w/ss (2.3mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 9T, 10T, 11T (HZ020)

5.7.3.6. Team Losi Mini-T plastic press-on pinions (2mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 12T, 14T, 16T (LOSB1069)

5.7.3.7. Xray M18 composite pinions (2mm bore, 0.5 module):

- 13T, 14T, 15T, 16T (#385701)
- 17T, 19T, 21T, 23T (#385700)

The standard Hacker B20-series motors have a 2.3mm shaft, but Aircraft World carries some B20-S motors with a standard 2mm shaft, which makes pinion selection much easier.

Precision Model Products modifies the Team Losi Micro RS4 pinions bored out to 2.3mm for Hacker B20 series motors. These pinions work but are not the best because they are very noisy.

Sparrow Products now sells a pinion adapter (bore reducer) which allows you to use a 3.17mm pinion with a 2mm or 2.3mm motor shaft. This is available from their website.

If you know of another source for 0.5 module metal pinions for 2mm and 2.3mm shafts with setscrews, then please send me a message at [RC Groups](#) , because these pinions are difficult to find.

The 3.17mm (1/8 inch) and 5mm shafts are used for nonmicro helicopters. Tower Hobbies car-

ries a wide range of 1/8 inch pinions in both 32 and 48 pitch sizes which are usable in electric helicopters.

Kawada makes 48 pitch 3.17mm pinions up to 40T. RCmart carries a full selection of Kawada pinions.

Please note the Duratrax Mini Quake pinions are NOT 0.5 module and will not work on most micro helicopters. The teeth are too big and the pitch may be 0.6 module, but haven't verified this.

The press-on pinions for GWS EPS gearboxes are 0.4 module and have a 2mm bore. These are usable for the Hornet, but they do not have a setscrew.

The smaller brass press-on pinions (1 and 1.5mm) can be very difficult to remove from motors. I do not recommend the GWS pinion puller for these - I have personally destroyed two GWS pinion pullers trying to remove this type of pinion. However, brass has a very high thermal expansion coefficient which can be used to easily pull these pinions off the motor.

The best way to remove these brass pinions is to clamp the motor in a vise, then press a hot blunt tip soldering iron on the end of the pinion (for maximum heat transfer), wait about four seconds to allow the pinion to become hot and expand, then pry off the pinion using needle nose pliers. Do not skip the soldering iron step, because otherwise you will pull the shaft out of the motor.

The best way to install a brass pinion on a motor is to use a vise. Put the motor and pinion between the jaws, and screw the vise shut to push the pinion onto the shaft. Be sure the back end of the shaft is pressed against the jaw otherwise you may damage the motor bearings.

When selecting pinions, be sure to check your helicopter manufacturer's pinions first. The pinions from the helicopter manufacturer usually work best for most models.

5.8. Wire

(The Corona kit does not need extra wire if using the Fusion 35, Pegasus 35, or Phoenix 35 controller)

The motor and battery wires are especially important on an electric helicopter. If the wires are too thin, then your helicopter will have less power because power is lost overcoming the resistance of the wire and the wire will become very hot.

For an Corona, ECOs, and Logos, you will need good quality 12-14 gauge wire for the motor and battery leads. These wires will work well:

- Castle Creations W13RB (13 gauge)
- Astroflight wire (13 gauge)
- W.S. Dean's Ultra Wire (12 gauge)
- Team Orion (12 gauge)

The 12 gauge is very heavy and only recommended for extreme flying and/or larger helicopters with high current draw (>30 amps). The 13 gauge wire should suffice for most types of flying.

For the Piccolos and Hornets, you will need good quality 20-22 gauge wire for the motor and

battery leads. This wire works well:

- Castle Creations W20RB (20 gauge)

Sometimes wire is sold as "square mm cross-section" instead of AWG. Here is a quick table for conversion:

- 1.5 sq. mm 15 AWG
- 2.5 sq. mm 13 AWG
- 4.0 sq. mm 11 AWG

5.9. Battery Connectors

Heavy-duty battery connectors are recommended to minimize power loss.

The following connectors work well for the Corona/ECO/Logo:

- 4mm gold-plated Corally "bullet" connectors
- Astroflight "Zero-Loss" 50 amp connectors
- W.S. Deans Ultra connectors
- W.S. Deans micro connectors (micro helis)
- JST BEC connectors (micro helis)

If you use the 4mm bullet connectors, you may want to use one male and one female plug on the battery otherwise you may plug in the ESC backwards, which will definitely damage it.

The Astroflight connectors are expensive but they are polarized and of extremely high quality and highly recommended.

These connectors may have some problems:

- Anderson's PowerPoles
- Sermos Connectors
- Tamiya connectors

The Tamiya connectors do not handle high current well. They will become very, very hot when conducting large amounts of current. Unfortunately, these connectors are supplied with Corona kits. It is highly recommended to replace these connectors.

Some people do use Powerpoles or Sermos with helis, but evidently some ESC manufacturers are claiming these connectors have problems.

There has been a report of Schulze refusing to honor a controller warranty due to the usage of

Powerpole connectors.

Also, Rumrunner Hobbies' webpage states:

"Lehner/BK warrantee does NOT Warranty (and is not limited to):... If Sermos, Powerpole, or Tamiya style connectors are used in the application."

Also mentioned:

"When connecting your new LMT controller to your batteries be sure to use Deans style connectors or 4mm Gold connectors (gold connectors are for racers only). Other connectors such as Sermos, Powerpole, and Tamiya connectors can NOT be used and WILL VOID your warrantee.

These style connectors have a tendency to arch (sic) and or spark as your vehicle is in motion. They also have a much higher resistance factor. If the connector does arch (sic) during operation of your vehicle it will short out the motherboard and render your controller useless!"

5.10. Motor connectors

The standard connector for nonmicro helis is the 3.5mm bullet-style connector. These work well for up to 70 amps and are supplied with Schulze controllers.

For the main motor of FP micro helicopters and for tail rotors of micro helicopters, the most commonly used connector is the crimp pin from a D-sub connector. These are good up to about 4 amps and are available from Jameco Electronics; the female pins are part #43369 and the males are part #43377

For the main motor of CP micro helicopters there really is no standard. I personally use the MP Jet 1.8mm gold connectors, which are available from Aircraft World.

5.11. Main motor ESC

(See [Chapter 37, Terminology](#) for a definition of [ESC](#))

If you plan to use a brushed motor, you will need a brushed motor ESC. If you plan to use a sensed brushless motor (like the X-250-4H) then you can use either a sensorless or sensed brushless motor controller. For the sensorless brushless motor controller, the sensor wires (connector) from the motor will not be connected to anything because the sensors are not required by the controller.

The sensed brushless motors may need to be sent back to the motor factory to reverse the motor direction if your rotor head is spinning in the wrong direction. Therefore, I recommend avoiding sensed brushless motors unless you already know the timing is for the desired direction of rotation.

If you plan to use a sensorless brushless motor, you will need a sensorless brushless motor controller. This motor type is not usable with a sensed brushless motor controller (such as the older Schulze Booster-40b).

An ESC used for main motor control must have the following characteristics are required (or must be programmable):

- No brake

- No reverse
- Slow start-up
- No low voltage cutoff or programmable very low voltage cutoff. (As low as possible, must be 0.7 volts/cell or less)

Most airplane ESCs are not suitable for helicopters because they have low throttle resolution, include a brake and have a fairly high low-voltage cutoff.

The JETI Microprocessor (red label series) is not suitable for helis because the throttle control is not smooth and is rather "steppy". The Advance (blue label series) is supposedly better, but nobody I know has tried this. Some ESCs have an optocoupler (usually called OPTO) instead of a BEC. The optocoupler electrically isolates the ESC from the control signal which reduces the possibility of interference from the external BEC.

For the micro helis, the following are popular as main motor ESCs:

- Pixie-7P (brushed ESC, 7 amp)
- Schulze Future 11.20e (brushless, rather heavy)
- Castle Creations Phoenix 10 (brushless, very light)
- Piccoboard/Piccoboard Plus/Piccoboard Pro
- GWS ICS-100E (brushed main motor ESC, 5 amp)

For the Corona, the following work:

- Castle Creations Pegasus 35 (brushed)
- Castle Creations Phoenix 35 (brushless)
- Hacker Master 40-3P (brushless, do not use the BEC on this ESC because the ESC will overheat on 3 servos?)

For the ECO 8/16, the following work:

- Schulze Future 12.46k
- Schulze Future 18.46k
- Hacker Master 40-3P Heli
- Kontronik Jazz 55-6-18

For the Logo 10, the following work:

- Schulze Future 18.46K

- Kontronik Beat 55-6-18

Do not use the SMILE 40-6-18 in the Logo 10 - it tends to burn out!!!

The Hacker Masters seem to burn out in the Logo 10 as well due to ESD problems.

The Castle Creations Phoenix works fine in the Piccolos and the Corona but does not work well in the ECO 8/Logo 10 and larger helis. The current version of the firmware has a problem in three areas:

- The soft start doesn't work properly. It may kick your heli around 180 degrees and/or tip your heli over.
- The governor mode doesn't work properly with a heading hold gyro. The RPMs will go up and down even when hovering, which makes the tail wag back and forth.
- The controller seems to be sensitive to radio glitches. When the Phoenix is used in a heli, it requires a receiver which has a fail-safe mode or glitch filtering, such as a PCM receiver or a Berg DSP receiver.

Therefore, the Phoenix is not suitable for larger helicopters until these firmware bugs are fixed.

If you are mounting the Phoenix ESC with double-stick tape, be sure to put the tape on the BEC side and not the FET side. The FET side generates the most heat, so it needs to be exposed to free air.

Phoenix 35 ESC showing the BEC side

The FET side is the side with the regular pattern of identical chips. The BEC side has a random collection of chips.

5.12. Tail motor ESC

(See [Chapter 37, Terminology](#) for a definition of [ESC](#))

You will only need a tail motor ESC if the heli has a tail motor, obviously.

For the tail motor ESC, two characteristics are important:

- High throttle resolution (256 steps or more)

Many airplane ESCs have very low throttle resolution (typically 32 steps) because airplane radios typically have a ratchet on the throttle stick which limits the throttle resolution anyway.

If a heading hold gyro is used with an ESC with low throttle resolution, the tail will "wag" as the gyro tries to find the correct throttle position to hold the tail still.

If a yaw rate gyro is used with an ESC with low throttle resolution then the tail will creep left or right because you will be unable to set the tail throttle to the perfect value with the revomix.

The GWS ICS-50E and probably other GWS ESCs are known to have only 16 steps of

throttle resolution

- High switching rate (>50 khz) (for brushed motors)

Many micro helis use metal brushed tail motors. These are easily recognizable because there are two types:

- The popular "N20" style motors all use metal brushes.
- The IPS-style motors with grey endbells use metal brushes.

These metal brushes are very fragile and are easily destroyed by the high current surges generated by low switching rate ESCs. Therefore it is desirable to use a high switching frequency ESC to extend the operating life of the expensive tail motors.

The IPS-style motors with black endbells use carbon brushes which are less fragile, but they will still last longer with a high switching frequency ESC.

The GWS ESCs are described as "high frequency" but they're only 2.8 khz. It's high frequency compared to the 50 hz control signal but it is not high frequency compared to the TREC and other high frequency ESCs.

Some people are using the Feigao 1208436L brushless motor + Phoenix 10 ESC for tail control, but this combination has wagging problems and does not work as well as a standard brushed motor + high frequency ESC.

The following ESCs are usable as tail motor ESCs:

- JMP HF100 (brushed 100khz switching, 256 steps, 1.5 amp)
- Schulze Slim-105He (brushed, 100 khz switching, ? steps, 5 amp)
- Dionysus Design TREC ESC (brushed, 100khz switching, 256 steps, 5 amp)
- Castle Creations Phoenix 10 (brushless, 10 amp, ? steps)

5.13. BEC (battery eliminator circuit)

(See [Chapter 37, Terminology](#) for a definition of [BEC](#))

If your heli uses up to 8 cells and uses only analog servos, then you can use the BEC which is included on many ESCs such as the Schulze Future 12.46k and the Castle Creations Phoenix 35.

Some controllers can handle up to 10 cells with four servos, but 10 cells is very marginal for most linear BECs, and the BEC will run very hot. I recommend using an external switching BEC when running battery packs over 10 volts (more than 8 cells NiCD/NIMH, or more than 2s LiPo).

Currently there are two popular BECs. The first is the Kool Flight Systems Ultimate BEC, also called the UBEC. This is a large 20 gram BEC which can deliver 3 amps continuous. There are two models for 5 volt use, one for up to 29 cells and other for up to 36 cells.

The second is the Firmtronic SBEC. This is a very small and light (8 grams w/o switch) BEC which can deliver up to 2.5 amps continuous and can work with up to 40 cells.

There are now two more choices, which are the Medusa Research "Potencia" 2 amp/6-25 cell and 3.5 amp/10-33 cell BECs (12 grams). I have not seen any reports from people using these on helicopters, however. If you are using any digital servos, then you will need to check the ESC's onboard BEC amperage rating. Most ESC BECs are rated for only 1 or 1.5 amps which is insufficient to run a digital servo + 3 analog servos. One digital servo with three regular servos can easily draw well over one amp, so if your ESC's built-in BEC is rated for only one amp, you will definitely need to use an external BEC.

If you use a one amp BEC with digital servos, it will probably overheat during flight and shut down. This will cause you to lose control of the helicopter and it will crash.

To use an external BEC with an ESC which already has a BEC, then you will need to disable the built-in BEC of the ESC. To do this, check if the ESC has one or two plugs which plug into the receiver. If the ESC has two plugs (like the Schulze Future 12.46e), then one of the plugs will have three wires and the other will have only two wires. The plug with only two wires is the BEC plug. If you do not connect this plug to the receiver, then the ESC's onboard BEC will be disabled. If the ESC has only one plug (like the Castle Creations Phoenix series) then the plug will have three wires and the middle wire should be red or orange.

Either pull this red wire out of the connector and tape it with electrical tape to prevent it from touching other wires or use a servo extension with the red wire pulled out and taped. This will disable the onboard BEC of this type of ESC.

5.14. Batteries

Helicopters need batteries that can deliver high current. If you use cheap batteries, your helicopter will probably not fly well. The Sanyo CP2400 and RC2400s are the best choices for beginners on nonmicro helis because they are reasonably priced and can discharge at high rates. NiMH batteries are usually higher capacity but deliver less current than Nicad batteries, so they are better suited for duration flying.

The one exception is the Sanyo HR-SC which is a NiMH battery specially built for high current drain which performs slightly better than the CP2400/RC2400 (HR-SCs must be used immediately after charging for best results).

NiMH batteries require about 5 charge/discharge cycles to reach full capacity. They work best immediately after charging - if you allow them to sit and cool off they will not work as well. Both Nicad and NiMH battery packs should be slow-charged on the first charge to ensure all cells in the pack will reach a full charge.

If this is not done, the cells in the pack may be at different states of a charge and the pack may never fully charge properly. If you notice a big drop in capacity in your battery packs after a few months of use, this is probably due to the cells in the pack having different states of charge. If this happens, you should try to "rebalance" the cells in the pack by slow charging them at C/20 for 24 hours. This will usually restore the pack to full capacity. This should only be done for Nicad and NiMH packs, and not for other battery types such as Li-ion or LiPoly. Your batteries will last much longer if you do not allow them to become too hot, because the primary cause of battery failure is the deterioration of the separator which is accelerated by higher temperatures. Therefore, you should allow your battery packs to cool a little after use before charging them again.

The batteries known to work well are:

Corona / Logo 10/16/20 / ECO 8/16:

- Sanyo CP1700SCR (NiCad 1700 maH, 5.5 milliohms)

- Sanyo CP2400 (NiCad 2400 maH, 4.5 milliohms)
- Sanyo RC2400 (NiCad 2400 maH, 3.2 milliohms)
- Panasonic HHR300SCU (NiMH 3000 maH)
- Panasonic RC-3300HV (NiMH 3300 maH, 5.0 milliohms)
- Sanyo HR-SC (NiMH 2600 maH, 4.0 milliohms)

Micro helis (Piccolo and clones, Hornet, etc but not T-rex or Zoom):

- Sanyo HR-AAAU (NiMH 720 maH, 30 milliohms)
- PowerEx AAA NiMH
- HECCELL AAA NiMH

(milliohms is a measure of internal resistance; LOWER IS BETTER)

If you are buying batteries not on this list, then you should ask the manufacturer for the internal resistance of the cells. If the batteries do not have an internal resistance as low as the cells on this list, then it is probably not suitable for helicopter use.

If you intend to fly aerobatics, do NOT use commercial battery packs. Most of these packs use a flat springy metal to connect the battery terminals and the springy metal will melt at high (50-60+) currents. Be sure to use your own inline-soldered battery packs if you intend to do hard aerobatics with your helicopter.

Lithium-polymer batteries are NOT recommended for helicopter beginners. They are fragile and incur damage easily, and when they are damaged they can IGNITE up to ten minutes later.

There was a story posted on [RC Groups](#) about a guy who crashed his plane powered by Li-Pos, and he put it in his SUV. Several minutes later someone told him his SUV was on fire. He posted pictures of the totaled SUV, and the interior was completely burned.

NOTE: The 17mm-long N20 motor used on some micro helicopter tails (some Piccolo models, all Hummingbirds, etc) will burn out quickly (5-20 mins) if the motor is run on 8 cells. Be sure to use only 7 cell battery packs to extend the tail motor life.

5.15. Main rotor blades

When learning to hover, use the semi-symmetrical blades. These are more stable for hovering (less sensitive to cyclic) than symmetrical blades. Also, use white blades if possible. The tilt of the helicopter is much easier to gauge when using white blades. Dark blades turn almost invisible when spinning and are very hard to see.

5.16. Mods

You should avoid adding any aftermarket modifications to the helicopter when are are learning to hover. The reason for this is:

- If you crash the helicopter, you may destroy your expensive aftermarket modifications

- You will be distracted by trying to avoid destroying your expensive mods and therefore learn slower

The modifications to avoid when learning to hover are:

- Carbon Fiber frames/crutches/tailbooms (cracks)
- Aluminum frame upgrades (bends)
- Aluminum head upgrades (bends)
- Fuselage (cracks)

Some mods are recommended because they improve control and are less likely to be damaged in a crash, such as:

- Aluminum swashplate
- Tail servo mount
- Carbon fiber pushrod (only costs ~\$3 to replace anyway)
- Autorotation gear (REQUIRED for most brushless motors)
- Ball-in-swash modification (improves control)

but in general, a stock helicopter is recommended.

Chapter 6. Support Equipment

6.1. Pitch gauge

A pitch gauge is an absolute must for collective pitch helicopters. It is unlikely you will be able to properly setup your non-micro CP heli to hover without using a pitch gauge.

For microhelis, MJP Carbon makes a microheli main blade pitch gauge. It is available from DeeTee Enterprises.

Ikarus makes a pitch gauge specifically for the ECO 8. For other non-micro helis, Century Helicopter Products makes a decent pitch gauge.



Pitch Gauges

6.2. Blade balancer (optional)

If you don't buy a blade balancer, it is still possible to balance the blades using a dowel or other method, but a good blade balancer makes the job much easier.

The KSJ-528 blade balancer works well. The Koll Rotor Pro is better than the KSJ-528 but is overkill unless you're doing advanced flying.

I highly recommend CAing the tip of a sewing pin to the pointer of the KSJ-528 to make the scale easier to read.



Kyosho Blade Balance

6.3. Paddle pitch gauge (optional)

This is very handy for ensuring your paddles are completely flat relative to each other. For non-micro helicopters, the KSJ-624 paddle gauge works well.

6.4. Prop balancer (optional)

In order to balance the rotor head, you need a prop balancer. The Du-bro "Tru-spin prop balancer" works well because you can hang the rotor head over the edge of a table when balancing the rotor head.

6.5. Tachometer

There are about three tachometers in wide use for helicopters.

The first is the Anderson Hobby tachometer. This is fairly cheap (about \$35) and works well on the ECO/Logo, but it does NOT work on micro helis such as the Piccolo CP! It also drains batteries quickly even when not turned on, so I recommend removing the battery when not in use.

The second is the X-cell optical tachometer. This is expensive (about \$150) but works with almost any helicopter. It only reads to 1990 rpm, so it may not be suitable for micro helicopters which typically need 2000+ rpm of headspeed.

The third is the Tera tachometer distributed by Thunder Tiger. This is a very nice digital tachometer specifically for helicopters which will clip onto the tail boom for hands-free measuring of the headspeed.

There are other tachometers, including:

- Magnum mini-tach. Price is about \$35.
- Hangar 9 micro digital tach
- Thunder Tiger 2642 mini tachometer



Tachometer

For some reason, Quantum Models www.quantummodels.com stocks more tachometers than any other online store I've seen.

6.6. Ball link pliers

Ball link pliers are highly recommended for non-micro helicopters because ball links are very difficult to remove properly without ball link pliers. You do not need a ball link plier for micro helicopters.



Ball Link Pliers

Both JR and Century make nice ball link pliers.

Be very careful when removing ball links on plastic balls (such as the ECO 8/16 stock swash-plate) with ball link pliers. You can scratch deep grooves in the plastic balls if you fail to center the ball in the jaws before squeezing.

6.7. Submini needle nose pliers

You need an extremely small pair of needle nose pliers to properly loosen the ball links on micro helicopters.

Xcelite makes a very good 4" sub-mini needle nose pliers, and it costs about \$15. It's available from Jameco. www.jameco.com part #217891



Needle-nose Pliers

6.8. Battery Chargers

There are many nice chargers on the market.

Here are the features I recommend you look for:

- For micros: able to charge at 500 ma - 1.5 amps
- For nonmicros: Able to charge at 3.5 to 5 amps
- Delta-peak charge termination

- Some type of false peak rejection capability (Sometimes called soft-start, peak delay, etc)

The soft-start/false peak rejection capability is especially important. Helicopters tend to discharge cells rather deeply, and when these cells are charged, the charger may often "false peak detect". This occurs because the cell chemistry is unstable when deeply discharged and the cell voltage will fluctuate randomly until the cell chemistry stabilizes.

A charger with soft-start or false peak rejection will not require restarting the charging cycle multiple times in the first 5-10 minutes of charging a deeply discharged battery pack.

The chargers which are known to fit these criteria are:

- Maha MH-C777 Plus II (surface charge, NiCad, NiMH, Li-ion)
- Great Planes Triton (peak delay, NiCad, NiMH, Li-ion, Pb)
- Hitec CG-330 (false peak reject, NiCad)
- Hitec CG-335 (false peak reject, NiCad)
- Hitec CG-335 Pro (false peak reject, NiCad, NiMH)
- Hitec CG-340 (false peak reject, NiCad, NiMH)
- Robbe Infinity II (false peak reject, NiCad, NiMH)
- Schulze ISL 6-330d (false peak reject, NiCad, NiMH, Li-ion, Pb)
- Orbit Microlader (soft-start, NiCad, NiMH, Li-ion, Pb)
- Orbit Microlader Pro (soft-start, NiCad, NiMH, Li-ion, Pb)

Before buying a charger, make sure it can charge the number of cells in your pack! Some chargers can only handle up to 10 or 12 cells, which is insufficient for a Logo 16/20 or ECO 16.

This may be important if you're planning on buying a larger helicopter eventually.

6.9. Digital voltmeter

A DVM is very useful for monitoring the voltage of the battery packs. If you are having trouble lifting off, then the first thing you should check is the battery voltage while the heli is powered up.



Digital Multimeter

6.10. Transmitter tray

A transmitter tray can help your helicopter flying skills. It holds the transmitter at a natural angle which allows better control of the joysticks. Petal Manufacturing makes nice transmitter tray which works with most transmitter models.

Chapter 7. Simulators

A simulator is highly recommended for helicopter beginners.

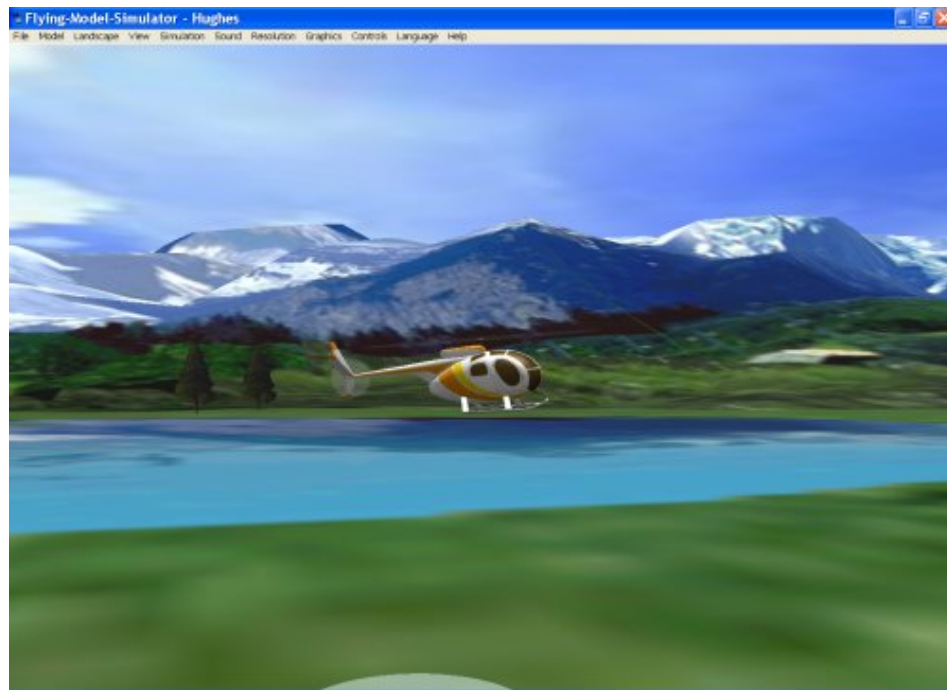
A typical well-trimmed helicopter will only hover in place for two or three seconds "hands-off" before it starts to drift in a random direction. Therefore, a helicopter requires constant correction to hover in one spot. In addition, a drifting helicopter will gain speed much like a ball rolling down a hill. If you are slow to move the stick to correct the drift, then you need more input to arrest the drift, so it is best to arrest the unwanted motion quickly before it gains speed.

The hardest part of flying a helicopter is developing the "reflexes" to move the stick in the correct direction regardless of helicopter orientation and the "delicate touch" required to adjust the helicopter movement without overcompensating. A simulator will help you develop these skills quickly without spending a lot of money on replacement parts.

Here is a quick subjective review of some simulators, with links to get additional information:

7.1. FMS

Free! (score: 3/10)



FMS

FMS is okay for learning hovering in all orientations. The models move extremely slowly so hovering is a little too easy. However, it does not seem to model forward flight correctly, so once you are ready to practice forward flight, I would recommend finding a better simulator.

Further information available from n.ethz.ch/student/mmoeller/fms.

You need to buy, or build an interface lead. There are several different designs for serial, gamesport or USB connection. Many of the suppliers listed in [Chapter 36, *Electric Helicopter & Parts Vendors*](#) sell them and a search on the web will produce a lot of suppliers, but here are a

few to give you an idea of what is available:

- (US) www.aero-model.com
- (UK) www.rcworld.co.uk
- (CA) www.rc-circuits.com
- (UK) www.rc-electronics.co.uk
- (US) www.milehighwings.com
- (NZ) www.acehobby.co.nz USB cable
- (US) www.heliguy.com has instructions on how to build your own cable.

7.2. Piccofly with Game Commander

~\$80 (score: 7/10)



Piccofly - in the kitchen

Piccofly is excellent for learning to fly the FP Piccolo and clones. It doesn't model forward flight well, but it simulates the "squirreliness" of hovering the fixed pitch micro helis very well.

It has a very nice "slow time" function which allows you to slow down the movement of the Piccolo so you can build your reflexes without getting too frustrated.

I would recommend starting off at about 70% time and gradually increasing the time until you can hover at 100% time (real time).

Futher information available from www.ipacs.de.

7.3. Easyfly

~\$80(score: 4/10)



Easyfly

The quality of Easyflight's helicopter flight model is a little better than FMS, but not by much. The helis move faster, which is good, but forward flight doesn't feel right because there isn't any translational lift. Okay for learning hovering, but not forward flight.

This is often bundled with Piccofly. Add-on aircraft and scenery packs are available.

Futher information is available from: www.ipacs.de.

7.4. Aerofly Professional

\$130 to \$200 (score: 5/10)



Aerofly Pro

The helicopter flight model is a little bit better than Easyfly but it still doesn't feel quite right. There's still not enough translational lift, but at least it won't let you loop the heli with 5ft of altitude without negative collective like Easyfly does. Good for learning hovering, but not forward flight.

Add-on aircraft and scenery packs are available.

Further information is available from www.ipacs.de.

7.5. Aerofly Professional Deluxe

- \$130 to \$200 (score: 8/10)

Recently introduced, this is a major update to the Aerofly engine. This version can handle photo-realistic scenery, and has very good lighting and shadow effects. However the underlying physics model is not quite as good as that in Reflex XTR, and there are not so many adjustable parameters as in Reflex. This is a very competent simulator, but perhaps lacks the ultimate flexibility offered by Reflex XTR.

Add-on aircraft and scenery packs are available.



Aerofly Pro Deluxe (Screen capture by Dongle)



Aerofly Pro Deluxe (Screen capture by Dongle)

Further information is available from www.aerofly.com/dehome.html.

7.6. Realflight G2 w/USB Interlink

~\$200 (score: 8/10)



Realfight G2

Realfight G2 has a pretty good helicopter flight model, and is a good simulator for learning non-micro helicopter skills. The helicopter flight model is probably best of all the flight sims mentioned here, and it will probably be good enough to practice 3D aerobatics.

I would recommend practicing hovering on the Impala model initially, then later when you acquire proficiency I would recommend buying the Add-ons 3 and practicing with the Raptor 30 model.

For some reason, many of the models in Realfight do NOT have the heading hold function enabled nor the revo mixing set up correctly. This means the helicopter will continually rotate and be difficult to hover. If you have this problem, you should select "Copy Model" and enable the heading hold gyro and also edit the radio to turn off the revo mixing. Add-on aircraft and scenery packs are available.

Further information available from www.realfight.com.

7.7. Realfight G3 w/USB Interlink

~\$200 (score: 8/10)

Realfight G3 is recently released, but the helicopter support requires a separate (free) upgrade installation. The flight models have been improved even further, so this remains an excellent all-round simulator. The scenery is computer-generated, rather than panoramic photographs, so although it does not look photorealistic, it is possible to move through the scenery. The existing G2 add-ons also work with G3.

Further information available from www.realfight.com.

7.8. Reflex XTR simulator w/USB interface

~\$190 (score: 9/10)



Reflex XTR - Indoor flying Corona



Reflex XTR - Realistic Corona model

People have mentioned the physics model in Reflex seems better than RFG2; however I have not tested this. However, Reflex does not include a USB controller (only USB interface for a

regular transmitter) and does not support network play.

The previous version of Reflex (version 4) is not as pretty as RFG2, but has a good reputation for accurate heli flying characteristics. However, the latest XTR version has now been released and it looks fantastic - much nicer than RFG2, and it has improved the physics model even more.

Futher information available from www.reflex-sim.de.

7.9. PreFlight Simulator

~\$75 (score: 5/10)



PreFlight with Albert Park photo-realistic scenery

Available directly from the maker Trancedental Technologies. This requires a unique transmitter lead, which plugs into the PC microphone socket.

The latest version includes photo-realistic scenery, an aircraft editor and a full scenery editor to allow you to create either your own photo scenery or your own cartoon scenery. There are a few helicopter models available from the supplier's site, but not really any independent sources.

This is a good budget simulator, with better physics than FMS, but less models are available. However you have the built-in capability to create your own aircraft and scenery. There have been some reports of problems installing on XP.

Futher information available from www.preflightsim.com.

7.10. Helicopter Simulator for the Mac

Almost all the simulators are available only for Windows, but this one is a helicopter simulator,

built specifically for Mac OS X.

Futher information available from www.alphamacsoftware.com.

7.11. Summary

Basically, Realfight G2/G3, Aerofly Pro Deluxe and Reflex XTR are the only one which seems to simulate helicopters properly. All other sims seem to model helicopters as a special type of airplane, which does not produce the correct flight characteristics.

The incorrect translational lift model actually affects hovering as well, because real (light) helicopters tend to bob up and down when there is a slight wind. This is because the wind has the same effect as forward flight - it makes the heli generate extra lift.

So, in Aerofly Professional, if you turn on wind, your heli doesn't bob up and down properly - it just slides around horizontally, which is incorrect. Realfight G2 and G3 models translational lift correctly, and the heli will gently bob up and down as the wind gusts. They also seems to model the "rotor wash" effect where the main rotor blades become less efficient when they enter their own rotor wash.

Therefore, if you learn to hover completely in FMS, Easyfly, or Piccofly, you will not learn how to properly use the collective to compensate for the effect of wind making your heli bob up and down. This can be learned later on a real heli, but it will require some adjustment time.

Most simulators have wind turned off by default, which makes hovering unrealistically easy. In order to accurately simulate being outside, you should turn on a little bit of gusty wind (maybe 3 mph or so).

When learning to hover, don't worry too much about finding a simulator which has (say) the Corona. Just learn to hover on the helicopter trainer model supplied with your flight simulator.

Imagine that you don't know how to drive a car and you plan to buy a Honda eventually. Do you really need to practice on a Honda so you can drive the Honda when you buy it? The basic driving skill is pretty much the same for all cars, with the exception of small driving differences and control placement.

Helicopters are pretty much the same way. Some helicopters are smaller and therefore more twitchy and difficult to fly, but the basic skill in flying a helicopter is the same across all models.

One nice feature of Realfight G2 & G3 is the network play, which allows you to fly and chat with other people using Realfight on the Internet. This helps to alleviate the tedium of hovering practice.

Reflex seems to be more processor-intensive than RFG2. There is at least one report that RFG2 runs faster on a P3/500 than Reflex. If you have a machine under 1 Ghz then RFG2 may run better on your machine.

Both RFG2 and Reflex require fairly good video cards to run well. I would recommend at least a GeForce 3, although people have run RFG2 on as low as a Riva TNT (probably with most effects disabled).

The [Simulators Forum](#) on [RC Groups](#) is a great source of information, and will give you the latest information on new versions.

A huge number of additional aircraft, scenery and utilities for most of the main simulators can be found at www.rc-sim.de.

Chapter 8. Transmitters

You can fly some helicopter with a simple four-channel radio, but you will be limited to the following helicopters:

- Piccolo FP and clone with any Piccoboard
- Hummingbird with onboard mixer board with any gyro
- Corona with heading hold gyro with no remote gain (e.g. GY240)
- ECO 8 with mechanical mixing with any gyro
(deprecated - not recommended due to sluggish response)

Ideally, you want a better radio with at least six channels and some or all of the following features:

- No throttle detents ("notches")

Most airplane versions of radios have "clickers" which will only allow a fixed number of throttle positions instead of a completely linear throttle position. This is very annoying when flying helis because the perfect throttle position for hovering is usually between two throttle click positions so you wind up fiddling with the throttle and bobbing up and down. Airplane-style radios can be converted to remove the notches by "flipping over" the metal arm which touches the joystick detents, but it's nicer if the radio is already configured for a helicopter.

- Exponential

This will allow you to make the helicopter cyclic less sensitive around the center, which will help you learn hovering more quickly. After you develop a delicate touch, you may want to reduce the amount of exponential.

- 5 point throttle/pitch curves (or better)

When flying a collective pitch helicopter, you will want a constant headspeed from a little below hovering up to full throttle. This is difficult to do with a three-point throttle pitch curve, and a five point curve is better.

- Throttle hold switch

This is a basic safety feature. It will prevent the helicopter from spooling up if a gust of wind pushes your shirt over the throttle stick or you accidentally bump it with your hand.

- 90 and 120 CCPM swashplate support

(See [Chapter 37, Terminology](#) for a definition of [CCPM](#))

Most helicopter nowadays use 90 or 120 CCPM swashplate modes. If your transmitter does not support these modes, then you will not be able to fly them.

- Idle-up support
(See [Chapter 37, Terminology](#) for a definition of [Idle-up Mode](#))

Idle-up allows you to change the throttle curve of the helicopter. This is highly desirable for collective pitch helicopters because it allows you to maintain a constant headspeed at all throttle positions in (idle-up mode) after spooling up (in normal mode). This makes a collective pitch helicopter more responsive to the throttle stick and nicer to fly.

Currently, the best price/performance in helicopter radios is the Futaba 7CH (FF7 in Europe). This radio has all of the above features and can be purchased for about \$170 (without receiver/servos) at various vendors on the Internet.

The Futaba 9CH is also good. This radio can be purchased for about \$300 (without receiver/servos) on the Internet.

Other good choices which are moderately priced (<\$500) include:

- JR 9303 Heli
- JR XP6102 Heli
- JR XP8103 Heli (XP3810 in Europe)
- Hitec Eclipse 7 Heli (can do 90 CCPM with programmable mixes - see notes below)
- Airtronics RD6000 Super Heli (do not buy the SPORT model because the SPORT model has no swash mode)
- Airtronics RD8000 Heli

These radios are very nice but are also very expensive:

- JR 10X Heli
- Futaba 9ZH
- Futaba 14MZ
- Multiplex EVO series

8.1. Hitec Eclipse 7 with 90 CCPM:

This is not supported directly by the transmitter, and must be done using programmable mixes. This was taken from the Ikarus Forums:

Quick guide on how to set up your Hitec Eclipse 7 for the ECO 8 using the stock 90 deg swash without the need for mechanical mixing.

First thing you need to do is set up your RX like this;

- Channel 1 - Aileron. Left servo on swashplate.
- Channel 2 - Elevator. Rear servo on swashplate.

- Channel 3 - Throttle. Goes to the ESC.
- Channel 4 - Rudder. Tail servo.
- Channel 6 - Pitch. Right servo on swashplate.

Now we move to the TX. Use the manual to set yourself up a 180 degree swashplate helicopter.

OK, here is where we actually get the swash to work correctly. If you turn you RX and TX on (engine disconnected please) and increase and decrease the throttle you will see that the swashplate tilts back and forth. This is not desired behavior. What we need to do is get those pitch movements working on the servo on the back (Channel 2).

To do this we are going to use one of the Programmable Mixers on the TX. To do this we have to enter "Programming Mode", it is done like this;-

1. Make sure your ECO's battery is disconnected and your TX is on (and your ECO is selected)
2. Hit the first two buttons at the same time on the bottom left (Edit up and down, not Engine lock cut). The TX should now have something like EPA 100% on it.
3. Hit the Edit up button (First button on the left) 6 times until you see PMX1 inh (stands for Programmable Mixer 1 Inhibit).
4. Hit the Active/Inhibit button (Last button on the Right) the display will change and have a lot of junk on it.
5. Select the Master Channel by hitting the Cursor Right button (4th button).
6. Set the Master Channel to 6 by hitting the Data Increase button 5 times (5th Button).
7. Select the Slave Channel by hitting the Cursor Right button (4th button).
8. Set the Slave Channel to 2 by hitting the Data Increase button once (5th Button).
9. Select the Mix Ratio by hitting the Cursor Right button (4th button).
10. Select the Mix Ratio to 70% by hitting the Data Decrease button 30 times (6th Button, and you can just hold it down, you don't really need to do it 30 times).
11. Turn on the mixer by switching the top right switch toward you. The screen should now look like this;-
12. You're done!! Exit from Programming mode (first two buttons at the same time on the bottom left) hook up your ECO (engine disconnected still) and move the throttle, the swash should now move up and down smoothly.

Some quick notes that may come in handy;-

- You may need to reverse some servos.
- Pitch and throttle curves must be setup now to complete the setup

8.1.1. Hitec Eclipse 7 and yaw rate gyros:

The Eclipse 7 revo mixing seems to be based on the throttle curve, not the stick position. Therefore when flying a CP heli with a yaw rate gyro, you will need to configure a programmable mix to mix the pitch channel into the rudder channel.

8.1.2. Hitec Eclipse 7 bugs:

Some of the older Eclipse 7s have a firmware where if you pull the throttle down all the way, the throttle will go to 100% instead. This is very dangerous - if you are buying a used Eclipse 7 beware of this bug.

Chapter 9. Helicopter Construction

9.1. General tips for all helicopters:

9.1.1. Building

Do not rush building the helicopter. Take your time and be very careful with everything, and make sure everything moves smoothly. If all moving linkages do not move smoothly, then the helicopter may have vibration problems later which will make hovering very difficult. A few extra hours spent making sure linkages move smoothly will pay off later when you shorten your hovering learning time by a few months.

9.1.2. Threadlock

Only use threadlock on metal-to-metal areas. Do not use threadlock on metal-to-plastic or plastic-to-plastic areas.

Blue threadlock is temporary, for stuff which may require disassembly later (after a crash, etc). Red threadlock is permanent, for stuff which will never be disassembled.

Example:

- Blue threadlock for the tail blade grip screw
- Red threadlock for the swashplate ball screws

9.1.3. Gear lubrication

Do not lubricate any exposed gears. This will only make the gears sticky and pick up grit, which will cause premature gear wear. It is okay to grease gears in enclosed gearboxes such as the Corona tail gears. When using lubrication, be sure to use a lithium-based grease which will not soften plastic.

9.1.4. Frame assembly

When assembling a plastic frame with metal screws (e.g. ECO 8/16 and Logo 10) be sure to use a jeweler's screwdriver or a With with a small handle to assemble the frame. If you use a large-handled screwdriver you will not be able to feel when the screw is fully inserted and you will probably strip the hole in the plastic frame.

9.1.5. Stripped threads

If you strip a plastic screw or setscrew hole, then you can fix it by squirting a small bit of CA into the screw hole and letting it dry to give the screw additional friction. But, it's better not to strip it in the first place.

9.1.6. Breaking-in motors

If you are using a brushed motor with carbon brushes, then you should "break-in" the motor before your first flight. This break-in procedure allow maximum contact of the brushes with the commutator. This will allow the motor to run at maximum efficiency and extend motor life.

(Break-in is not required for these motor type:

- Metal brushed motors. This includes motors such as the Team Orion Elite Micro Modified motor.
- Micro heli tail motors. This includes both the gray and black endbell GWS IPS-style motors, and the N20 style motors.

There are at least two ways to do this:

- Dry method: Run the motor for two hours at 1/4 throttle.
- Wet method: Run the motor for 10-15 minutes in a glass of water.

Be sure to disassemble the motor afterwards and thoroughly dry everything, otherwise parts may rust. Don't use this method on motors which are assembled using bent metal tabs (such as the Piccolo motors) because the metal tab may break off when disassembling or reassembling the motor.

Be careful with the carbon dust. It can get into your lungs and cause severe breathing difficulty, especially if you're asthmatic.

Be sure to blow the carbon dust out OUTSIDE with some compressed air and don't get the carbon dust into your lungs.

9.1.7. Carbon dust

Beware of carbon fiber dust. It is classified as a hazardous material and can cause severe breathing difficulty, especially if you are asthmatic.



Warning

DO NOT CUT CARBON FIBER INDOORS. ALWAYS CUT CARBON FIBER OUTSIDE.

9.1.8. Capacitors

If you are using a brushed motor, be sure to solder three capacitors to the motor: one between the positive terminal and negative terminal, one between the positive terminal and case, and one between the negative terminal and case. This will reduce the amount of interference generated by the brushed motor.

9.1.9. Motor diode

If you are using a brushed motor, it may come with a diode which you may need to attach to the motor. The diode looks like a black barrel with a grey stripe on one side, and two leads coming out each end.

This diode prevents ESC damage by shunting the spikes of reverse current generated when the brushed motor rotates. So, you put the diode on the power terminals of the brushed motor. The end with the silver band goes on the positive terminal of the motor, and the end with no band goes on the negative terminal of the motor.

9.1.10. Ball links

Your ball links must move freely, but not be loose. If your ball links are too tight, you can put the ball link on the ball and gently squeeze around the edge of the ball link with a pair of slip-joint or ball-link pliers.

If your ball links are too loose, then they can be tightened by removing them from the ball then squeezing them gently across the face of the ball link with a pair of slip-joint or ball-link pliers.

9.1.11. Motor shaft

For non-micro helicopters: If your motor output shaft does not have a "flat" on the shaft, the pinion may spin around on the shaft because the setscrew can't grip the shaft. To put a flat on the shaft you need a Dremel with a diamond grinding tip, some masking tape, and a plastic bag.

- Cut off about eight pieces of masking tape about 3 inches long. Take four of the pieces and make a # pattern across the front of the motor so the # will slightly overlap the shaft. Take the remaining four pieces and make another # across the front about 45 degrees offset from the previous tape, making sure it slightly overlaps the shaft again. This should completely cover the front bearing and will prevent metal bits from falling in.
- Put the motor in the plastic bag, then punch a hole in the plastic with the motor shaft so the motor shaft sticks out the bottom. Tie the back end of the plastic bag. This will prevent metal shavings from falling into the motor and destroying it.
- Grind a flat on the shaft using a Dremel with a diamond bit. Hold the Dremel so the metal bits are ejected AWAY from the front bearing of the motor.
- Use some masking tape and wrap it around the shaft a few times to collect the loose metal bits sticking to the shaft.
- Remove motor from plastic bag, being careful not to get any metal shavings into the motor.
- Remove remaining masking tape from the motor.

9.1.12. For the Piccolo:

The stock plastic motor pinion may slip on the motor shaft. We recommend using CA to glue the motor pinion onto the motor shaft to prevent this from occurring.

9.1.13. For Futaba transmitters:

If you have only two servos controlling your swashplate (with either non-CCPM or any CCPM) then the channel assignments are:

- channel 1: left/right (roll) servo
- channel 2: front/back (pitch) servo
- channel 3: throttle (ESC)
- channel 4: tail servo
- channel 5: gyro sensitivity (optional)
- The tail servo or tail motor ESC should plug into the gyro.

9.1.14. For Futaba transmitters:

If you have three servos controlling your swashplate (either non-CCPM or any CCPM) then the channel assignments are:

- channel 1: left (roll) servo
- channel 2: front/back (pitch) servo
- channel 3: throttle (ESC)
- channel 4: tail servo
- channel 5: gyro sensitivity (optional)
- channel 6: right (roll) servo
- The tail servo or tail motor ESC should plug into the gyro.

9.1.15. For JR transmitters:

If you have two servos controlling your swashplate (either non-CCPM or any CCPM) then the channel assignments are:

- channel 1: throttle (ESC)
- channel 2: left/right (roll) servo
- channel 3: front/back (pitch) servo
- channel 4: tail servo
- channel 5: gyro sensitivity (optional)
- The tail servo or tail motor ESC should plug into the gyro.

9.1.16. For JR transmitters:

If you have three servos controlling your swashplate (either non-CCPM or any CCPM) then the channel assignments are:

- channel 1: throttle (ESC)
- channel 2: right (roll) servo
- channel 3: front/back (pitch) servo
- channel 4: tail servo
- channel 5: gyro sensitivity (optional)
- channel 6: left (roll) servo
- The tail servo or tail motor ESC should plug into the gyro.

9.1.17. Canopy painting

Do not paint the canopy a dark color. You will need to focus on the canopy while learning to hover, so be sure to paint it a bright color or leave it white.

Also, some kind of decals are recommended to make it easier to see the orientation of the canopy at long distances.

9.1.18. Tail servo

Do not use rubber servo grommets when mounting the tail servo because this will cause tail wag when used with a heading hold gyro.

9.1.19. Grease

Do not use grease on the helicopter gears unless instructed by the construction manual. Grease attracts dirt which increases wear on plastic gears.

9.1.20. Mounting component

For micro helis: you can mount a gyro or tail servo on the tailboom by using either a cable clip or cable tie mounting plate. If you use a cable tie mounting plate, you may need to use two tiwraps to secure the mounting plate to the tail boom and/or use some hot glue to prevent the mounting plate from sliding on the tail boom.

9.1.21. Ball in swashplate

For FP micro helicopters: many micro helicopters do not include a swiveling ball in the swashplate to minimize slop. This makes the helicopter very difficult to hover.

There are upgrade kits which allow you to install a ball-in-swash on most micro helicopters. These are highly recommended. Like90 sells one, so does Pierre Hollister. See links section for URLs.

For even better control, you should put a small piece of fuel tubing above and below the swashplate ball to prevent the swashplate from moving up and down.

9.2. Component Placement:

- If you are using a brushed motor, the motor itself will be the main source of RFI. Pragmatically speaking, you want to keep your radio and gyro as far away from the brushed motor as possible. This will eliminate and/or reduce the number of radio glitches.
- If you are using a brushless motor, the ESC for the motor will be the main source of RFI. So, it is desirable to locate the radio and gyro as far away from the ESC as possible. On a Corona/ECO 8/Logo 10, I would recommend at least two inches of spacing between the ESC and the gyro/receiver.
- Most gyros (GY240/GY401) require mounting on a horizontal surface, but some gyros (Ikarus Profi, CSM LW200, GWS PG-03) require mounting on a vertical surface. Be sure to check your gyro's documentation to see how it should be mounted on your heli!
- Make sure your gyro is mounted firmly to the frame and/or to a gyro mount which is firmly attached to the frame. Be sure to use the manufacturer-supplied double-sided foam tape or equivalent to attach the gyro to the frame or gyro mount. The double-sided foam absorbs high-frequency vibration which will cause a heading hold gyro to drift, so the tape is VERY important.

If a heading hold gyro is not FIRMLY mounted, it will cause tail wag. This will occur because the gyro will be wobbling and will not sense the correct angular position, and will overshoot when trying to return the tail to the "correct" position.

- Do not shorten any radio/servo/gyro wires until you have flown a flight or two and have checked for glitching. You may need to move some components farther apart on the frame to eliminate glitching, and if you have shortened the wires this will be difficult.

9.3. Specific tips for LMH Corona only:

- Many Corona kits seem to have missing parts. If you are missing a part and you bought the kit directly from Lite Machines, call them and explain your situation. If you bought from a retailer and not Lite Machines, then talk to your retailer about the missing parts. You may want to finish most of the model before reporting missing parts so you don't need to call multiple times.
- The general consensus on the Ezone regarding the Fusion-7 motor is it's not very good. People have reported the motor dying after as few as 5-10 flights. The Kyosho Atomic Force seems to be the best alternative brushed motor. It is available from Tower Hobbies.
- Make sure there is enough room between the two cyclic servos for the servo arms to rotate freely without hitting the other servo. If the servo arm rubs against the other servo, your front/back cyclic control will be sluggish and hovering will be very difficult.
- The manual recommends using one 4 dot blade grip and one 6 dot blade grip, but the heli is more stable and easier to hover if you use two 4 dot blade grips because the headspeed is higher. Later on if you want more lift you can switch one of the blade grips to a 6 dot blade grip.
- If you are at a high elevation, you may not get enough lift using two 4 dot blade grips, however. In this case, you should use the manual-recommended grips.
- The labels on the main rotor blades seem to be attached using the world's stickiest adhesive. The residue from the adhesive can be easily removed using WD-40 or Goo Gone.



Warning

DO NOT USE ACETONE. ACETONE WILL MAKE THE BLADES BRITTLE. THE BLADES MAY SHATTER WHEN THEY HIT AN OBJECT.

- The Fusion 35 controller on the LMH Corona is a relabeled Castle Creations Pegasus 35.
- The Fusion 35/Pegasus 35 seems to have trouble arming on many transmitters. If you turn on the transmitter, then turn on the Corona and do not hear two beeps, then you are having this problem. To fix this problem, you need to set a lower endpoint for the throttle channel on your transmitter. For a Futaba 9C, go to Menu->End Point->THR and set it to 125/125.
- Many people make "tail boom protector" for the Corona to protect the tail boom from boom strikes. This is usually foam wrapped around the tail boom or a strip of 1/4 thick balsa or 3/8 dowel tie wrapped to the tail to prevent the rotor blades from denting/bending the tail boom. Other people use a "rotor deflector" which is a piece of wood or angle aluminum mounted on the tail to deflect the rotor blade.

- The feathering plate should be parallel to the swashplate. If these are not parallel, then you may need to loosen the main shaft and slide the main shaft down a little bit until the two are properly parallel.

9.4. Specific tips for all Piccolo (Fun/ECO/CP upgrade/Pro):

- Drill a hole through the landing skid (67361) so the struts (67378) will go all the way through the skid. This will make the landing skid much stronger. If you don't do this, then the nipple on the landing skid will probably break off in a hard landing.
- When building the landing skids (67361), use thick CA instead of the thin CA included in the kit. The thin CA runs all over the place and is difficult to get in the right place. Also, CA the rear skid struts into the frame FIRST. Then CA the front skids into the frame and make sure they almost align with the rear skid struts. If you don't do this the landing skids will probably be crooked.
- Do not use CA to glue in the tail boom. This usually works too well. When you crash, it will be almost impossible to remove all the tail boom bits and you will have to drill out the remaining pieces. It is much better to put a few layers of CA on the ends of the tail boom and let this dry thoroughly, then friction-fit the tailboom into the body and the tail rotor assembly.
- The landing skids may pop off the frame in even mild landings. You can reinforce the landing gear by CAing a length of CF rod across the front and rear landing gear skids about a half-inch (1.25cm) below the chassis (67360). This absorbs most of the landing stress that would normally pop the landing skid struts off the frame.
- The Piccolo tends to lose the bearings on the hub (67566) on hard crashes. You may want to purchase an aftermarket aluminum hub or carefully thick CA the bearings to the stock hub to avoid losing the bearings. Beware when purchasing an aluminum hub; some of them appear to be made from soft aluminum and will bend easily. I do not recommend J's aluminum hubs for this reason. The Precision Model Products hubs are of much better quality.

9.5. Specific tips for fixed pitch Piccolo (ECO/Fun) only:

- The stock Piccolo FP has excessive play in the control mechanism. Specifically, the swashplate wobbles around too much. There are two mods which are required to fix this: the ball-in-swash mod and the Chris Rigoletti antirotation strap. These will make your initial hover attempts somewhat easier.
- The older FP Piccolo kits had a anti-rotation link (67366) with only a single hinge rather than the newer double hinges. If you receive a one of these single hinge anti-rotation links, they do not work well, and I recommend you replace it with a newer double-hinge one.

9.6. Specific tips for collective pitch Piccolo (CP upgrade/Pro) only:

- The pitch case (68211) will usually be too tight on the main rotor shaft (68203). This will cause drag on the motor. To fix this, put a 3mm drill bit into Dremel, then put the pitch case onto the drill bit, then run the Dremel at low speed for about five minutes. Hold the pitch case very gently to prevent it from spinning around. After this, lubricate the inside of the pitch case with some graphite to further reduce friction.

- The M2x6 screw which holds in the pitch bellcranks (68212) will usually rub against the flybar control levers (68209). To fix this problem, put the M2x6 screws into a drill and hold the head of the screw against a metal file to shave down the screw head. This will prevent the screw head from rubbing against the flybar control lever.
- Some CP upgrade kits include an older style flybar (68208) which is not very good. The older style flybar is completely smooth and does not have the grooves stamped into the flybar to prevent the control arms (68209) and flybar paddle (67371) from slipping. If you have one of these flybars, you should replace it, because it will be almost impossible to prevent the control arms from slipping on the older flybar even if you roughen the flybar.
- The Piccolo CP/Pro head has some cyclic interaction. For example, when you apply forward cyclic, it tends to go forward and left, and back tends to go back and right. Therefore, you will need to use aileron/elevator and elevator/aileron mixing to compensate for this problem.

9.7. Specific tips for the MS Composit Hornet II:

This is a very difficult kit to build. There are many tiny nearly invisible parts, so please be careful not to lose any parts! There are some parts which are too tight on the Hornet II. This is an explanation of the "enlarging the hole" trick used in many of the following Hornet II steps:

- Put a 2mm drill bit on a drill
- Slide the part onto the drill bit
- Hold the part with your fingers
- Turn on the drill at low speed
- Using your fingers, Move the part in a circular motion so the drill bit will touch the sides of the hole to widen it slightly.

There are a few steps which involve CAing together two smooth plastic parts or a plastic part and a carbon fiber part. The CA will not adhere well to smooth parts, so you should roughen the areas to be glued with 400 grit sandpaper for better adhesion.

Making CA joints

Step 1 - Main Body Assembly:

The joint between the frame base (E402) and the frame support (E403) will be much stronger if you use 400 grit sandpaper to roughen the area underneath the frame support so the CA will stick better.

Step 2 - Tail Rotor:

Do not force the bearings onto the tail drive shaft (E417). If you try to force the bearings onto the shaft, the shaft may split. It is much better to use some 400 grit sandpaper to sand down the shaft slightly so the bearings will slide on.

Step 2 - Tail Rotor:

The pinion (E118) and the gear (E028) which are supposed to fit on the ends of the tail drive shaft (E417) have holes which are too small and the gears will get stuck halfway onto the shaft. Please use the "enlarging hole" trick so the pinion can be slid onto the shaft

without becoming stuck. If you widen the hole too much, then the gear/pinion may slip. You can fix this by smearing some thin CA into the crack between the pinion and shaft *AFTER* you have put the gear/pinion on the shaft.

Step 2 - Tail Rotor:

The bell crank (E026) will not pivot smoothly on the tail gearbox (E425). There are multiple problems which must be fixed for this bell crank to pivot smoothly:

- The bell crank is too tight on the tail gearbox. You will need to do three things to fix this problem:
 - i. Polish the pivot pin with some extra-fine sandpaper (800 grit or better)
 - ii. Use the "enlarging hole" trick on the bellcrank pivot hole to enlarge it slightly.
 - iii. Use the "enlarging hole" trick on the bellcrank hole for the slider cage CP (E091). Be very careful enlarging this hole because it doesn't need to be enlarged much.
- There are bits of flashing left on the tail gearbox (E425) in two places which rub against the bellcrank. These look like small circles. Use some masking tape to protect the bearings from the plastic dust, then use a small needle file to remove the flashing so the bellcrank (E026) pivots smoothly.
- Use powdered graphite to lubricate the bellcrank pivot hole before using CA on the plastic retainer (E027).

Step 2 - Tail Rotor:

The holes in the tail hub (E431) are not tapped very well. Screw in a stainless steel M2 screw into both holes of the hub to clean up the threads before inserting the M2x8 bolts (E058).

Step 3 - Rotor Head Assembly:

At this point you will have six bearings: four 2x6x2.5 and two 2x6x2. Be sure to use the 2x6x2.5 for the main blade grips! The bearings look very similar!

Step 4 - Rotor Head Assembly:

Squirt some powdered graphite through the flybar hole in the stabilizer lever (E072) to reduce friction and allow the flybar to rotate smoothly.

Step 4 - Rotor Head Assembly:

Be sure to tighten the grub screw(E083) just enough so you can see a tiny gap between the stabilizer lever (E072) and the stabilizer bed (E073) on both sides. This will ensure the stabilizer lever pivots freely without rubbing against the stabilizer bed.

Step 5 - Rotor Head - Completion:

The ball link diagram labeled "2x" is incorrect. The diagram shows two short ball links connected by a bolt. The ball link labeled E021 should be a LONG ball link, not a short ball link.

Step 6 - Helicopter Construction:

There are two places in this step (4 and 14) where it calls the E419 the "Vertical Fin Holder". This is incorrect. It should read "Horizontal Fin Holder". There is no vertical fin holder.

Step 6 - Helicopter Construction:

If you glue the vertical fin to the tail boom, it will be difficult to remove when replacing the tail boom. I recommend drilling four 2mm holes in the vertical tail fin and using two nylon tiewraps to secure the tail fin to the tail boom without using CA.

Step 7 - RC Installation:

I recommend putting a piece of 1/8" or 3mm plywood underneath the front servo mount to give extra clearance to the servo arm. Additionally you should trim the same amount off the ball link to compensate for the raised servo.

9.8. Specific tips for Ikarus ECO 8/16 only:

If the ECO 8/16 is built strictly by the manual, you will create a helicopter which has extremely tight linkages and will have severe vibration problems and will be difficult to hover. Please follow these tips so your ECO 8/16 will fly well.

- It is possible make the ECO more durable and crash-resistant by "doubling up" the sideframes. To do this, buy another set of sideframes, and epoxy each set together - don't forget to rough up the mating surfaces of the sideframes with 200 grit sandpaper first for better epoxy adhesion. You will need to replace the M2x8 with M2x10 screws, and also replace the M2x30 screws with two extra-long M2 bolts or two M2 threaded rods because the M2x30s will be too short to reach through the tail boom mounts. The double frames will add about 41 grams to your AUW and reduce your flight times by about 30 seconds, but the frame will be much stiffer for better control and also survive most crashes.
- The stock ECO 8 landing gear is a bit narrow and makes landing difficult for beginners. You may want to replace it with the ECO 16 landing gear (67916 + 67917) or the ECO 8/16 extra wide landing gear (67822).

The ECO 16 landing gear is about 1 inch longer and two inches wider than the stock ECO 8 landing gear. This landing gear will need slight modifications to work on the ECO 8 because it is designed to hold two battery packs.

The ECO 8/16 training gear is about 1 inch longer and 3.25 inches wider than the stock ECO 8 landing gear. This can hold either one or two battery packs and requires no modification.

Both the ECO 16 landing gear and the ECO 8/16 training gear use the ECO 16 skids (67917) which are wider in diameter.

- The control balls on the plastic swashplate (67701) have been known to break off on extremely hard crashes. You may want to upgrade to the aluminum swashplate (67707) immediately. Also, the aluminum swashplate can be configured to support 120 CCPM which offers better control than 90 CCPM.
- The stock main rotor shaft (67535), the stock feathering shaft (67509), and the stock tail rotor shaft (67550) are very soft and bend easily in minor crashes.

If this happens, I highly recommend replacing them with the hardened versions: 67940, 67942, and 67941 respectively.

- I don't recommend using the mechanical mixer, because electronic mixing works much better than the mechanical mixer. If you do choose to use the mechanical mixer anyway, you will need fairly strong servos because the mechanical mixer needs a lot of force to move it around. Probably HS-81s are not adequate for mechanical mixing - you need at least HS-85BBs.
- The stock wooden main rotor blades are fairly durable and are very good for beginners because they will survive minor crashes. I would recommend using the stock wooden main rotor blades for as long as possible - definitely while learning hovering in all orientations.
- Pg 6: The tail drive belt pulley (67702) may wobble because the hole is not drilled exactly in

the center of the pulley. This usually does not cause problems, but in some cases the hole is very out of center, and the tail belt may slap against the tail boom as it spins up or while it's flying. In this case, it is advisable to replace the tail belt pulley with a new one that is hopefully better, or replace both pulleys with the Voyager E rear belt pulleys (060860), or replace both with aftermarket aluminum pulleys (PMP ATPS).

- Pg 6 & 13: Be very careful tightening the setscrews in the tail pulleys (67702). The plastic material is very soft and strips very easily. You should use a small nutdriver (Wiha #263 or similar) to tighten the setscrews.

If you accidentally strip the hole, you can repair the hole by using the CA trick mentioned in the general construction tips section.

- Pg 8: If the aluminum skids (67563) are difficult to fit into the undercarriage cross member (67562) try using a hairdryer to heat the cross member until it softens slightly, then slide in the aluminum skids.
- Pg 9: When building the pitch compensator, the manual does not mention the arm (67591) has a *TAPERED* hole for the pin. If you try to force the pin through the narrow hole instead of the wide one, this may cause damage to the arm.
- Pg 9: The two collective pitch compensator arms (67591) will rub against each other on a stock ECO, which is bad. You should put an M2 washer between each arm (67591) and the hub (67590) to increase the spacing between the arms.
- Pg 10: The flybar seesaw (67610) usually does not seesaw smoothly on the rotor center unit (67639). This flybar seesaw needs to move very smoothly on its pivots otherwise this will cause vibrations when hovering.
- To fix this problem, take some extra-fine steel wool (#000) and spread it with your fingers to make a very thin mesh. This mesh should be about 1 inch by 1 inch and be mostly air with about 50 or 60 strands of steel wool running through it.

Remove the flybar seesaw, then put the steel wool mesh on top of the pivot, then mash the seesaw on top of it so the steel wool is trapped between the pivot and the seesaw. The seesaw should snap on with moderate pressure; if you need too much pressure then your steel wool mesh is too thick.

Now wiggle the seesaw up and down about 10 times, then remove the steel wool and check if the seesaw pivots smoothly. If it still does not pivot smoothly, then repeat this process. Do not repeat more than twice because this will wear out the pivot. For the final finish, apply some powdered graphite onto the pivot. After this, the seesaw should move very smoothly.

- Pg 10: The flybar (67609) usually does not rotate smoothly in the flybar seesaw (67610). You **MUST** make the flybar seesaw rotate smoothly in the flybar seesaw otherwise the heli will be very difficult to hover. You will need to push the flybar through the flybar seesaw repeatedly (like playing a violin) for about 5 minutes until the rod slides smoothly through the flybar seesaw. This will make the heli much more stable and easier to hover.
- Pg 11/update: (Advanced) You can give make a free tail pitch slider upgrade by installing a brass ball on the outer slide ring (67643). You must do this modification **BEFORE** the needle bearing (67644) is installed inside the outer slide ring. Cut off the plastic ball from the outer slide ring, then drill a 1.5 mm hole where it was. Take an M2x8 screw and a brass ball, and screw it into the 1.5 mm hole. Look inside the outer slide ring and check how much of the screw protrudes inside. Remove the screw and trim it to size, then CA the screw and brass ball into the outer slide ring.

- Pg 12: The diagram does not show this, but you will need to bend the top of the 93mm ball link very slightly (maybe 5-10 degrees) to ensure it does not rub against the flybar when the swashplate is at the bottom of its travel. Check to make sure the ball link does not rub against the flybar seesaw (67610) when the swashplate is moved up and down. If the ball link rubs against the flybar seesaw, then reduce the angle of the bend. This bend slightly increases the usable negative pitch range.
- Pg 13: The tail rotor shaft (67550) is asymmetrical and one notch is closer to one end than the other. The shaft end with the notch FARTHER from the end should slide into the pulley (67702), not the blade grip hub (67549).
- Pg 13: The tail blade grips (67542) should be controlled by the leading edge of the blade, and not the trailing edge. If the tail blade pitch is controlled by the trailing edge, the tail may wag. Double-check and make sure the Ikarus logo on the tail blades is visible from the right side of the heli, and the control ball for the tail blade grips is on the leading edge of the blade.
- Pg 13: There is a serious problem on this page. In some versions of the English manual, the instructions do not mention using threadlock on the screw holding the tail blade grip (67603) to the tail hub (67549). The German version of the manual correctly tells you to use threadlock on this screw. If you fail to do this your tail rotor grip may fall apart in flight causing the heli to pirouette out of control. Do not skip the threadlock on this screw! Also, if you disassemble and reassemble the tail rotor later, don't forget to reapply fresh threadlock on this screw!!

- Also, be sure the screw tail blade grip is left slightly loose so it can rotate freely on the ball bearing and screw. If the tail blade grip is screwed too tightly to the tail rotor hub, then the tail may "wag" because the mechanics may bind and gyro will have trouble controlling the tail blade pitch.

You should check the play in the tail blade after installing the tail blades. There should be approximately 12 mm (half inch) of play in the tail blades. If you have significantly less or more play, then you should remove the tail blade and readjust this screw.

One popular mod for this is the "double ball bearing mod" - this involves using two 2x6x3 ball bearings in each blade grip (instead of just one per blade grip) and substituting a M2x8 screw instead. This reduces slop significantly in the tail and is highly recommended.

- Pg 13: The M2x6 screw (67561) should not be screwed too tightly into the short ballend (67564) on the tail. If the screws are too tight, then the tail pitch lever will not move smoothly around the middle of its range because the ballends will not be free to flex outwards. To adjust this screw properly, screw it in completely, then reverse it approximately one-eighth turn. This should be about right but you should check the pitch lever movement to verify it moves smoothly.
- Pg 13: The pitch lever (67541) must move VERY freely on the tail housing (67548). On an unmodified ECO this is very sticky, which will make the tail "wag" with a heading hold gyro!

To fix the stickiness problem, rub the post where the pitch lever mounts with some extra fine steel wool to remove the grooves left from the molding process. Next, apply some powdered graphite to the post and to the inside of the pitch lever and mount the pitch lever. Wiggle the pitch lever a few dozen times to spread the graphite. The pitch lever should now move very smoothly.

- Pp 16-21: Don't use servo grommets to mount the servos to the frame. Instead, cut a 4mm length of very small fuel tubing and slide this onto the M2 screw. When this tubing is compressed, it will fatten out and fill the gap between the servo and screw.

- Pp 16-21: If you are using the aluminum swashplate with 120 CCPM, mount one servo in front and two in the back at the 12 o'clock, 4 o'clock, and 8 o'clock positions. This is easier to mount than two servos in front and one in back. You will need to fiddle with the transmitter swashplate setting to swap the front and back with this servo configuration (SWASH AFR on the Futaba 9C).

Note: This servo arrangement will not work with a frame brace (because the front servo will hit the frame brace) nor will it work with a stock Hacker B50 heatsink (because the heatsink will hit the frame brace). The Hacker B50 heatsink will require about a 1.25" section of it removed so it doesn't interfere with the front servo.

- Pg 22: The suggested component placement will work if your gyro requires mounting on a vertical surface but does not work well if using a gyro which requires mounting on a horizontal surface such as a Futaba GY240 or GY401. If using these gyros, then mount the gyro on top of the tail boom support behind the shaft (instead of the receiver) and mount the receiver upside down under the tail boom support (where the frame is angled). This component placement keeps the ESC far away from the receiver and gyro and prevents radio glitching problems.

9.9. Specific tips for Logo 10 only:

- See www.logoheli.com for excellent construction tips
- Some Logo 10 kits are missing parts and/or including the wrong sized ball links. If your kit has this problem, you should contact the retailer who sold you the kit and explain your problem.
- Many Logo 10 owners have reported the tail belt builds up static electricity in the tail boom. This can cause glitching and/or ESC failure. Extreme care must be taken with component placement.
- The Logo 10 stock plastic swashplate has been known to separate in flight. This leads to loss of control and probably a crash. You may want to immediately upgrade to the aluminum swashplate to avoid this situation.
- The Logo 10 tail wire guides are not very good. They are not adjustable and the pushrod tends to bind in them. I recommend replacing these guides with an adjustable set, such as the K&S 529 "Special Control Rode Guide Set".

9.10. Specific tips for the Gensmantel Micro Heaven:

Note: People have said that Gensmantel was originally a distributor for Ikarus helicopters. After a while, they started producing their own helicopters. The relevant point of this is that many Ikarus ECO 8/16 parts can be used on the Gensmantel Heaven series (including the Micro Heaven) since some dimensions are identical. Both helicopter series use 6mm main shafts, 18mm tail booms, etc.

Note: The Micro Heaven requires submicro servos such as a GWS Naro or GWS Naro HP BB. The micro servos such as the HS-81 or HS-85 are too big and will interfere with the main shaft 3D support.

- Pg 15: The head of the tail boom mount screws (3804) will interfere with the chassis (5510). You should countersink the holes in the tail boom mount (5510) to avoid this.

- Pg 17: The tail transmission shaft (3301) may come from the factory with the gear hub mounted either too low or too high. This can be easily fixed by putting the shaft part loosely in a vise and gently tapping the shaft through the gear hub.
- Pg 21: The stock landing struts aren't very good and the "claw" part which holds the landing skids will break easily. This can be easily replaced with the Voyager E landing gear (JR 960631 & 960632). You will need to cut off the battery clamps and drill a 2mm mounting hole in each skid.
- Pg 23: When the optional 3D main rotor shaft support is installed, the main rotor shaft may bind. Make sure the main rotor shaft still turns freely after you install the main rotor shaft support.
- Pg 32: The control arms on the tail blade grips (3503) tend to break off under stress because the control arms are rather slender. Specifically, they tend to break at the sharply bent section near the control ball. These control arms should be preemptively strengthened before they break by using cotton thread and CA, using these directions:
 - i. Tie the thread to the control arm.
 - ii. Wrap one layer of thread around the control arm starting at the blade holder. Do not wrap too close to the control ball; leave about 1/16" (2mm) clearance between the thread and the control ball. Do not cut the thread yet.
 - iii. Wrap another layer of thread back over the first layer starting near the control ball. On this layer, wrap about ten extra turns of thread near the sharp bend.
 - iv. Cut the thread and tie off near the blade grip.
 - v. Soak the thread in thin CA. Make sure you are holding the blade grip so the excess CA will not ooze onto the blade holder or the control ball. Be sure to have some tissue paper handy to soak up the excess CA.
 - vi. Spray the thread with CA accelerator to harden the CA
- Pg 36: I highly recommend using CA to secure the ball link (3612) to the tail rotor case (3805) to ensure the ball link will not rotate in flight and change the tail blade pitch.
- Pg 36: The tail belt will have a tendency to rub against the tail boom because the pulley is not centered on the tail shaft. This can be avoided somewhat by flaring the tail boom slightly where the tail belt enters it using a pair of needle nose pliers.
- Pg 37: The tail pitch lever (3501) will not move the tail pitch slider (3513) very smoothly because the plastic is sticky. Apply some powdered graphite to these parts to ensure the tail pitch lever moves the tail pitch slider smoothly.
- Pg 37: The tail vertical fin (3405) is held onto the tail boom with M2x30 bolts (3840) and M2 nuts (3941). These M2 nuts tend to fall off easily. I highly recommend replacing these nuts with 2mm nylon locking nuts (Ikarus 67583).
- Pg 37: The tail blade grips use regular 2mm nuts to hold the tail blades. This is bad because the nuts can fall off and this will cause the tail blades to fly off and the helicopter will pirouette out of control. I highly recommend replacing these with 2mm nylon locking nuts (Ikarus 67583) also.

Chapter 10. Post-Construction/ARF Checklist

These items should be double-checked before you attempt to fly your new helicopter. These items should be checked for both helicopters you have built yourself, and also for prebuilt ARF kits.

- The main rotor blades should be mounted for the correct rotor head rotation. For most helicopters this is clockwise. For the Corona this is counterclockwise.
- The tail rotor blades should be mounted for the correct rotation. Turn the main gear by hand so the main rotor blades are rotating in the correct direction, and the tail rotor blades should be rotating in the correct direction also. If the tail rotor blades are rotating in the wrong direction:
 - i. Make sure the tail blades are not mounted backwards.
 - ii. If the heli uses a belt-driven tail, then ensure the tail belt is twisted in the correct direction.
 - iii. If the heli uses a gear driven tail, then ensure the the tail drive gears is meshing at the correct point on the main gear.
- Check the meshing of all gears, and ensure they are not too tight. If your gears (including bevel gears and motor pinions) are meshing together too tightly, you will lose a lot of power and your flights will be very short.

Make sure that the gear teeth only mesh together by about 3/4 of a tooth. This can be easily set by putting a plastic bag between the gears and squeezing the gears together, then removing the bag. You can check the mesh by holding one gear and rotating the other. If the gear mesh is correct, there should be some free play. This will allow the gears to transfer power more efficiently.

- If using a tail belt drive, make sure it's not too loose nor too tight.
- The flybar paddles should be parallel to each other. If you have the KSJ-624 paddle gauge set, then you should use these to align the paddles. (Not applicable to the Corona.)
- The flybar should tilt very smoothly and easily. If you blow on the flybar paddle, the flybar should tilt. If the rotor head is built absolutely perfectly, then the flybar paddle should tilt down, then bounce and come back up. You should be able to keep the flybar paddle bouncing by blowing on it with the right timing.

If the flybar does not tilt easily, then you will have very little cyclic control, which is dangerous. This problem must be fixed before you attempt to fly the model. To fix this, you may need to:

- i. Loosen some ball links using a pair of pliers or ball link sizing tool
- ii. Lubricate the flybar pivot with dry graphite
- Ensure all electronic components which are sensitive to electrical noise (gyro and receiver) are placed away from the components which generate electrical noise (motor and speed controller).
- Ensure the expensive electronic components (such as the gyro and speed control) are located where they will not be easily damaged in a crash.

- Ensure all wires are securely fastened, especially the wires from the gyro. Dangling wires may cause tail wag problems.

Chapter 11. Soldering Technique

Good solder joints are extremely important for an electric helicopter. Electric helicopters require extremely large amounts of current for even simple acts such as basic hovering.

If the battery and motor connections are not soldered correctly, then the motor may not receive enough current and the helicopter may lack power to fly properly.

The basic steps to forming a good solder joint are:

- Select the correct size soldering iron for the application

If you are soldering small wires (about 20 gauge) then you should use about a 20 watt soldering iron. If you are soldering battery packs or larger (12-18 gauge) wires then you need at least a 40 watt soldering iron with a thick tip to have sufficient heat to solder properly. The Weller SP40L costs less than 20 dollars and is a very good soldering iron for soldering thicker wires.

- Use the correct solder

You need ROSIN core solder for soldering electrical connections. Do not use acid core solder, because this solder is for applications such as plumbing and the acid will cause corrode the wires and connectors.

- Use the correct size heat shrink tubing (if necessary)

Heat shrink tubing generally shrinks by 50%, so you will need tubing which is no longer than twice the size of the wire and/or connector in order to ensure a snug fit.

- Allow the soldering iron/gun to warm up

It requires approximately 750 degrees Fahrenheit to melt solder. If you try to solder before the iron/gun is fully heated, then the solder will not melt properly. If the soldering gun does not heat up properly and/or takes too long to heat, then the screws holding the tip have probably loosened, so not enough current is flowing to the tip. Disconnect the soldering gun then tighten the screws.

- Clean the surfaces to be soldered if necessary

If you are soldering batteries together you will need to clean the surfaces with some sandpaper before soldering. This is not required for gold- or zinc-plated connectors or circuit boards which are already coated with solder, or for wires which have recently been stripped.

- Twist the wire conductors tightly together

If they conductors of the wire are loosely twisted then they will not heat properly and it will be very difficult to solder them. If you apply a little extra twist just before soldering, they will be much easier to solder.

- Slide heatshrink tubing onto the wire (if required)

In some circumstances you cannot slide the heatshink onto the wire(s) after soldering, so you should slide the heatshink tubing onto the wire first.

Make sure that you slide the heatshink tubing far enough away from the soldering area so it will not shrink prematurely from the soldering heat.

- Coat ("tin") the mating surfaces with solder (do not solder them together yet). If soldering wire to a gold-plated bullet connector or an Astroflight Zero-Loss connector, then do not tin the connector.

This involves two steps:

- Touch the soldering iron to the surface to heat it
- Wait a few seconds to allow the surface to become hot
- Touch the solder to the surface and let the solder melt

A common mistake is to apply the solder directly to the soldering iron/gun tip. This is not the correct way to solder and will create a hole in the soldering iron/gun tip after a while. The solder should be touched to the surface to be tinned. If it does not melt, then the surface is not hot enough.

- Touch the parts together then heat with a soldering iron

This step is much easier if you clamp one of the parts with a small table vise to keep it from moving, and hold the other part with a wooden clothespin to avoid burning your fingers.

Alternatively, you can drill a hole in a block of wood to hold bullet or Zero Loss connectors while soldering.

When the the soldering iron is touched to the solder it should melt and merge with the solder on the other surface. After the solder has completely melted, remove the soldering iron tip and let the solder cool. Be sure not to move the parts while the solder is cooling.

- Visually inspect the soldering joint

The solder joint should be smooth and shiny after the solder cools. If the solder joint looks dull and grainy, then the solder joint is bad and it should be reheated to let the solder flow properly. You may need to apply a little fresh solder so the fresh rosin will allow the solder to flow freely.

- Shrink the heatshrink tubing

Heatshrink tubing is best shrunk with a hairdryer on a high heat setting. Allow the hairdryer to warm up, then hold the heatshrink tubing in the hot air stream., Be sure to rotate the tubing so it heats evenly and shrinks without creasing.

- Be sure to WASH YOUR HANDS after soldering

Most commercial solder is 60% tin and 40% lead. Lead is harmful to your body and causes lead poisoning which prevents calcium, iron, zinc and other minerals from being properly used by your body. Be sure to wash your hands after soldering before eating!!!

Chapter 12. Helicopter and Transmitter Setup

Please disconnect the motor from the ESC when performing setup steps which do not require the main rotors to spin. If the disconnected ESC wires might touch each other when disconnected then you should wrap electrical tape around the connectors to prevent the ESC from being shorted.

12.1. Balancing the heli - forward/aft

The lengthwise CG of a helicopter should be at its main rotor shaft or slightly forward. Otherwise, the heli will have a tendency to drift forwards or backwards.

To check this, first install the heli's batteries where you think they should go. rotate the main rotor so the blades are perpendicular to the body. Grab the main rotor blade grip closest to you and raise the heli up to eye level. Now find a wall corner or door jamb, and move the heli around so you can see the vertical line of the wall corner behind the helicopter.

Now try to align the main shaft with the vertical line. If the main shaft aligns perfectly with the line, then no adjustment is necessary. If the nose is light, then you will need to pull the battery pack forward. If the nose is heavy, then pull the battery pack backwards. Repeat until you find the correct battery position to balance the heli correctly. If you use a tail servo mount on the ECO, the battery pack will need to be shifted forward quite a bit to adjust the CG properly. If you do this, you will need to put a rubber band over the two front side frame pegs to support the battery pack.

12.2. Balancing the main rotor blades using the KSJ-528 blade balancer

Balancing the blades will minimize vibration which will make hovering easier, and it will give the heli more power because less energy is wasted shaking the heli. Also the heading hold gyros will work much better with less vibration because they gradually accumulate yaw error with every little motion. Reducing vibration will minimize the "gyro drift" where the heli slowly starts to turn. Therefore, balancing the main rotor blades is very, very important.

There are multiple ways to balance the blades, but this method works best for me so far. It minimizes the amount of tape used and we avoid disrupting the airflow where the blades generate the most lift by putting most of the tape near the bolt holes and the CG.

Be sure to use ELECTRICAL tape to balance the blades. Regular transparent tape is not heavy enough. Electrical tape weighs about 0.1 gram per 2.5cm (1 inch).

12.2.1. Step one: Matching the CG

1. Remove the blade holder posts from the balancing tray of the KSJ-528.
2. Make sure the balancing tray balances evenly when nothing is on the tray. If necessary, use the setscrews to balance the tray.
3. Place one blade in the KSJ-528 tray and delicately shift the blade left or right across the balancing tray until the blade balances.
4. Mark this point with a felt tip pen.
5. Repeat for the other blade.

6. Stack the rotor blades, then put a bolt through the hole to align the blades perfectly. Check if the CG of the blades match within 1/16th of an inch (1.5mm).
7. If the CGs are close enough, go to Step two: Matching weight
8. Determine which blade has CG farthest away from the mounting bolt hole.
9. Move the CG of this blade closer to the bolt hole by placing placing 1-2 inches of electrical tape on the underside of the blade next to the leading edge near the bolt hole.
10. Measure the CG on this blade again and mark it.
11. Go to step 6

12.2.2. Step two: Matching the weight

1. Determine which of the blade holder posts fit your blades, then mount them on the balancing tray.
2. Make sure the balancing tray balances evenly when nothing is on the tray. If necessary, use the setscrews to balance the tray.
3. Mount the blades on the blade holder posts and make sure both blades balance and are perfectly horizontal.
4. If the blades do not balance, put a small strip of electrical tape on the underside of the lighter blade at the CG point next to the leading edge of the blade.
5. Add or remove tape on the lighter blade at the CG point until the blades balance.

12.2.3. Step three: Optimizing tape usage (optional)

1. If only one blade has tape or you used less than seven inches of tape in steps one and two, you can skip this step.
2. If one blade has a lot of tape near the bolt hole and the other blade has a lot of tape on the CG, then you should definitely perform this step.
3. On the blade with tape near the bolt hole, remove all the the tape.
4. On the blade with tape at the CG, remove the tape and discard half of the tape. Reapply the other half of the tape to the blade but at a point halfway between the CG and the tip.
5. Go back to step one and rebalance. The blades should require less tape to balance this time.

12.3. Adjusting the blade grip bolts

1. Loosen the main blade grip bolts so the main blades move freely.
2. Hold the helicopter so the right side or left side is facing down.
3. Turn the main rotor hub so the blades are parallel to the ground.

4. Tighten the blade grip bolts just enough so the blades won't droop much when the heli is lightly shaken. If You overtighten the main blade grip bolts, then the main rotor blades will not straighten out at full headspeed and this will cause vibration.

If you are having too many boom strikes later, you can tighten the blade grip bolts after running up the heli to full headspeed to ensure the blades have straightened out.

12.4. Flybar paddle setup

This step is not necessary for the Corona since it is already performed by the instructions in the construction manual. The tilt of the flybar paddles needs to match the tilt of the swashplate. This is done by adjusting one flybar paddle at a time.

1. First, make sure the flybar paddles are parallel to each other. This can be done using the KSJ-624 paddle gauge or just by visual inspection. If the paddles are not parallel to each other then loosen the paddle mounting screw or setscrew and twist the paddle and retighten the screw.
2. Next, rotate the main rotor so the main rotor blades are aligned with the body, e.g. one points forward and the other points backwards.
3. Pick one flybar paddle, and lower it slightly so it almost obscures the swashplate. Now align the outer edge of the flybar paddle with the top of the swashplate. It should be level with the top of the swashplate. If the paddle is tilted relative to the swashplate, then this should be fixed by shortening or lengthening the linkages between the swashplate and the flybar paddles
4. Now rotate the rotor head 90 degrees so the flybar paddles are aligned with the body. Check the same paddle against the top of the swashplate again. It should still be aligned.
5. Repeat the last two steps for the other flybar paddle and make sure it is aligned with the top of the swashplate at two different angles 90 degrees apart.

12.5. FP & CP helicopter swashplate setup part 1 - swashplate type



Note

Note: For this step, disconnect the motor wires from the ESC. This will prevent the motor from accidentally spinning. Do not rely on the Throttle Hold function.

For the Hitec Eclipse 7 using 90 CCPM, see the special note in the transmitter section.

Configure the swashplate type using your transmitter manual.

For a fixed pitch 90 degree swashplate, it is possible to configure this as either a "plane" configuration where there is no swashplate, or as a helicopter with separate pitch/roll and collective servos, and ignore the collective channel.

12.6. CP helicopter swashplate setup part 1 - collective setup



Note

This setup only applies for CP helicopters. Skip this section for FP helicopters.



Note

For this step, disconnect the motor wires from the ESC. This will prevent the motor from accidentally spinning. Do not rely on the Throttle Hold function.

Turn on the transmitter then power up the helicopter.

Remove any transmitter trim from the cyclic controls.

12.6.1. Servo reversing

Move the throttle stick up and down. When you move the throttle stick up, all servos should push the swashplate up. When you move the throttle stick down, all servos should pull the swashplate down.

Some helicopters may be designed so the swashplate moves in the opposite direction. If your helicopter's directions say this is correct, please use this instead.

If some servos are not moving in the correct direction, then reverse the servo direction in the transmitter until all servos move correctly.

12.6.2. Servo centering

Move the swashplate to the middle of its servo range using the throttle stick. Check to make sure the cyclic servos are also in the middle of their travel range. For most helicopters this means the servo arm should be perpendicular to the servo body. If the servo arm is not centered (perpendicular to the servo body) then you may need to remove the servo arm from the servo and recenter it and/or adjust the lengths of the linkages from the servo to the swashplate.

12.6.3. Swashplate leveling

Once the servo centering has been set, the swashplate should be:

- In the middle of its travel range
- Perfectly perpendicular to the main shaft.

There should be no tilt to the left/right or forwards/backwards.

If the swashplate is not perfectly level, then remove and adjust the length of the linkages from the servos to the swashplate until the swashplate is perfectly level when the cyclic servos are centered.

12.6.4. Swashplate travel

Set the servo travel on the cyclic servos so the swashplate is all the way down at zero throttle and all the way up at full throttle. Make sure the cyclic servos do not bind at the zero throttle and full throttle positions.

You will limit the travel range later when setting the blade pitch range but for now set full travel.

On some machine and servo combinations (such as the ECO 8/16 and the HS-85) you may need to increase the servo ATV or increase the swashplate pitch mixing to ensure the swashplate travels fully up and down the shaft.

Make sure the swashplate stays level as you increase the throttle stick. If this does not occur, then check your swashplate servo endpoints and make sure they are all the same.

12.7. CP helicopter swashplate setup part 3 - cyclic setup



Note

This setup only applies for CP helicopters. Skip this section for FP helicopters.



Note

The collective setup must be done before the cyclic setup. Otherwise the cyclic setup will be impossible.

12.7.1. For transmitter mode 2 (US & Europe)

Move the RIGHT transmitter stick up and down. This should move the swashplate forwards and backwards.

Move the RIGHT transmitter stick left and right. This should move the swashplate left and right.

12.7.2. For transmitter mode 1 (Asia & Europe)

Move the LEFT transmitter stick up and down. This should move the swashplate forwards and backwards.

Move the RIGHT transmitter stick left and right. This should move the swashplate left and right.

If any of these swashplate movements are reversed, then go to the swashplate mixing menu (SWASH AFR on a Futaba 9C) and change the aileron or elevator mixing percentage from positive to negative or negative to positive until the swashplate moves correctly.

Also, ensure that the servos do not bind at the extreme stick positions. The servo binding draws a lot of power which may cause the BEC to overheat and shut down, which will cause the receiver to stop working, which will cause the helicopter to crash. Therefore, if binding is observed, you will need to reduce the swashplate mixing to avoid it.

When the sticks are centered, the swashplate should be level. The easiest way to check this is by holding the helicopter at eye level, then looking at a bookcase behind it.

Align the main shaft with the edge of the bookshelf, then raise/lower the helicopter until the swashplate is at the same level as one of the shelves. You should be able to easily tell if the swashplate is perfectly level or not.

12.8. FP helicopter swashplate setup - cyclic setup



Note

This setup only applies for FP helicopters. Skip this section for CP helicopters.

12.8.1. For transmitter mode 2 (US & Europe)

Move the RIGHT transmitter stick up and down. This should move the swashplate forwards and backwards.

Move the RIGHT transmitter stick left and right. This should move the swashplate left and right.

12.8.2. For transmitter mode 1 (Asia & Europe)

Move the LEFT transmitter stick up and down. This should move the swashplate forwards and backwards.

Move the RIGHT transmitter stick left and right. This should move the swashplate left and right.

If any of these swashplate movements are reversed, then reverse the servo so the swashplate moves correctly.

Also, ensure that the servos do not bind at the extreme stick positions. The servo binding draws a lot of power which may cause the BEC to overheat and shut down, which will cause the receiver to stop working, which will cause the helicopter to crash. Therefore, if binding is observed, you will need to reduce the swashplate mixing to avoid it.

When the sticks are centered, the swashplate should be level.

The easiest way to check this is by holding the helicopter at eye level, then looking at a bookcase behind it. Align the main shaft with the edge of the bookshelf, then raise/lower the helicopter until the swashplate is at the same level as one of the shelves. You should be able to easily tell if the swashplate is perfectly level or not.

12.9. Transmitter Throttle Hold setup

You should follow the transmitter manual directions to enable the throttle hold function on your transmitter.

Throttle hold is very good because it prevents the heli from throttling up if you must work on the heli while it's powered and something bumps the joysticks.

Note: The throttle hold mode may have its own pitch curve.

If this is the case, you will need to set this the same as your normal mode or idle-up mode to ensure the heli does not "hop" when you hit throttle hold to spool down the heli.

12.10. Transmitter Exponential setup

The "exponential" can be used to increase or decrease the servo movement around the stick center.

For a helicopter, you want to decrease the servo movement around the stick center so you can make smaller corrections when hovering.

For the Futaba radios, I would recommend a setting of -20% to start.

For JR radios, this value is reversed, so set this to 20%.

12.11. Transmitter Throttle setup

- Remove the MAIN BLADES from the helicopter

- Secure the helicopter so it cannot move.

For a nonmicro heli, put a wooden beam or two-by-four through the skids and place a brick or other heavy object on each end of the beam. For a micro heli, put a piece of wood through the skids and clamp the wood to a table on both sides. Also, make sure the tail rotor is away from any objects.

- If you have a Futaba transmitter and a Castle Creations or Schulze ESC, then you will need to reverse the throttle for this step. The throttle reverse may be necessary for other transmitter and controller combinations as well.
- Install a battery in your heli, then follow the ESC directions to arm the ESC. If your ESC does not arm, then you may need to reverse or unreverse the throttle direction.
- Give just enough throttle on your transmitter to make the head spin a little.
- If your main rotor blades are spinning backwards, and
 - i. If you have a brushed motor and a brushed motor controller, then you need to swap the two motor wires.

If you have a diode wired to your motor, then be sure to swap this also because the grey band needs to be on the positive (red) wire to the motor.
 - ii. If you have a sensed or sensorless brushless motor and a sensorless brushless motor controller, then you should swap any two of the three motor wires.
 - iii. If you have a sensed brushless motor and a sensed brushless motor controller, then you should consult your motor manufacturer. This usually requires the motor to be sent back to the factory to have the motor retimed.

12.12. ESC programming

If you are using a programmable ESC which uses the transmitter to set the ESC options and you have previously set a throttle curve for this model, then you may need to reset the throttle curve to default (e.g. linear from 0 to 100%) to program the ESC otherwise the ESC may not be able to recognize the low-middle-high stick positions.

12.12.1. Parameters for Castle Creations ESC used as the MAIN motor ESC

- Cutoff Voltage: as low as possible so the heli will not fall out of the sky. If you are using lithium polymer batteries, you will need to be careful not to drain the batteries beyond the recommended minimum voltage.
- Current Limiting: insensitive
- Brake: disabled - so we don't strip the main gear when the motor spools down.
- Throttle Type:

For FP helis: fixed endpoint

For CP helis: Try low RPM governor mode first.

If there is not enough headspeed later, try high RPM governor mode.

- Timing Advance: depends on motor, choose standard if unknown
- Cutoff: soft
- Soft start:
FP helis: fast start (soft start has problems when used with FP helis on some firmware versions)
CP helis: softest start
- PWM Switching Rate: depends on motor, but 11 khz is fine for most main motors (except Kontronik Samba needs high switching frequency)

12.12.2. Parameters for Castle Creations ESC used as the TAIL motor ESC

If you have a tail motor ESC, then it will require programming as well. You should temporarily plug the tail motor ESC into the throttle channel on the receiver to program it.

For the Castle Creations ESCs used as the TAIL motor ESC, the following parameters should be used:

- Cutoff Voltage: as low as possible so the heli will not fall out of the sky. If you are using lithium polymer batteries, you will need to be careful not to drain the batteries beyond the recommended minimum voltage.
- Current Limiting: insensitive
- Brake: disabled - so we don't strip the main gear when the motor spools down.
- Throttle Type: fixed endpoint
- Timing Advance: depends on motor, choose standard if unknown
- Cutoff: soft
- Soft start: Choose fast start
- PWM Switching Rate: depends on motor, but 11 khz is fine for most tail motors

12.12.3. For the Schulze 12.46e and 18.46K ESCs:



Note

0 = switch in LEFT position with label readable

1 = switch in RIGHT position with label readable

1. Switch 1: 0 - aircraft mode

2. Switch 2: 1 - helicopter mode

3. Switch 3:

FP helis: 0 - normal speed controller

CP helis: 1 - governor mode

4. Switch 4: 0 - high rpm mode

5. Switch 5: 1 - soft timing

6. Switch 6: 0 - 9 Khz switching rate

For other ESCs, set the parameters using the above parameters as a general guide.

If you have a programmable ESC which is programmed using beeps then you should carefully watch the tail servo when the ESC beeps. If your tail servo wiggles every time the ESC beeps, then your gyro or gyro wires are too close to the ESC.

12.13. Transmitter Throttle Curve setup

For a fixed pitch heli the throttle curve should be left as default - linear from 0 to 100%. It is not necessary to check the headspeed because you are unlikely to exceed the maximum headspeed, as the heli will take off like a rocket if the headspeed is too high.

For a collective pitch heli you should get a tachometer to measure the headspeed. Borrow one from a friend if necessary.

For the next step, you will need to know your desired head speed.

- Hornet CP: 2000-2200 rpm
- Piccolo CP/Pro: 2000-2200 rpm
- ECO 8 1400-1800 rpm
- Logo 10 1400-1800 rpm

Most microhelis will have a nasty wobble below 1800 rpm, and most non-micro helis will have a nasty wobble below 1400 rpm. If you can't reach the proper head speed, you should buy a new pinion with the proper number of teeth before proceeding. With a collective pitch heli with a five point curve on the transmitter, it should be set to roughly 0-50-x-x-x where x is the throttle position at which you have the desired headspeed. For a collective pitch heli with a three point curve on the transmitter, it should be set to 0-x-x where x is the throttle position for the desired headspeed. If x is not between 85% and 95% of throttle, you should select a different sized motor pinion because the motor will not be running efficiently which will decrease your power and flight time.

Note: If you have a Futaba radio and a Fusion 35 ESC, then you may have problems properly arming the ESC. If you have this problem, then try increasing the throttle range to 125% so the low endpoint is lower.

Note: If you have the Futaba 9C, it defaults to putting a weird bump in the middle of the throttle and pitch curves. This bump can be removed by entering the Advanced menu and disabling the Hovering Throttle and Hovering Pitch options.

12.14. Tail rotor pitch servo setup

Note: For this step, disconnect the motor wires from the ESC This will prevent the motor from accidentally spinning.

Do not rely on the Throttle Hold function. The tail servo should be in the middle of its travel range when the tail pitch lever is also in the middle of its travel range. If this is not true, then adjust the linkages until the midpoints are matched.

12.14.1. For heading hold gyros:

- If you have an ECO 8, when you hold the heli and turn it, the heading hold gyro should turn push the tail pitch lever lever to the BACK.

12.14.2. For all helis:

- If your tail rotor is on the right side of the boom and you push the rudder right, the tail blades should increase in pitch.
- If your tail rotor is on the left side of the boom and you push the transmitter rudder left, the tail blades should increase in pitch.

The tail pitch control servo should be able to move the tail pitch control lever all the way from one limit to the other with about 120-150 degrees of servo arm travel.

If the servo needs more than 150 degrees of travel to reach both limits of the pitch control lever, then replace the servo arm with a longer one.

If the servo needs considerably less than 120 degrees of travel to reach bot limits of the pitch control lever, then move the servo arm linkage to a hole closer to the servo arm pivot then check again.

You can fine-tune the amount of tail servo travel by using the LIMIT adjustment on the GY401.

12.15. Gyro setup - variable pitch tail rotor

Heading Hold Gyro setup:

First, if you are using a heading hold gyro (such as the GY240 or GY401) you must make sure your transmitter REVO MIXING option is disabled, because this option is only for non-heading hold gyros.

If you are using a Piccoboard with a heading hold module, you do not need to trim the helicopter properly without the heading hold module installed (e.g. as a yaw rate gyro). Just install the heading hold module and it should work properly as a heading hold gyro. You may need to adjust the gain however.

12.15.1. GY240 setup:

There are three controls which require setup on the GY240.

12.15.1.1. Setting AVCS:

Set to ON. AVCS is Futaba's name for "heading hold" and you want this enabled.

12.15.1.2. Setting DIR:

1. Turn on the transmitter.

2. Disconnect the heli motor.
3. Plug in the heli battery.
4. Wait for the gyro to initialize.
5. Turn the heli right about 20 degrees. If your tail rotor faces left(Corona) then the tail rotor blades should increase in pitch. If your tail rotor faces right (ECO, Logo) then the tail rotor blades should decrease in pitch.
6. If the tail rotor blade pitch change is wrong, then flip the direction switch on the gyro, and retest.

12.15.1.3. Setting GAIN:

1. For the Corona, the GY240 does not hold the tail well without high gain (because it's fixed pitch) so set this to about 75%.
2. Otherwise, set this to 50% to start. It can be adjusted later if the tail wags too much.

12.15.2. GY401 setup:

There are five controls on the gyro and one on the transmitter which require setup on the GY401.

12.15.2.1. Setting DS:

This should be OFF unless you are using a S9253 S9250, S9450, etc. digital servo compatible with a fast update rate. Not all digital servos are compatible with the GY401 DS mode!

12.15.2.2. Setting DIR:

See the GY240 section on setting this switch.

12.15.2.3. Setting DELAY:

Set this to about 50 initially.

If your tail servo is fast (<0.11 sec/60 degrees) set this to a lower value.

If your tail servo is slower or you are using a fixed pitch tail driven by a variable speed motor (Piccolo Hummingbird, etc.) then set this to a higher value.

12.15.2.4. Setting LIMIT:

This controls the amount of tail servo travel.

1. Turn on the transmitter.
2. Disconnect the heli motor.
3. Plug in the heli battery.
4. Wait for the gyro to initialize.
5. After the gyro has initialized, make sure the tail servo is at the center of its travel range (90

degrees to servo body) and the tail pitch lever is at the center of its travel range as well (90 degrees to tail boom).

6. Turn off the AVCS mode temporarily at the transmitter.
7. Use the rudder stick and give full left rudder and full right rudder. The tail servo should be moving moving the tail pitch slider through its full range of motion.
8. If the tail pitch slider is not moving far enough, then you will need to increase the LIMIT control.
9. If the tail pitch slider is moving too far and hitting the ends of travel and the tail servo is emitting buzzing sounds, then decrease the LIMIT control.
10. It may be necessary to move the tail servo mount on the tail boom or adjust a ball link or something else to ensure that:
 - i. The tail servo can move the tail rotor pitch from minimum to maximum without binding (e.g. without the tail servo making a buzzing sound).
 - ii. The tail servo should be centered when the tail rotor pitch is at the middle of its range. Be sure to reenable AVCS mode after setting the LIMIT control.

12.15.2.5. Setting SENSITIVITY:

This is done at the transmitter on channel 5 for both Futaba and JR radios. If you have a newer Futaba radio (like a 9C) this is already handled in the GYRO SENS menu. In this menu set the mode to AVC and the sensitivity to about 50%.

If you have a Futaba/Hitec (negative shift)radio, channel 5 settings below 50% are non-heading hold mode sensitivity and settings above 50% are heading-hold mode sensitivity. Initially, set your channel 5 to about 88% travel.

If you have a JR (positive shift) radio, the settings are swapped, e.g. below 50% is heading hold sensitivity and above 50% is non-heading hold sensitivity. Try setting your channel 50 to about 12% travel.

12.15.3. Non-Futaba Heading Hold gyro setup:

You should follow your manufacturer's directions.

In addition, you should set the subtrim step size to the smallest increment possible so you can get very fine control of the rudder neutral point so you can match the transmitter's rudder neutral point to the gyro's neutral point.

On the Futaba 9C, go to the TRIM menu and change the rudder step size from 4 to 1.

12.15.4. Yaw-Rate Gyro setup:

If using a separate yaw rate gyro (not Piccoboard):

You need to enable the REVO MIXING feature on the transmitter and adjust the REVO MIX curve to effect revo mix changes.

If using any Piccoboard WITHOUT the heading hold module:

You will need to adjust the REVO MIX dial on the Piccoboard to effect revo mix changes.

The revo mix controls the speed or pitch of the tail rotor relative to the throttle position. This is required to counteract the torque generated by the main rotor blades so the heli does not yaw while in flight.

You will need to adjust the revo mix so the heli does not yaw at all throttle positions.

The best way to do this is to buy a "lazy susan" type turntable that will allow the helicopter to rotate freely while the helicopter is weighed down so it won't take off inadvertently. (Rubbermaid appears to make one which is probably suitable)

Perform preflight checks, then slowly apply throttle.

The helicopter will start to yaw as you apply throttle.

You will need to adjust the revo mix so the heli has no tendency to yaw as you slowly apply throttle. It is normal for the tail to swing a little when changing the throttle, as long as the heli does not continuously rotate while the throttle is not changing.

If the helicopter is rotating and you need to increase the thrust of the tail rotor to counteract the rotation, then you should increase the revo mix at that throttle position or turn right the revo mix dial on the Piccboard.

If the heli is rotating and you need to decrease the push of the tail rotor to counteract the rotation, then you should decrease the revo mix at that throttle position or turn left the revo mix dial on the Piccboard.

12.16. Gyro setup - fixed pitch tail rotor

Heading Hold Gyro setup:

First, if you are using a heading hold gyro (such as the GY240 or GY401) you must make sure your transmitter REVO MIXING option is disabled, because this option is only for non-heading hold gyros.

If you are using a Piccboard with a heading hold module, you do not need to trim the helicopter properly without the heading hold module installed (e.g. as a yaw rate gyro). Just install the heading hold module and it should work properly as a heading hold gyro. You may need to adjust the gain however.

12.16.1. GY240 setup:

There are three controls which require setup on the GY240.

12.16.1.1. Setting AVCS:

Set to ON. AVCS is Futaba's name for "heading hold" and you want this enabled.

12.16.1.2. Setting DIR:

1. Disconnect the heli motor and position the heli so the nose is pointing towards you and the tail is facing away from you.
2. Turn on the transmitter.
3. Plug in the heli battery.
4. Wait for the gyro to initialize.

5. Hold the heli firmly with the tail pointed away from you and arm the tail ESC by holding full left rudder on the transmitter.

The tail motor should start. Rotate the heli left and right by about 30 degrees. If the tail motor is pushing against the direction of rotation, then this is correct.

6. If the tail motor is pushing in the same direction as the rotation, this is incorrect, and you will need to toggle the DIR switch to fix the problem.

12.16.1.3. Setting GAIN:

Set this to 50% to start. It can be decreased later if the tail wags too much, or increased if the tail wanders too much.

12.16.1.4. GY401 setup:

There are five controls on the gyro and one on the transmitter which require setup on the GY401.

12.16.1.5. Setting DS:

This should be OFF. There are no tail ESCs which are compatible with the digital servo mode.

12.16.1.6. Setting DIR:

See the GY240 section on setting this switch.

12.16.1.7. Setting DELAY:

The tail motor will behave like a very very slow tail servo so the delay should be set to a large value. Set this to 100% initially.

12.16.1.8. Setting LIMIT:

This controls the range of throttle for the tail ESC. Set this to 100%. If you set the limit too low (less than about 90%) then you will have problems arming the tail ESC.

12.16.1.9. Setting SENSITIVITY:

This is done at the transmitter on channel 5 for both Futaba and JR radios. If you have a newer Futaba radio (like a 9C) this is already handled in the GYRO SENS menu. In this menu set the mode to AVC and the sensitivity to about 50%.

If you have a Futaba/Hitec (negative shift) radio, channel 5 settings below 50% are non-heading hold mode sensitivity and settings above 50% are heading-hold mode sensitivity. Initially, set your channel 5 to about 75% travel.

If you have a JR (positive shift) radio, the settings are swapped, e.g. below 50% is heading hold sensitivity and above 50% is non-heading hold sensitivity. Try setting your channel 5 to about 25% travel.

12.16.1.10. Non-Futaba Heading Hold gyro setup:

You should follow your manufacturer's directions.

In addition, you should set the subtrim step size to the smallest increment possible so you can get very fine control of the rudder neutral point so you can match the transmitter's rudder neutral point to the gyro's neutral point. On the Futaba 9C, go to the TRIM menu and change the rudder step size from 4 to 1.

12.16.2. Yaw-Rate Gyro setup:

If using a separate yaw rate gyro (not Piccoboard):

You need need to enable the REVO MIXING feature on the transmitter and adjust the REVO MIX curve to effect revo mix changes.

If using any Piccoboard WITHOUT the heading hold module or a 3-in-1 or 4-in-1 combo board:

You will need to adjust the REVO MIX dial on the board to effect revo mix changes.

The revo mix controls the speed or pitch of the tail rotor relative to the throttle position. This is required to counteract the torque generated by the main rotor blades so the heli does not yaw while in flight.

You will need to adjust the revo mix so the heli does not yaw at all throttle positions.

The best way to do this is to buy a "lazy susan" type turntable that will allow the helicopter to rotate freely while the helicopter is weighed down so it won't take off inadvertently. (Rubbermaid appears to make one which is probably suitable)

Perform preflight checks, then slowly apply throttle. The helicopter will start to yaw as you apply throttle. You will need to adjust the revo mix so the heli has no tendency to yaw as you slowly apply throttle. It is normal for the tail to swing a little when changing the throttle, as long as the heli does not continuously rotate while the throttle is not changing.

If the helicopter is rotating and you need to increase the thrust of the tail rotor to counteract the rotation, then you should increase the revo mix at that throttle position or turn right the revo mix dial on the Piccoboard.

If the heli is rotating and you need to decrease the push of the tail rotor to counteract the rotation, then you should decrease the revo mix at that throttle position or turn left the revo mix dial on the Piccoboard.

12.17. Transmitter tail setup - both fixed and variable pitch

Move the rudder and make sure the NOSE of the heli will move in the same direction you push the rudder.

This means the when you push the rudder RIGHT, the tail should move LEFT and vice versa.

If the tail rotor is mounted on the LEFT side of the tail boom and it is a pusher configuration, and you press the rudder RIGHT then the tail blades should DECREASE pitch.

If the tail rotor is mounted on the RIGHT side of the tail boom and it is a pusher configuration, and you press the rudder RIGHT then the tail blades should INCREASE pitch.

For a fixed pitch tail, substitute the words "slow down" for "decrease pitch" and "speed up" for "increase pitch".

If the tail moves in the wrong direction, then you should reverse the rudder channel on your transmitter.

12.18. Adjusting main blade pitch



Note

Note: For this step, disconnect the motor wires from the ESC. This will prevent the

motor from accidentally spinning. Do not rely on the Throttle Hold function.

This step is only necessary for collective pitch helicopters like the ECO 8/16 and Logo 10/16/20. This step is not necessary for fixed pitch helicopters like the Piccolo FP and the Corona.

You should have a pitch gauge, either from the manufacturer of your heli designed specifically for your heli or a general-purpose helicopter pitch gauge.

1. Disconnect the heli motor from the ESC. Put some electrical tape on the exposed connectors to insulate them so they will not short out against each other or against other electrical components.

NOTE: Do NOT use the throttle hold instead of disconnecting the motor battery. Some transmitters (Futaba 9C) seem to have a bug where if you adjust the pitch with the throttle hold enabled, it does not save the settings correctly. So don't use throttle hold. Disconnect the motor wires instead.

2. Put the pitch gauge on the helicopter following the pitch gauge instructions.
3. Turn on the transmitter.
4. Connect the heli battery.
5.
 - For a CCPM helicopter:
Adjust the blade pitch by adjusting the PITCH option on the swashplate mixing menu (SWASH AFR on Futaba 9C).
 - For a non-CCPM helicopter:
Adjust the blade pitch by adjusting the pitch servo endpoints.
 - For both helicopter types:
For hover practice, adjust the blade pitch so the pitch range goes from 0 degrees at zero throttle to about 8 degrees at full throttle.

For normal (non-inverted) flight, adjust the blade pitch so the pitch range goes from -3 degrees at zero throttle to 10 degrees at full throttle.
6. Put the pitch gauge on the other blade and adjust its blade pitch too.
7. Set the throttle hold and idle-up pitch curves to match your normal mode pitch curves. This will prevent the heli from hopping when switching between normal, idle-up and throttle hold modes.



Note

If you have the Futaba 9C, it defaults to putting a weird bump in the middle of the pitch curve. This bump can be removed by disabling the Hovering Pitch option.

12.19. Blade tracking - CP helicopters

If the pitch of the blades is not the same, then one blade will generate more lift than the other when hovering. This will cause vibration and steals power.



Note

Note: If the flybar paddles are not parallel to each other, then it may be impossible to track the main rotor blades properly. Ensure the flybar paddles are parallel to each other before adjusting main blade tracking.

1. Temporarily put a piece of bright colored tape on one of the rotor blades. This will cause the blades to be unbalanced but don't worry about this for now. Just remember to remove the tape after tracking the blades. You need this tape to determine which blade is higher or lower when checking the tracking.
2. Get a 6 foot length of 1" x 4" board.
3. Take the heli outside where the blades won't hit anything, and slide the board through the landing gear on top of the landing skids then either stake down the board or put cinderblocks on it. The board will hold down the heli in case *Something Really Bad Happens*.
4. Perform a preflight inspection and check everything.
5. Turn on the transmitter.
6. Connect the heli battery.
7. Arm the helicopter and slowly increase the throttle to about 1/4.
8. Walk a safe distance away, then get on your stomach, and apply throttle and look at the rotor blades from exactly the side. If both rotor blades are spinning exactly in the same plane and look like this: -o- then no adjustments are needed.

If both rotor blades are not tracking in the same plane and look like this: >o< then the blades are not tracking properly and require adjustment.

An alternative way to check the tracking is to place a mirror on your feet, then tilt the mirror so you can see the blades while standing up. This is considerably safer since your face will not be hit if the heli decides to throw a blade.

9. Shut off the throttle and wait for the rotor blades to spin down.
10. Disconnect the heli battery.
11. If the blades did not track evenly, then increase the pitch of the low blade and/or increase the pitch of the high blade.
12. Go back to step 4 if necessary.

12.20. Blade tracking - FP helicopters

The Corona does not need blade tracking adjustments if you used two 4 degree blade grips. The head mechanics are very stiff and fairly precise which simplifies setup considerably. If you used one 4 degree and one 6 degree blade grip, you should follow the manual directions to set

blade tracking.

The Piccolo FP has a soft rotor head and therefore the tracking is frequently off. This is especially bad because bad tracking steals a lot of power in micro helicopters. To check the blade tracking on a Piccolo, temporarily put a piece of bright colored tape on the leading edge of one of the rotor blades. This will cause the blades to be unbalanced but don't worry about this for now. Just remember to remove the tape after tracking the blades. You need this tape to determine which blade is higher or lower when checking the tracking.

Apply throttle and look at the rotor blades from exactly the side. If both rotor blades are spinning exactly in the same plane and look like this: -o- then no adjustments are needed.

If both rotor blades are not tracking in the same plane and look like this: >< then the blades are not tracking properly and require adjustment.

The tracking of the stock Piccolo FP blades can be adjusted by holding the blade firmly at the root and twisting the blade at the widest point. Be sure not to twist the rotor head (67370). You should increase the pitch on the low blade and decrease the pitch on the high blade until the two blades track evenly.

Chapter 13. R/C Heli Rules & Tips

13.1. The proper way to carry a heli

The proper way to carry a heli is by the blade grip. The blade grip carries the weight of the heli during flight and is designed to hold the weight of the heli.

You should hold the blade grip as if you were holding a flashlight. Your thumb should be on top of the blade grip, and the fingers curled under.

You should avoid touching the blades, especially if they are woodies. The trailing edge of wooden blades are made from soft balsa and will crumble very easily.

Also, be sure to keep your fingers away from the control linkages to avoid bending the control rods and changing the tracking of the blades.

13.2. Helicopter arming procedure

1. Fully extend the transmitter antenna
2. Turn on the transmitter
3. Wait for it to transmit
4. Connect the helicopter battery LAST

If you connect the heli battery without the transmitter on, it may go to full throttle which may maim or kill you and/or nearby people.

13.3. Helicopter disarming procedure

1. Disconnect the helicopter battery FIRST
2. Turn off the transmitter
3. Collapse the antenna

If you turn off the transmitter before disconnecting the heli battery, the heli may go to full throttle which may maim or kill you and/or nearby people.

13.4. Do not carry a live heli!



Warning

CARRYING A LIVE HELI IS VERY DANGEROUS!

A gust of wind can blow your shirt over the throttle or radio interference can cause the motor to start up!

This includes:

- ALWAYS carry the helicopter to the flying spot before plugging in the battery.
- DO NOT plug in the battery first then carry the heli to the flying spot!
- ALWAYS disconnect the helicopter battery immediately after flying and before carrying the helicopter back.



Warning

DO NOT CARRY A LIVE HELICOPTER AFTER FLYING!

13.5. The blades are traveling at high velocity!



Warning

THE MAIN ROTOR BLADES ARE TRAVELING AT HIGH VELOCITY AND CAN KILL OR MAIM YOU. BE VERY CAREFUL.

When I first started flying helicopters, I read every single web page I could find on the Internet regarding helicopters. One web page mentioned a story where a guy was flying his helicopter in a park, and a little dog started chasing his helicopter around. The heli pilot asked the dog owner to retrieve his dog, but the dog owner thought it was cute and wouldn't do it. When the heli landed, the dog ran to the helicopter and lunged at it. The main rotor blades were still spinning at full speed and neatly chopped off the top of the dog's skull.

Also, there are stories about R/C helicopter rotor blades chopping off people's fingers. Don't believe it? Let's do the math.

An ECO 8 has a rotor diameter of 41.7 inches. This means the rotor tips travel $41.7 * 3.14$ or 130.9 inches in one revolution.

The rotor is spinning at about 1600 rpm. This means the rotor tips travel $130.9 * 1600$ or 209,440 inches in a minute.

In one hour the rotor tips will travel $60 * 209,440$ or 12,566,400 inches.

$12,566,400 \text{ inches/hr} = 1,047,200 \text{ feet/hr} = 198.3 \text{ mph!!!}$

So, when an ECO 8 rotor blade is spinning at 1600 rpm, the blade tips are traveling at 198 mph. That's why helicopter rotor blades can slice off fingers and the top of skulls.



Warning

RESPECT THE SPINNING ROTOR BLADES.

13.6. Always disconnect the battery when working on the helicopter



Warning

ALWAYS DISCONNECT THE BATTERY WHEN POSSIBLE IF WORKING ON THE HELICOPTER. IF YOU MUST WORK ON A LIVE HELI, THEN DISCONNECT AT LEAST ONE OF THE MOTOR LEADS SO THE MAIN ROTOR/TAIL

ROTOR WILL NOT SPIN UP AND MAIM YOU.

If the main rotor or tail rotor spins up and maims or kills you, this will probably slow down your helicopter learning process, so please try to avoid this.

13.7. Liability insurance

A membership in your country's local R/C modeling club is highly recommended because it provides insurance coverage in case you damage something. This is very useful if your heli damages somebody's car, or injures someone.

In the USA a membership in the Academy of Model Aeronautics ([AMA](#)) provides insurance coverage.

In the UK the British Model Flying Association ([BMFA](#)) provides this service.

Chapter 14. Learning to Fly an R/C Helicopter

14.1. The skills required

The skills required to fly a helicopter can be categorized into three broad areas:

- Visual skills
- Integration
- Motor skills

Here is a more detailed explanation of the skills involved:

- Orientation. You must be able to instantly determine the position, yaw, pitch, and roll, and the acceleration in yaw, pitch, and roll while the helicopter is moving. (the roll, pitch yaw, and deltas of each)
- Movement. You must be able to track the velocity and acceleration of a helicopter relative to the ground while tracking the orientation of the helicopter. (the x, y, z, and the deltas of each)
- Computation. Your brain must take these 12 data items of orientation and movement and determine the correct direction and distance to move the two joysticks.
- Motor skills. You need extremely fine motor skills to move the joysticks in small increments to effect very small corrections to the helicopter's orientation and movement.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to develop these disparate skills independently, which results in a steep learning curve.

14.2. Making the learning process easier

Here are some recommendations to make this learning process easier

14.2.1. Hover no higher than eye level

This allows you to more easily determine the movement of the helicopter because the ground provides a visual point of reference.

This also allows you to more easily determine the orientation of the helicopter. If the disc of the rotor blades appear oval, then the helicopter is not level with your eyes.

Also, the helicopter will suffer less damage from a 5 ft crash than from a 30 ft crash. Some helicopters (like the Corona) will probably incur no damage, and you can simply walk over and set it upright and continue practicing.

You should be careful when flying outdoors if there are visually distracting items in the background such as trees, houses, etc. This "background clutter" can pull your eye's focus away from the heli which can result in a crash. You should avoid hovering your heli in front of background clutter so concentrating is easier.

14.2.2. Paint your canopy a bright color or leave it white

It looks really cool to paint your helicopter completely black; however it rapidly becomes less cool when you realize you can't see the orientation of the helicopter beyond ten feet. A black helicopter rapidly turns into a silhouette, and becomes very difficult to fly.

If painting, be sure to paint your canopy a bright color. Fluorescent neon colors work well. A two-tone color scheme where the left side is painted a different color than the right side helps visual orientation considerably.

14.2.3. Use white blades

Black blades are cool, but they turn almost invisible when hovering. White blades are much more visible.

14.2.4. Use a heading hold gyro.

This will free you from worrying about the yaw and rate of yaw of the helicopter, which leaves you free to concentrate on the other ten orientation items.

14.3. Minimize downtime; maximize practice time

Several items fit into this category:

- Practice on a durable heli (Corona)
- Use training gear to minimize the chance of tipping over and damaging the rotor blades and tailboom
- Use a boom protector (dowels taped/tiewrapped to boom to reduce damage if main rotor blades hit the boom)
- Practice on the simulator. The helicopters in the simulator do not require a trip to a hobby store or waiting for parts to arrive from an online store. They don't require finding a dealer with parts in stock, or waiting for parts to arrive, or installing the replacement parts, or tedious detective work to identify the cause of vibration problems.

Simulators and heading hold gyros are probably the two biggest advances in the last five years for reducing the learning curve of R/C helicopters.

- Keep a supply of commonly damaged/lost crash parts. For the Corona, this would be: main rotor blades, tailbooms, vertical tail fins, and Z links.

For other helicopters, this would include: main rotor blades, flybars, flybar paddles, spindle shafts, main rotor shafts, tail booms, tail rotor blades, tail rotor shafts, vertical tail fins, and landing gears.

14.4. Divide the learning process into smaller, easier steps

The classical steps in learning to fly a heli are:

- a. Tail-in hovering
- b. Side-in hovering
- c. Forward flight

d. Figure eights

These steps work well if you are already flying R/C planes.

Chapter 15. Hovering Technique

Hovering a model helicopter is much like balancing a ball bearing on a sheet of glass. This is a half-serious helicopter joke, but it's actually much more accurate than people realize. If you place a ball bearing on a sheet of glass, and tilt the glass left, then the ball bearing will start to roll left and accelerate faster and faster.

If you tilt the glass right until the glass is level, then the ball will stop accelerating but will keep rolling at a constant speed. To stop the ball, you must tilt the glass right a little more until the ball slows down, then level the sheet of glass as it slows down.

A model helicopter behaves the same way. If you apply a little left cyclic and center the stick, the helicopter will tilt left and start to move left, and keep accelerating faster and faster. If you apply a little right cyclic then center the stick to level the helicopter, it will become stop accelerating, but will keep moving left. In order to stop the helicopter, you need to apply enough right cyclic so it will slow down and then level the helicopter as it slows down.

A common beginner problem is to overcorrect the movement and the helicopter will "pendulum" back and forth. This indicates you are either moving the cyclic too far and/or holding it too long before centering the stick.

For the section we will divide helicopters into two types:

- Helicopters with rigidly held swashplates

Helicopters with rigidly held swashplates hold the swashplate by at least three points so it is held rigidly in place. Helicopters such as the Hornet, Hummingbird Elite CP, ECO 8, Logo 10, etc are in this category.

These types of helicopters require small, delicate movements of the cyclic stick. Penduluming is usually the result of moving the stick too much.

- Helicopters with "floating" swashplates

Helicopters with floating swashplates usually have a lot of slop in the control mechanism due to the floating swashplate. Helicopters with floating swashplates include: ECO/Fun Piccolo, GWS Dragonfly, Century Hummingbird V3, etc.

These types of helicopters are less sensitive to cyclic stick movement and are more easily controlled with larger, fast stick movements. These stick motions might be called a "twitch" for lack of a better word. Penduluming is usually the result of holding the stick too long in the pushed position.

Chapter 16. Tail-In Hovering

The first helicopter orientation to learn is "tail-in" hovering. This is called tail-in because the tail of the helicopter will be the closest to you.

16.1. Preparation

- The most common helicopter "minor crash" is a boom strike. This occurs the helicopter lands too hard and the main rotor blade strikes the tail boom. It is advisable to have at least one extra tail boom on hand to avoiding waiting for parts.
- You should have some practice time on a flight simulator. This will really reduce the number of crashes and save you A LOT of money.
- You should have a training gear on your heli. The training gear prevents the heli from tipping over and damaging itself, and additionally makes the heli more stable by slowing the cyclic response.

For a 1000-2000 gram heli, the best and cheapest training gear can be made from a small hula-hoop and some 1/4 inch dowels. Do not use a dowel thicker than 1/4 inch, because the 1/4 inch dowels will break in a hard landing and absorb some of the impact.

- i. Put the dowel across the diameter of the hula-hoop, and cut the dowel so it's about 1 inch longer than the diameter.
- ii. Cut another dowel the same length.
- iii. Use two tie-wraps to lash the two dowels together in an X pattern.
- iv. Use tie wraps to attach the X to the hula-hoop.
- v. Use tie-wraps or rubber bands to attach the X to the landing gear of your helicopter.
- vi. Make sure the hula-hoop is on the bottom, so it will slide along the floor on the hula-hoop.

The CG may shift when you attach the training gear, so be sure to readjust the battery pack to move the forward/aft CG back to the main rotor shaft.

16.2. Tail-in hovering - Phase 1

- The objective for Phase 1 is to slide the helicopter around on the ground to start building the hovering reflexes. We do not want to lift off yet. I recommend doing this for at least a few battery packs.

You will be learning the "tail-in" orientation, which is the tail of the helicopter pointed towards you and the nose away from you.

Be sure to focus on the nose of the helicopter, and not the tail. If you focus on the tail, this is very bad. You may want to stand slightly left or slightly right of the helicopter so you can see the nose.

- For a non-micro helicopter, find an empty flat space that is fairly level and is fairly clean (no rocks or debris for the training gear to hit). You will need at least a 20 ft by 20 ft area for

this, although bigger is better.

An empty parking lot works well for this. Make sure there are no cars nearby to ensure you won't hit them.

For a microheli, you probably want to find a hard level indoor surface, possibly an empty garage or the kitchen. A 10 ft by 10 ft surface is probably necessary.

- Make sure wind conditions are ideal.

If you are using a heading hold gyro, then you want as little wind as possible. The best times for this are probably the first three hours of daylight or the last hour of daylight before dusk.

If you are using a non-heading hold gyro, then you want a little bit of steady breeze (not gusty) to help hold the helicopter tail steady because the helicopter will tend to turn when moving around. You will also want a little bit of forward trim to compensate.

With either gyro type, make sure you point the heli nose into the wind so the tail fin will help keep the heli straight.

- Place the helicopter and training gear on the ground, with the nose of the helicopter pointed away from you.
- Preflight check the helicopter. Make sure all ball links are properly on the balls.
- Turn on the transmitter and fully extend the antenna. Make sure the throttle hold is enabled on the transmitter and ensure the idle-up switch is in normal mode and the throttle stick is at zero throttle. Make sure the transmitter is in heading hold mode if using a gyro with remote mode select, such as the GY401.
- Connect the helicopter battery and wait for the gyro to initialize.

When you do this, make sure your the transmitter antenna is at least two feet away from the receiver antenna and your body parts are at least six inches from both the transmitter and receiver antenna.

If the transmitter antenna is too close to the receiver antenna and/or your hand is too close to the antenna, then the transmitter signal may overpower the receiver which can cause glitches. This may cause the motor to start up and/or the gyro to incorrectly calibrate the rudder center position.

The GY401 LED (light) should blink rapidly for about two seconds, then switch to fully lit. If the LED switches to a slow blink instead, then this is yaw rate mode and your transmitter is not configured correctly.

If the GY401 is powered-up in non-heading-hold mode, then you will not be able to switch back and forth between gyro modes. So, be very careful to power up the helicopter while the transmitter is set to heading hold mode.

- Perform a radio range check and ensure all cyclic servos move properly.
- Make sure the throttle stick is completely down, then turn off the throttle hold and follow the ESC directions to arm the main motor ESC.

If you have a tail motor ESC, first wait for the gyro to initialize. Next, hold the rudder full left (or full right if you have reversed the transmitter channel) to arm the tail ESC.

- *VERY, VERY SLOWLY* apply enough power for the helicopter to become light on the skids. ***** DO NOT LIFT OFF ***** If you accidentally lift off at this point, you will probably panic and crash. So try not to lift off.
- When you push the rudder stick left, the heli should rotate counterclockwise. When you push the rudder stick right, it should rotate clockwise. If these directions are reversed, then you should fix the problem before continuing.

The rudder stick should control the *NOSE* of the helicopter and not the tail.

Some heading hold gyros will have a tendency to "drift" away from the direction they're supposed to hold. This has been reported with the CSM LW200 gyro. If this occurs, then use the trim on the rudder to remove any drift.

- The heli will start to wander around on its own. Use the cyclic control to keep the helicopter within a 10 foot circle.
- The helicopter may have a constant tendency to move in one direction, and you may need to apply some trim to counteract this.

Note that it will be impossible to perfectly trim the helicopter at this stage since you are hovering in ground effect.

- Always keep the tail of the helicopter pointed towards you. If you are using a heading hold gyro, this should occur automatically. If you are using a yaw rate gyro, you will need to use the rudder to maintain the tail position because the tail will tend to weathervane with the heli movement.
- Always fly the nose of the helicopter. This is very important. Do not fly the tail. Always fly the nose of the helicopter. When you give left rudder, the nose should turn left, so always look at the nose.
- Try to avoid overcorrecting. Be sure to reread the "Hovering Technique" section if you have problems with overcorrection.
- If the helicopter starts to wander too far, reduce the throttle to let the helicopter settle and stop moving. Don't "chop" the throttle - reduce the throttle smoothly. Later on when you are actually hovering, chopping the throttle will cause the helicopter to crash. So, it's good to not acquire this habit in the first place.
- Focus your attention on the helicopter. Try to tune out any distractions, and don't hold a conversation while learning to hover. Think only of the helicopter and its tilt and direction of movement.
- It may help to watch the disk of the main rotor blades because it will tell you if the helicopter is level.
- When your nerves become frazzled, take a break. Don't push yourself too hard, because you may lose concentration and crash the helicopter.
- When your batteries become weak, switch packs. Be sure to wait a little while between flights to allow the motor to cool down. For maximum battery life, let the battery cool a little (about 5 mins) before recharging.
- For a non-micro helicopter, when you can hold the heli in a 10 foot circle, you are ready for the next phase.

For a microheli, you should be able to hold the heli in a 3 foot circle.

16.3. Tail-in hovering - Phase 2

- The objective for Phase 2 is to hover at 3-4 inches of altitude (2-3 inches for a micro). Do not go any higher.

You will be in "ground effect" so the helicopter will be twitchier than normal. This is a little awkward, but I highly recommend you practice this for at least a few battery packs to start building the necessary reflexes.

- Go back to the hovering area, preflight the helicopter, and perform range check/servo movement checks.
- If you are using a heading hold gyro, then make sure there is no wind or as little wind as possible.

If you have a non-heading hold gyro, you will need a slight wind to help keep the tail steady. If you try to hover a non-HH helicopter without wind, this will be very difficult because the helicopter will "weathervane" into the direction it's moving. This is very bad because you will need to try to keep the tail steady while simultaneously hovering the helicopter.

When hovering with wind, practice hovering with the nose of the helicopter facing INTO the wind. When the heli is facing into the wind, the vertical tail fin will help keep the heli from turning (yawing).

- Wait for the gyro to initialize, then arm the ESC.
- SLOWLY apply enough throttle to lift the helicopter to the desired altitude.
- When the helicopter tilts, you will hear a scraping sound, because the edge of the hula-hoop (or a ping-pong ball) will drag along the asphalt (or carpet). Pay attention to this sound, because it indicates your helicopter is tilted.
- Watch the disk of the main rotor blades as they spin. Try to keep the circle level, because when the circle is level, your heli is level.
- When the helicopter moves left, you should push the joystick right to halt the movement, then when the helicopter has stopped moving you need to nudge the joystick left to level the helicopter. Same for the other three directions.

So, to stop a heli from moving in direction x requires two small stick movements. This requires a while to learn properly.

- The helicopter may have a constant tendency to move in one direction, and you may need to apply some trim to counteract this.

Note that it will still be impossible to perfectly trim the helicopter at this stage since you are hovering in ground effect.

- Try to avoid "overcontrolling" the helicopter. You want to use small, delicate stick movements to gracefully correct the movement. It takes a while to develop this delicate, smooth touch. Be patient with yourself.
- Try to keep the helicopter within a 10 foot circle, and try to keep it level.
- At some point, you will start to hover longer and longer periods without an edge of the training gear touching the pavement. This may require 5-10 battery charges or more.

- When you become more comfortable with the controls, you should gradually increase the altitude until you are hovering at about waist level (for micro helis) or eye level (for nonmicro helis)
- Congrats. You're tail-in hovering. :)
- When you can hold the heli within about a 5 ft circle, you should practice hovering with the heli slightly to the left of you or slightly to the right of you (in about the 10 o'clock position and 2 o'clock position) to prepare for the next section.

Chapter 17. Side-In and Nose-In Hovering Orientations

The next step after tail-in hovering is side-in hovering. There are two orientations for side-in hovering: left-in and right-in hovering where the left side and the right side of the helicopter are facing you, respectively.

You should make sure your tail-in hovering is fairly solid before attempting side-in hovering. You will turn the heli back to the tail-in orientation if you start to lose control, so make sure your tail-in hovering is very solid before attempting this.

Tail-in hovering is easiest if the learning process is divided into two steps:

- Translating into side-in
- Turning into side-in

Translating into side-in is easier than turning into side-in, and should be practiced first.

17.1. To translate into a left side-in hover:

Assuming you are facing north, set the heli down about 15 ft in front of you and lift into a tail-in hover. Now move the heli east about 15 ft. This is a 45 degree side-in hover. Once you are comfortable with this hovering position, you should move the heli south about 15 ft so the heli is 15 ft east of you.

Turn to face the heli.

Once you are comfortable with this, you should practice turning into a side-in hover.

17.2. To turn into a left side-in hover:

Lift off into a tail-in hover, then use the rudder to turn the heli to a left side-in orientation. You should turn very slowly to avoid losing orientation, and increase the turn rate as your proficiency improves.

Once you can hover both left-in and right-in hovering, you should increase practice more on the weaker orientation to strengthen it. This is very important to avoid developing "handedness" in orientation. After left-in and right-in hovering, you might choose to learn nose-in hovering. Some people say this is "very difficult" but really it's just another orientation to learn. If you've learned three orientations, you might as well learn the fourth before you go on to the next part.

It's probably okay to remove the training gear after you are fairly comfortable with side-in hovering or nose-in hovering. The removal of the training gear will change the flight characteristics of the helicopter and make it more sensitive to stick input, so this will require some mental adjustment. After you have removed the training gear, you should hover at about 3ft to eye level.

I would recommend spending at least two months learning each hovering orientation to ensure you are very comfortable with each orientation. When you can hover entire packs with each orientation and feel reasonably in control of the heli, you are probably ready to progress to the next stage.

Chapter 18. Additional Orientation Exercises

"...what flyers need most is solid fundamentals."

—Jason Krause interview, Model Helicopter Technique #36

"I think you should really focus on the fundamentals.... A pilot should make sure he is completely confident with all orientations of the machine before attempting any 3D maneuvers."

—Pete Niotis interview, Model Helicopter Technique #44

18.1. Introduction

The foundation of your helicopter flying skills is good orientation. If you do not have good orientation skills, it will seriously hinder your ability to learn forward flight and advanced skills.

Also, probably the #1 reason for beginner helicopter crashes is losing orientation. If you can follow the helicopter orientation as it moves, you will crash less often.

Here are some exercises to practice which will help you close the "orientation gaps" you may have. You may want to practice these in a simulator first to become comfortable with them.

18.2. 90 degree yaw

While hovering, turn 90 degrees. Turn from either side-in to nose or tail in, and back. Try to keep the helicopter stationary while turning.

There's four different variations on this exercise:

- Tail-in to left-in and then back
- Tail-in to right-in and then back
- Nose-in to left-in and then back
- Nose-in to right-in and then back

18.3. 180 degree yaw

While hovering, turn 180 degrees. Start with one side-in orientation and switch to the other side-in orientation. Also, practice switching from tail-in to nose-in and back, and tail-in to nose-in and back. Try to keep the helicopter stationary while turning.

There's two different variations on this exercise:

- Nose-in to tail-in and then back
- Right-in to left-in and then back

18.4. 45 degree nose-in orientations

The straight nose-in orientation easy, but the angled nose-in orientations with the nose pointing 45 degrees left and right are more difficult, so this is good to practice.

18.5. Single pirouette

While hovering tail-in/side-in/nose-in, execute a full 360 degree yaw, and resume hovering. Be sure to practice both clockwise and counterclockwise pirouettes to avoid developing "handedness".

18.6. Multiple slow pirouettes

These pirouettes should take about 16 seconds to complete a full 360 degree rotation. Try to keep the helicopter stationary while performing the pirouettes. Be sure to practice both clockwise and counterclockwise pirouettes to avoid developing "handedness".

Chapter 19. Transmitter Setup for Fast Forward Flight

For a CP helicopter, you will want to program the idle-up mode on your transmitter before attempting forward flight. This will improve the collective response of your helicopter, which is required to maintain level forward flight.

The idle-up mode allows you to keep a constant headspeed regardless of the throttle position. This allows you to decrease and increase the main rotor blade pitch without losing headspeed. This makes the helicopter more responsive to altitude changes because the motor will not change speed when the throttle stick is moved.

To set the idle-up, first look at your normal throttle curve, and note the maximum throttle. For example, if your normal throttle curve is 0-50-85-85-85, then your max throttle is 85.

Next, switch to the throttle programming menu for the idle-up mode. Set the throttle as a straight line across for the maximum value in your normal throttle curve; in this case it would be 85-85-85-85-85. Now, when you spool up your helicopter, you will do it in the normal throttle position until you reach full speed. When the full speed is reached, you will flip over to the idle-up mode to start flying. When you land (or crash) and need to turn off the motor, use the throttle hold switch. This will take a little bit of practice.

Chapter 20. Entering & Exiting Fast Forward Flight

Forward flight is a little tricky on helicopters. It requires simultaneous coordination of both the throttle and cyclic to enter and exit forward flight smoothly.

To enter forward flight, it is necessary to tilt the heli forward (use forward cyclic) and simultaneously apply a little throttle. If you tilt the heli forward without applying throttle, the helicopter will slide nose-first into the ground. This is because the thrust from the heli is being vectored at an angle relative to the ground, and you lose some vertical lift because it's being converted to horizontal thrust.

Once the helicopter starts moving, you will need to tilt the heli back a little and simultaneously reduce throttle below hover. You will need to reduce the throttle because translational lift will occur and you will now get extra lift. Exiting forward flight into a hover is the reverse process. You will need to tilt the heli back (use back cyclic) to reduce forward motion, and simultaneously reduce throttle to prevent the heli from climbing up. After the forward motion has been reduced, you will need to level the helicopter (use forward cyclic) and add throttle to transition to a stable hover.

One way to practice forward flight is to pick two points a comfortable distance apart (maybe five feet for a micro, ten or fifteen feet for a nonmicro) then practice flying back and forth between those two points (stop into a hover at each point and turn 180 degrees).

Chapter 21. Banked Forward Turns

Banked turns are also a little tricky, and require simultaneous coordination of the throttle and cyclic.

The first phase of a banked turn is to apply left or right cyclic in the direction of the turn until the desired bank angle is reached.

The second phase of a banked turn is to simultaneously apply a small amount of back cyclic and rudder in the direction of the turn. The third phase is to straighten out after the turn. This requires using forward cyclic to maintain forward motion and centering the rudder stick.

Be careful when making a turn in windy conditions. This is the main cause of beginner crashes at this stage.

When you are flying into the wind, you will gain translational lift and the heli will rise, so you will decrease throttle. As you perform the turn and are flying with the wind, you will all of a sudden lose translational lift very abruptly and the heli will start to sink.

With a fixed pitch heli, the throttle changes are not immediate because the main rotor needs to gain RPM. So, you will need to apply throttle early before you lose translational lift (about halfway through the turn), otherwise the heli will lose some altitude when finishing the turn.

Chapter 22. Figure Eights

This is a combination of the forward flight and banked turn skills.

This is a bit tricky on the Corona because it does not turn well when the main rotor is throttled down, because the tail rotor is also throttled down. If you try to do turns when the tail is throttled down, it will turn very slowly then snap into position when the helicopter enters forward flight.

To do proper figure eights on the Corona, you will need to throttle up slightly when entering turns to ensure the tail has enough authority to turn the Corona, and throttle down slightly when exiting the turn and entering the forward flight section.

Practice easy figure eights first where the heli turns tail-in at both ends of the figure eight. Once you are comfortable with these, try the hard figure eights where the heli turns nose-in towards you. *BE SURE* to attempt the nose-in turns at a reasonable distance from yourself to avoid hitting yourself with the helicopter!

For added complexity, try doing a pirouette or two in the middle of the forward flight section of the figure-eight.

Chapter 23. Backwards Flight

"I always lead with the tail. As I watch the heli I'm keying off the tail, as far as I know, and I steer along with the tail."

—Todd Bennett, Model Helicopter Technique #35

Backwards flight is tricky because it requires unlearning some of the reflexes learned for forward flight. You will need to fly backwards by concentrating on the tail of the helicopter (not the nose!), and the controls to slow down and speed up are reversed.

You will need to be very careful about letting the tail tilt too low, because it will hit the ground and flip the helicopter over.

If you don't have a good heading hold gyro by this point, I highly recommend you buy one now. Backwards flight is much more difficult without heading hold because the tail will have a strong tendency to weathervane suddenly and flip around, which can cause you to lose orientation and crash.

You may want to perform the "fly between two points" exercise mentioned in the forward flight section in a backwards orientation to become comfortable with backwards flight.

Chapter 24. Banked Backwards Turns

Banked backwards turns are tricky because the cyclic does not follow the rudder...it is the opposite of the rudder. This requires a bit of explanation.

For forwards flight, a left turn consists of left rudder with LEFT cyclic, because the left side of the helicopter faces the inside of the loop.

For backwards flight, a left turn consists of left rudder with RIGHT cyclic, because the right side of the helicopter faces the inside of the loop.

There are two turns in two orientations, which results in four backward turns:

- Right turn where heli is tail-in relative to you (e.g. heli is traveling from your left to your right, then makes a right turn towards you)
- Left turn where heli is tail-in relative to you (e.g. heli is traveling from your right to your left, then makes a left turn towards you)
- Right turn where heli is nose-in relative to you (e.g. heli is traveling from your right to your left, then makes a right turn away from you)
- Left turn where heli is nose-in relative to you (e.g. heli is traveling from your left to your right, then makes a left turn away from you)

The potential for crashing is pretty high, so I highly recommend practicing these in a simulator before trying them on your heli. I recommend learning the tail-in turns before the nose-in turns because the tail-in turns are easier.

When performing backwards turns, there are three things you need to watch simultaneously:

- The bank of the helicopter. If the helicopter banks too much then it will lose lift and slide into the ground.
- The angle of the tail. If the tail sinks too low then your heli will dive into the ground.
- The yaw rate. If you yaw too much, you will wind up merely performing pirouettes, and if you yaw too little the turn will look sloppy.

Chapter 25. Backwards Exercises

A "remote circle" in this section means flying in a circle not around yourself, but at some distance away.

25.1. Backwards remote half circles

Fly in a circle, but fly only half of it backwards. So, you will need to perform two 180 degree pirouettes during the circle to change orientation. This is easier than a backwards full circle because you can learn the tail-in backwards turn first, which is easier.

For a clockwise circle, do the right half of it with a backwards orientation. For a counterclockwise circle, do the left half with a backwards orientation.

25.2. Backwards remote full circles

Fly in a full circle backwards. Try to keep the helicopter moving smoothly at a constant speed. Be sure to practice both clockwise and counterclockwise circles.

25.3. Backwards tail-in figure-eight

Fly in a figure-eight backwards where the heli turns nose-in to you during the turn.

25.4. Backwards nose-in figure-eight

Fly in a figure-eight backwards where the heli turns nose-in to you during the turn.

Chapter 26. How Helicopters Work

A helicopter is basically a rock with a propeller. The only lift it generates is from the main rotor, and it uses a tail rotor to avoid yawing from the torque generated by the main rotor.

The main rotor is composed of: the main blades, the smaller blades are called the flybar paddles (or subrotor in some cases), and the hub which holds the blades and paddles to the main shaft.

Beneath the main rotor hub is a device called a swashplate which is connected by linkages to the flybar and maybe the main blades. The swashplate is a mechanical device which transmits the mechanical position of the servos to the main rotor hub parts which are rotating. It allows the cyclic servos which are on the helicopter body to change the pitch of the flybar paddles and the main blades as the blades rotate.

The antirotation pin and the antirotation arm keep the bottom part of the swashplate from rotating while the top portion rotates along with the main rotor.

The cyclic servos are controlled by the radio, and control the tilt (and for CCPM also the position) of the swashplate. There are usually either two or three cyclic servos.

In a CCPM (Cyclic/Collective Pitch Mixing) system, the swashplate is connected via series of mechanical linkages to the flybar and the main rotor blade grips. The tilt of the swashplate controls the flybar paddle attack angle as it rotates, and the height of the swashplate as it slides up and down the main rotor shaft controls the angle of attack of the main blades.

In a non-CCPM system (like the Piccolo CP), the swashplate is connected only to the flybar, and a separate series of linkages controls the pitch of the main rotor blades. The tilt of the swashplate controls the flybar attack angle as it rotates, and the swashplate does not slide up and down the main rotor shaft.

In a fixed pitch system, the pitch of the main rotor blades cannot be changed, so there are no linkages which control the pitch of the main rotor blades.

The tail rotor prevents the helicopter body from yawing when the helicopter motor drives the main rotor blades. The yaw varies as the speed and pitch of the main blades change, so the amount of tail rotor thrust is variable to compensate for this.

Some helicopters use a fixed rotation rate/variable pitch tail rotor system where the tail is driven by the same motor as the main rotor via a belt, wire or tube drive. A tail servo changes the pitch of the tail rotor blades to increase or decrease the tail rotor thrust.

On other helicopters, the pitch of the tail blades is fixed but the tail rotor blades are driven by a variable-speed electric motor to provide the variable tail rotor thrust.

Chapter 27. How Gyros Work

Many people seem to be confused about how gyros work. In order to understand how a gyro works, it is necessary to first understand the relationship between the main rotor and the tail rotor.

Most helicopters have a clockwise main rotor, so for this section, we will assume the main rotor blades are spinning clockwise.

Also, some helicopter use a variable pitch tail rotor and some helicopters use a variable-speed motor for the tail rotor, so this section will use the terminology "increase/decrease tail rotor thrust" to accomodate both cases.

27.1. The functions of the tail rotor

The three basic function of the tail rotor are:

- Counter main rotor torque
- Turn (yaw) the helicopter
- Stabilize yaw

27.1.1. Counter main rotor torque

The first function provided by the tail rotor is to counter main rotor torque.

The motor in a helicopter spins the blades clockwise. But in order to spin the blades, the motor needs to push against something. In this case, the motor is pushing against the body of the helicopter. So, when the motor spins the main rotor blades clockwise, the body of the helicopter tends to spin counterclockwise. This is consistent with Newton's Third Law of Motion which states:

"For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction."

In this case, the action is a clockwise rotation of the main rotor blades, and the reaction is the body of the helicopter turning counterclockwise. So, the tail rotor needs to provide the correct amount of clockwise thrust to balance the counterclockwise reaction to the clockwise main rotor. For lack of a better term, we will call this "main rotor counter thrust".

27.1.2. Turn (Yaw) the Helicopter

The second function provided by the tail rotor is to turn (yaw) the helicopter.

If we need to turn left, then we set the tail rotor thrust to slightly less than the main rotor counter thrust. This means the counterclockwise force (reaction of main rotor) will be greater than the clockwise force (tail rotor thrust) so the body of the helicopter will turn counterclockwise.

If we need to turn right, then we set the tail rotor thrust to slightly more than the main rotor counter thrust. This means the counterclockwise force (reaction of main rotor) will be less than the clockwise force (tail rotor thrust) so the body of the helicopter will turn clockwise.

If we don't need to turn, then the tail rotor thrust is exactly the main rotor counter thrust. For

lack of a better term, we will call this the "turning thrust".

27.1.3. Yaw Stabilization

The third function provided by the tail rotor is yaw stabilization.

When airflow hits the side of the helicopter, the helicopter will tend to "weathervane" into the airflow because there is more leverage against the tail of the helicopter than the nose.

This airflow can be either a random gust of wind, or the helicopter may be moving sideways relative in still air.

We can use the tail to correct the orientation of the helicopter by increasing or decreasing the thrust of the tail rotor. For lack of a better term, we will call this the "yaw stabilization thrust".

So the total thrust of the tail rotor should be all three of these variables added together, or:

tail rotor thrust = main rotor counter thrust + turning thrust + yaw stabilization thrust

27.2. Yaw rate gyros and how they work

For a yaw rate gyro, the following functions are controlled by the following devices:

- Counter main rotor torque - transmitter revo mixing
- Turn (yaw) the helicopter - rudder stick
- Stabilize yaw - yaw rate gyro

A yaw rate gyro is a very simple device. It only senses the turn rate (angular acceleration) and it cannot sense the absolute orientation of the helicopter. In technical terms, it "dampens" the tail movement.

Imagine you are blindfolded, and are standing on a frozen lake wearing smooth shoes. A person will try to turn you, and you are only allowed to resist the turning force by digging in your shoes into the smooth slippery ice. Basically, you cannot resist the turning force very much, and once you have been turned, you do not know the original orientation.

This is very much like a yaw rate gyro.

Therefore, a yaw rate gyro can only provide partial yaw stabilization thrust. Usually the amount of yaw stabilization thrust is controlled by the gyro gain. Increasing the gain will make the helicopter more resistant to random turning, but it also decreases the pirouette rate because the gyro will fight against both random and intentional yawing movement.

A yaw rate gyro cannot provide "heading hold" capability because it only pushes against the turning movement but will slip somewhat, and once it's been turned it cannot return the helicopter to the original orientation.

A yaw rate gyro "slips" when trying to counter tail movement, so it cannot effectively counter main rotor torque. Therefore, the main rotor counter thrust is provided by the revo mixing function on the transmitter.

The revo mixing allows you to set the tail rotor thrust for each throttle position so the tail rotor thrust exactly counters the main rotor torque. There is no formula for setting these values; they must be empirically set by trial and error.

The turning thrust is governed by the rudder stick on the transmitter, the same as in a heading hold gyro.

27.3. Heading Hold gyros and how they work

- Counter main rotor torque - heading hold gyro
- Turn (yaw) the helicopter - rudder stick via heading hold gyro
- Stabilize yaw - heading hold gyro

A heading hold is more sophisticated than a yaw rate gyro and functions completely differently.

The first big difference between a heading hold gyro and a yaw rate gyro is that the heading hold gyro has a microprocessor on-board and can remember how much the helicopter has turned. Therefore if a random wind gust turns the helicopter, it can always return the helicopter to the original orientation.

Therefore, the heading hold gyro can supply the correct main rotor counter thrust automatically because it doesn't "slip". When you apply throttle and the tail starts to move because there's more main rotor torque, the heading hold gyro can increase the tail rotor thrust to turn the tail back to its original position.

Also, the heading hold gyro can provide the correct yaw stabilization thrust because it doesn't "slip", and therefore it can retain the correct orientation at all times.

The second big difference is the rudder signal from the transmitter no longer directly controls the tail thrust. The rudder signal tells the heading hold gyro how many degrees per second to turn, and the HH gyro will do whatever is necessary to move the tail to this position.

Note that the revo mixing **MUST** be disabled for the heading hold gyro to work properly. If the revo mixing is enabled, then the heading hold gyro will interpret it as a signal to turn the helicopter.

27.4. The difference between yaw rate and heading hold gyros

Imagine we have a helicopter with a properly configured yaw rate gyro and the motor is disconnected and it is on the ground where it cannot turn. If we hold left rudder on the transmitter for one second and then center the stick, the servo will move to one extreme servo position for one second and then center.

Now, imagine we have the same helicopter with a properly configured heading hold gyro, and the motor is disconnected and it is on the ground where it cannot turn. Imagine that the setting for this heading hold gyro is full left stick is 180 degrees per second.

If we hold left rudder on the transmitter for one second and then center the stick, the heading hold gyro will know the helicopter should turn counterclockwise 180 degrees. However, since the helicopter is on the ground and cannot turn, the tail servo will stick at one extreme and stay there - the heading hold gyro will keep trying to turn the helicopter. If we manually pick up the helicopter and turn it counterclockwise 180 degrees, the servo will finally center.

Note that both types of gyros only stabilize YAW. Neither type of gyro will stabilize roll or pitch. Technically speaking, a helicopter gyro contains an angular acceleration sensor for only one axis.

Chapter 28. GY-Series Gyro Technical Info

28.1. GY401 setup:

There are six adjustments on the GY401: direction, DS, delay, limit, gain and pirouette rate. The delay and limit are controlled by trimmers on the gyro itself. The gain adjustment is controlled at the transmitter by setting the value of the gyro channel, and the pirouette rate is set by adjusting the endpoints of the rudder channel.

28.1.1. GY401 direction switch:

For a heli with a tail servo, the GY401 direction switch configures the direction the gyro moves the servo for clockwise and counterclockwise movement.

For a heli with a tail motor ESC, the GY401 direction switch configures whether the gyro moves the throttle up or down to turn the heli clockwise or counterclockwise.

For both heli types, If this switch is set incorrectly, the heli will pirouette wildly and out of control.

28.1.2. GY401 DS (digital servo) switch:

The GY401 DS switch allows the gyro to update a digital servo about 4x faster than a normal servo.

Do not set this switch unless you are using a servo which supports a 270 hz frame rate, such as the S9253, S9254, or Volz Speed-Maxx.

Do not set this switch if you are using a tail motor ESC.

28.1.3. GY401 Delay trimmer:

The Delay adjustment is on the gyro itself, and allows you to configure the gyro for the response of the tail rotor system. This is only used in heading hold mode.

The delay setting of 0 is used for very fast servos such as the S9253/S9254. The delay setting of 100 is used for very slow tail servos and for tail motor ESCs. A tail motor ESC requires at least half a second to go from half throttle to full throttle, which is about twice as slow as the slowest tail servos (0.25 sec/60 degrees)

For a heli with a tail servo, if the delay setting is too low, then the gyro will assume the servo is faster than it really is. So the gyro will send commands to the servo to move very quickly, and the servo will try to move to the new position but it will be too slow, and it will lag behind the gyro commands.

For a heli with a tail motor ESC, if the delay setting is too low, the gyro will assume the tail motor can change RPM very fast. So the gyro will try to change the speed of the tail motor very quickly but the tail motor RPM will lag behind the gyro commands.

This delay setting seems to affect the end of a turn (yaw). At the end of a turn, the gyro needs to increase the tail thrust to slow down the tail then decrease it to maintain a steady tail position.

For example, imagine you are performing turning the heli (yaw) and you suddenly stop. If the delay setting is too low in this situation, the tail will wag a few times before settling down because the gyro will overshoot the end of the turn and need to correct the heading a few times.

If you increase the delay, this may allow you to increase the gain, although you may not need this as a beginner.

28.1.4. GY401 Limit trimmer:

The limit adjustment is on the gyro itself, and allows you to set the endpoints of the servo travel.

For a heli with a tail servo, if the limit setting is too high, then the gyro will attempt to move the tail servo too far in one or both directions. This will cause the servo to bind and emit a buzzing noise, which creates accelerated wear on the servo motor and early servo failure.

If the limit setting is too low, then this will decrease the range of the tail blade pitch. This will reduce your pirouette rate and may cause tail control problems.

For a heli with a tail motor ESC, if the limit setting is too low, then the tail motor ESC may fail to arm when holding the rudder stick full left. Therefore you cannot set the limit too low when using a tail motor ESC, but this is dependent on the tail ESC.

For a heli with a tail motor ESC, if the limit setting is too high, then this causes severe problems. The tail motor ESC will not arm because holding left rudder will cause the gyro to emit a signal that is too low for the tail motor ESC to arm. Also, if you hold extreme right rudder, the tail motor ESC may shut down because the signal is outside the valid range.

Therefore, for a heli with a tail motor ESC, the limit trimmer should be set to 100%.

28.1.5. GY401 Gain setting:

The gain adjustment is done at the transmitter via the gyro gain connector on the channel. This MUST be plugged into a receiver channel.

There isn't good documentation for the gain setting available, so the following information is what I have personally deduced from my own observations, which may not be completely correct.

The gain setting seems to control how much the tail is allowed to drift before the gyro will correct the position. It is basically a "fussiness" value. A low gain allows the tail to drift of about 2 or 3 degrees in either direction before the gyro will correct the position. A high gain allows a drift of less than 0.5 degrees.

There are two factors which limit the maximum gain setting:

For a heli with a tail servo, the limiting factors are the tail servo resolution and the amount of slop in the tail rotor pitch control mechanism.

If the tail servo resolution is low, then the gain setting must be fairly low to prevent wag.

For a heli with a tail motor ESC, the limiting factors are the tail motor ESC's throttle resolution and the inertia of the tail motor and tail rotor.

Imagine a tail servo or tail motor ESC with an extremely low resolution; let's say only 9 steps between the low and high endpoints. So, any position between 0 and 9% is truncated to 0%, any position between 10% and 19% is truncated to 10%, etc.

Imagine that hovering requires a tail channel position of 57%. However, the tail servo or tail motor ESC has limited resolution and can only be at 50% or 60%.

If the gyro gain is set very high, then the gyro will be very fussy about the tail position, and will

keep changing the tail position. This will cause tail wag.

If the gyro gain is set fairly low, then the gyro will be less fussy about the tail position and will allow some drift before correcting the tail position. This reduces or eliminates the tail wag.

If the tail rotor pitch control mechanism has a lot of slop, then the gyro will need to move the tail servo past the slop in either direction before the tail pitch will change.

If the gyro gain is set to a high value, then the gyro will be fussy and will try to move the tail servo often. This will cause wag.

If the gyro gain is set to a low value, then the gyro will be less fussy about the tail position and won't care about small changes in tail position, and this will decrease or eliminate wag.

Many guides recommend the gain value be set as high as possible without causing wag, but this causes the servo to wear more quickly. I recommend this value be set to a slightly lower value than the maximum possible value to reduce servo or tail motor wear.

If your transmitter supports the GY mode (Futaba 8U, 9C, 7C, etc) then you can set the mode to either heading hold (AVC) or yaw rate (NOR). If your transmitter does not support the GY mode, then you can set the mode with this formula:

For heading hold mode, take the 50 and add the heading hold gain percentage divided by two, and this is the percentage of the travel you should use for the transmitter's gyro gain channel.

For example, to set heading hold with 60% gain, then this would be $(60 / 2) + 50 = 80\%$ of full travel.

For yaw rate mode, take 50 and subtract the yaw rate gain divided by two and this is the percentage of travel you should use for the transmitter's gyro gain channel.

For example, to set yaw rate mode mode with 40% gain, this would be $50 - (40 / 2) = 30\%$ of full travel.

28.1.6. GY401 pirouette rate:

The pirouette rate adjustment is done at the transmitter via the rudder channel EPA. 100% EPA is roughly about 720 degrees/second maximum pirouette rate. Setting this to a lower value decreases the max pirouette rate, and increasing it will increase the max pirouette rate.

28.2. GY240 setup:

There are only three adjustments on the GY240: direction, gain and pirouette rate.

28.2.1. GY240 delay setting (fixed):

The GY240 has a fixed delay setting and this is not adjustable. However, the GY240 assumes a very slow servo, and the fixed delay setting appears to be greater than 100% delay on the GY401. This is one reason why the GY240 appears to work better with tail motors than the GY401.

See also the GY401 delay setting for more info.

28.2.2. GY240 limit setting (fixed):

The GY240 limits are not adjustable.

If you are using a heli with a tail servo, you will need to adjust the mechanical linkages so the

tail pitch slider does not bind at both extremes of travel. Pragmatically, this means you will need to try different holes in the tail servo horn and/or tail pitch lever until the tail pitch slider can travel to both extremes without binding.

If you are using a heli with a tail motor ESC, then there is no adjustment required.

See also the GY401 limit setting for more info.

28.2.3. GY240 direction switch:

This functions identically to the GY401. See the GY401 direction switch explanation for more details.

28.2.4. GY240 gain trimmer:

The GY240 gain trimmer works similar to the GY401 gain trimmer, however the GY240 gain is less sensitive than the GY401 gain. My rough guess is the GY240 60% gain is about the equivalent of the GY401 30% gain.

28.2.5. GY240 pirouette rate:

This GY240 pirouette rate is configured in the same way as the GY401 pirouette rate. However, the maximum pirouette rate is only about quarter that of the GY401.

Chapter 29. Yaw-Rate Gyro Technical Information

The gain on a yaw-rate gyro functions differently than on a heading hold gyro. It controls how much the gyro dampens (works against) movement. This is fine if you are not using the rudder. However, if you use the rudder, a yaw-rate gyro will dampen this movement too.

So increasing the gain on a yaw-rate gyro has two effects:

- It dampens random movement more, so the tail is more stable. This is good.
- It also dampens intentional tail movement, so this decreases the maximum pirouette rate. This is bad.

A standard single-rate yaw-rate gyro exhibits these bad behaviors. There are more sophisticated yaw-rate gyros which partially fix some of these problems:

Dual-gain gyros allow you to set two gain settings on the gyro and switch between these two gain settings from the transmitter, so you can decrease the gain when you need high pirouette rates.

Remote-gain gyros allow you to set the gain from the transmitter by a knob or switch, so you can decrease the gain when you need high pirouette rates.

Chapter 30. Battery Care & Maintenance

Different types of batteries have different requirements for care and maintenance. In order to ensure maximum battery usability, you should carefully follow the recommendations for each battery type.

30.1. Nickel-cadmium (nicad) batteries:

Nickel-cadmium batteries are generally the most robust of all the battery types. They're the oldest and most reliable battery type, (often over 200 charge/discharge cycles) and are fairly resistant to overcharging, vibration, and other forms of abuse.

Nicad batteries can be charged at a maximum rate of 2C.

Nicad batteries should be left discharged at the end of the flying day. When stored long-term (over two months) they should be stored in a cool storage area. After storage, you should slow-charge them a few times to ensure the battery pack is balanced.



Warning

Nicad batteries contain cadmium which is toxic and can cause lung and kidney damage. Be sure to wash your hands after handling nicad batteries. Also, nicad batteries **MUST** be disposed of properly. See the end section about battery disposal.

30.2. Nickel-metal-hydride (NiMH) batteries:

Nickel-metal-hydride batteries are a newer battery type than nickel-cadmium. They have a higher energy capacity than nicad, but have a much shorter life (about 100 charge/discharge cycles), and they are more easily damaged by overcharging and vibration.

NiMH batteries can be charged at a maximum rate of 1C, however, some people claim the Sanyo HR2600SC can be charged at 2C rates. This warms up the cell for maximum performance prior to flying. Chargers will fail to properly terminate the charge when NiMH cells are charged at rates less than 0.4C, so slow charges must be carefully timed to avoid overcharging the cells.

NiMH batteries can be left either charged or discharged at the end of a flying day. When stored long-term they should be stored in a cool storage area. After storage, they should be cycled a few times to restore capacity.

30.3. Lithium-Polymer (lipo) batteries:

Lithium-polymer is the newest battery type. They have up to four times the battery capacity of nicad batteries, but they are very fragile. They contain lithium which is a metal which ignites on contact with air, so if the battery balloons and the covering pops or the covering of the battery is punctured, it will ignite and explode.

Lipo batteries can be charged at a maximum rate of 1C.

Lipo batteries are very sensitive to overcharging. They should **ALWAYS** be charged in a fire-proof container and should **NEVER** be left unattended because they have been known to ignite in some circumstances.

Lipo batteries should not be discharged below 3 volts per cell because they can be damaged

by overdischarging. They should not be fully discharged at the end of the day; you should leave some charge in them. Thunder Power recommends long-term storage with about a 40% charge left in the cell; this minimizes cell deterioration and prevents the cell's voltage from dropping too low. They should be stored in a cool place in a fireproof container.

Lipo batteries are fairly fragile. You should avoid dropping them (especially onto concrete or asphalt) because this can cause cell damage. Lipo batteries have been damaged in a crash and have spontaneously ignited up to 30 minutes later. Any lipo batteries which have been in a helicopter that has crashed should be kept in a fireproof container for a few hours for observation.

Do not attempt to charge or discharge a ballooned battery pack. The proper way to dispose of a bad lipo cell is to take a container and fill it with water, then keep adding salt and stirring until no more salt will dissolve (reached saturation). Drop in the cell and leave for at least *TWO WEEKS*. Also, please search for "lipo disposal" in the [RC Groups](#) forums for the latest safety information on this technique.

30.4. Nicad/NiMH/Lipo Battery disposal:

All battery types, especially NiCad and LiPo battery packs, must be disposed of properly. In the US, go to www.rbc.org to find the nearest battery disposal site.

More information on R/C batteries can be found at Red Scholefield's R/C battery clinic at www.rcbatteryclinic.com and also at www.batteryuniversity.com.

30.5. Solderless power tube (SPT) battery packs:

The endcaps of the solderless power tubes can be damaged in hard crashes when the battery pack is ejected from the helicopter. These endcaps can be purchased separately from MEC.

My experience with the SPT battery packs is the battery terminals tend to oxidize as the batteries are heated and cooled. This oxidation results in increased resistance and the battery pack may appear to be weak.

I recommend disassembling the SPT battery packs about once a year and cleaning the battery terminals with a plastic household scouring pad. This will restore the performance of the battery pack

Chapter 31. Tweaking Helicopter Twitchiness

As a beginner, you may find that your helicopter is much too twitchy to comfortably learn hovering. Here are some tips to reduce the cyclic sensitivity and make hovering easier:

(Note that you can reverse any of these actions to increase the cyclic sensitivity for aerobatics later when you're ready, e.g. increase headspeed, increase swashplate mixing, decrease exponential, lighten the flybar paddles, etc.)

31.1. Reduce the headspeed (CP helis only)

Reducing the headspeed is good for multiple reasons; it gives longer flight times, and reduces damage if a crash occurs. Most non-micro helis are comfortably flyable down to about 1400 rpm of headspeed. Be sure to leave enough "climb-out" so you can correct a bad mistake.

31.2. Reduce the swashplate mixing

You can reduce the aileron/elevator mixing percentages in the swashplate mixing menu of your transmitter to reduce the amount of cyclic throw. Probably 10-20% of the total is the most you can safely reduce without losing too much cyclic control. Be sure to leave enough cyclic so you can correct a bad mistake.

31.3. Increase exponential on aileron/elevator

This will decrease the cyclic sensitivity around the stick center while still giving you full movement at the periphery of stick movement. Don't forget that increasing exponential is a larger negative number for Futaba radios and a larger positive number for JR radios. For other manufacturers please consult your owner's guide.

31.4. Add flybar weights

You can slide a shaft collar onto both sides of the flybar. The shaft collars can be slid in or out from the head to adjust the cyclic sensitivity.

As the shaft collars are slid away from the head, this increases the inertia of the flybar and makes the cyclic less sensitive. Make sure the shaft collars are at the same distance from the center of the head to avoid unbalancing the flybar.

Chapter 32. Your First Major Crash

"There are two kinds of helicopter pilots: those who have crashed, and those who *will* crash."

—probably a paraphrasing of a motorcycle quote

Your first major crash is the hardest crash, psychologically. My informal guess is over 80% of the people who "give up" on R/C helicopters do so after their first major crash.

However, everyone crashes. Even the best helicopter pilots such as Curtis Youngblood and Alan Szabo have crashed in public, and have been recorded on tape.

If you can get past the first major crash, then your chance of succeeding is fairly good.

Your helicopter may look like a pretzel. However, most helicopter crashes look much worse than they actually are. Also, if you have bought from a reputable dealer, then they will stock every single part of the helicopter individually, and you should be able to buy every single replacement part.

If the replacement cost of the individual parts exceeds the cost of a new kit, then you should buy a new kit and use the parts from the kit. This is rather rare, though.

Chapter 33. Maintenance & Crash Repair

33.1. Brushed motors w/carbon brushes

After every ten flights or so, the carbon dust should be blown out of the motor with compressed air and the commutator checked to see if it is clean. If the motor is assembled with screws and the commutator is dirty, disassemble the motor and burnish the commutator with some extra fine steel wool or 1000-1200 grit sandpaper.

33.2. Main rotor shaft bearings

Some helicopters (ECO, etc) have open-faced bearings. These bearings are not sealed, and because the ball-bearings are exposed, they can become contaminated with dirt and grit.

If you notice the main rotor shaft bearings grinding or not rotating smoothly, then they should be removed and cleaned in some good solvent or cleaned with compressed air. If they still sound or feel funny, they should be replaced.

33.3. Tail rotor shaft bearings

The tail rotor shaft bearings may incur damage if the tail blades touch the ground, especially on the ECO 8/16. They should also be checked periodically and cleaned or replaced if necessary.

33.4. Tail belt tension

Tail belts tend to loosen over time especially if the tail boom mount is loose. They should be checked and retensioned periodically.

33.5. Battery retaining o-rings

O-rings will last longer if they are unhooked from the battery mounts when not in use. If they are left under tension continuously, they will develop cracks over time. The o-rings should be checked periodically and replaced if necessary.

33.6. Main rotor blades

If the main rotor blades appear damaged do NOT fly with them. They can explode in flight which is very dangerous. You should replace any blades which appear damaged.

33.7. Corona specific maintenance:

- If you have a boom strike, the tail boom can be straightened by pushing a 3/8" dowel through the tail boom.
- If you let the Corona come down too fast it may "bounce" off the ground and break a main gear tooth and/or trash a bearing. So, the main gear should be checked periodically for missing teeth and the main rotor shaft bearings should be checked for smoothness.
- Be sure to check HS-81s for broken gear teeth after each hard crash. They may rotate properly through the whole rotation, but they may have a broken tooth somewhere.

I consider the HS-81 gears a "sacrificial" part...they break to prevent other things from being broken, and at \$3-\$5 a set they are fairly cheap.

33.8. Piccolo specific maintenance:

- There isn't much maintenance required on a Piccolo. The stock brushed motor (the 280 or 310) should last 300 flights or more without maintenance if properly broken-in.
- If the antirotation pin breaks off the swashplate but the stub is left, then it can be fixed with a small nylon tiwrap. Cut the tip from the tie-wrap and lash it the remnants of the antirotation pin by using several loops of cotton thread. After tying, put a drop of thin CA on the thread to harden it.

33.9. ECO 8/16 specific maintenance:

- The one-way bearing in both plastic and aluminum autorotation hubs has been known to become loose. Usually when this happens, the one-way bearing can be pushed out of the hub with firm finger pressure.

This can be easily fixed by roughing up the bearing and autorotation hub mating surfaces with 200 grit sandpaper and using thick CA to reassemble the unit.

- The tail blade grips (67542) should be checked periodically to make sure they are not too loose. If they are, be sure to unscrew them from the tail rotor hub and apply fresh loctite to the screw before reassembling.
- The main rotor shaft bolt (67599) is rather soft and can become bent in a hard crash. Be sure to check this bolt if the main rotor blades have hit anything. If the bolt is bent, be sure to replace it and do not fly with it.
- The battery holder O-rings (67587) will need to be replaced about once a year because they will start to crack. These can be replaced with the stock Ikarus parts or you may be able to find the O-rings(30mm ID x 3mm thick) cheaper elsewhere.

Chapter 34. Troubleshooting Common Problems

34.1. Motor ESC will not arm, or motor continues to run at zero throttle

- If you are using a Futaba transmitter, you will need to reverse the throttle channel on the transmitter.
- You may need to decrease the "zero throttle" endpoint to arm the ESC properly. This is a common problem with the Castle Creations ESCs, but also happens occasionally with the Schulze ESCs as well.

34.2. Short flight times and/or not enough power

- For brushed motors: the commutator may be dirty. See section on maintenance.
- Pinion meshing may be too tight. The pinion should not be firmly fitted against the main gear. The motor pinion should be able to wiggle just a tiny bit without turning the main gear.
- Motor pinion may be slipping on motor shaft. If your motor pinion uses a setscrew, then your motor should have a flat spot on the motor shaft so the setscrew will not slip on the motor shaft.

If the motor shaft has no flat spot for the setscrew to bite, then you should make one with a Dremel and a diamond cylinder point bit (#7123).

For the Piccolo using the stock motor (G280 or G310) and the plastic motor pinions, it may be necessary to glue the plastic pinion onto the motor shaft to prevent it from slipping.

34.3. Woodies may be trashed

Most larger wooden blades are made of a hardwood leading edge and a balsa trailing edge all shrinkwrapped together.

On hard crashes, the balsa part can be severely damaged but the blade looks fine due to the shrinkwrap holding the blade together.

If you look closely you may be able to see the breaks in the balsa. If you can see this, then the blade should be replaced.

34.4. Heli has excessive vibrations

If you follow these directions step-by-step, you should be able to solve most vibration problems.

The basic methodology is to keep removing parts from the helicopter until the vibration stops, and when the vibration stops the last piece you removed was causing the vibration problem.

- Check the obvious

Check if main gear mesh is too tight.

Check if the main gear is missing teeth.

Check if the tail belt is too loose or too tight.

- Check main blade tracking. Put a piece of marking tape on one blade and run up the motor. Check if the blades are tracking properly. If the blades do not track properly, then see the section on blade tracking.
- Check if the blade grip bolts are too tight. Hold the helicopter so the right side or left side is facing down, and see if the main rotor blades will stay horizontal to the ground. If they just barely stay horizontal then this is just right.
- Check main rotor blade CG and balance. Balance the main blades on a blade balancer and ensure the CGs match and the blades balance. If the CG does not match or the blades do not balance, then see the section on blade balancing.
- Check if the feathering shaft is bent. Disassemble the main rotor hub and remove the feathering shaft. Roll the feathering shaft on a sheet of glass to check if the shaft is bent. The Corona doesn't have a feathering shaft, and instead has an aluminum rod which holds the subrotor on the rotor hub. This rod is very thin and has a tendency to bend after a few crashes. You will notice this because the subrotor paddles will "droop down" and will not be parallel to each other. This problem can be easily fixed by carefully bending the subrotor paddles up to straighten the aluminum rod or by replacing the aluminum rod.
- Check if the rotor head is balanced. Reinstall the head and swashplate assembly but remove the main rotor blades. Connect the battery and slowly apply throttle. If the heli is vibrating then you should check if the flybar is straight and centered and balance the main rotor head using a Tru-spin prop balancer or equivalent.
- Check if the main shaft is bent. Remove the main rotor head, swashplate and all the related linkages. Run up the motor without the head and hold a screwdriver against the top of the shaft as the shaft turns. If you feel vibration while holding the screwdriver against the turning shaft, then the shaft is bent.

Alternatively remove the head and swashplate assembly and remove the main shaft. Roll the main shaft on a sheet of glass and check if the main rotor shaft is bent.

- Check the main rotor bearings. Remove the main shaft bearings from the helicopter. Put the main shaft through each bearing and spin it by hand. If the bearing does not rotate smoothly or feels gritty, then replace it.
- Check tail rotor blade balance

Reinstall the main rotor shaft and main gear, but do not reinstall the head and swashplate assembly. Remove the tail rotor blades and run up the helicopter. If the vibrations are gone, then the tail blades need to be balanced or replaced.

- Check the tail rotor bearings

Remove the tail shaft bearings from the helicopter. Put the tail shaft through each bearing and spin it by hand. If the bearing does not rotate smoothly or feels gritty, then replace it.

- Tail rotor hub balancing

If the vibrations remain, then the tail rotor shaft and hub need to be balanced. Put the entire assembly on a Tru-spin prop balancer or equivalent for balancing.

- Check for known problems for the heli model

Some helicopters models have known problems. For example, many Hummingbird CPs appear to have been shipped with warped head blocks (CNE205).

34.5. Heli "glitches" randomly due to radio interference

- If using a brushed motor, move the receiver and gyro farther away from the brushed motor and servos
- If using a brushless motor, move the receiver and gyro further away from the brushed motor controller
- Check all bearings on rotating parts. Bad bearings rotating at high speed can cause radio frequency interference.

34.6. Heli hovers slightly tilted to the right (or left)

This is normal. The helicopter will tilt slightly due to the thrust of the tail rotor.

34.7. Heli wobbles and is very unstable

- Your headspeed may be too low and you may be compensating for this by using more main motor pitch which makes the heli motor bog down and the heli unstable.
- Your rotor head may not be firmly attached to the main rotor shaft. This usually occurs when the hole in the rotor head is reamed out after multiple hard crashes. If the rotor head is not fitting snugly on the main rotor shaft, it should be replaced. This problem is seen on MS Hornets. because the E044 pivot support is fragile.

34.8. The blade tracking is fine at low speeds, but the blade tracking becomes worse at high head speeds.

- On a CP Piccolo, this is usually caused by a broken pitch arm base (68211). Visually inspect the two thin "legs" which are between the arms and the tube. One of the legs may have broken.
- The feathering shaft may be bent. Disassemble the head and put the feathering shaft in a drill and spin it to check if the shaft is bent.

34.9. Tail jerks around when spooling up with HH gyro

- The gyro may be too close to the ESC. On a non-micro heli, the gyro should be at least four inches away from the ESC.
- Tail belt may be twisted around. Removing the tail rotor assembly from the tail boom and make sure the tail drive belt isn't twisted.

34.10. Cyclic servos wiggle around

Cyclic servos wiggle around without joystick input when motor is running at or near hovering throttle

- This could be radio interference. Make sure your motor leads are short and routed away from the receiver.
- With a brushed motor, the motor brushes may be worn or the commutator may be dirty which causes radio interference.

Check your brushes and make sure they are in good condition and check the condition of the commutator.

34.11. Tail wags (hunts) constantly with HH gyro

- The gyro sensitivity may be set too high. Try lowering the gyro sensitivity (channel 5) until the wagging stops. A Logo 20 sized helicopter usually requires about 50% in AVCS mode (75% in ATV mode) for good performance. An ECO 8 usually requires the sensitivity to be about 30% in AVCS mode (which is 65% in ATV mode) to stop hunting. Smaller helis will require even lower sensitivity.
- The main gear or other gear may be missing a tooth. Visually inspect the teeth of all gears and verify they are all intact.
- Tail belt may be loose. The belt should be firm but not too tight.
- Excessive play in the tail pitch control system can cause tail wag. Make sure there are no loose screws/ball links/clevises in the tail pitch control system.(A little play is normal, but not too much)
- The tail rotor shaft may be dirty and the pitch slider may not be sliding smoothly on the shaft.

This is fairly easy to fix. Remove the tail rotor shaft and thoroughly remove all gunk using some tissue paper. A cotton swab stick is just under 2mm in diameter, so cut a cotton swab in half and use the two stick sides to clean the inside of the tail pitch slider.

Do *NOT* apply any oil to the tail pitch slider because it will become dirty extremely quickly. If lubrication is needed then use powdered graphite instead.

- The tail blade grip bearings may be dirty and/or damaged, or loctited to screw.
- The tail blade grip screw may be bent.
- Make sure the servo is mounted securely to the frame or tail boom mount. Check for loose or stripped screws.
- Make sure there are not rubber servo grommets used for the tail servo mounting. This can cause wag.
- Try replacing the tail servo. The potentiometer on some servos will wear quickly with constant movement, and this can cause wag.
- Check if the gyro is mounted securely to the frame. If the gyro is not mounted firmly with servo tape, then it can wobble back and forth which can cause wag.

The thick foam gyro tape supplied with the CSM LW200 has a very bad reputation for causing problems. The tape will tear across the middle of the foam core and cause the gyro to vibrate which causes tail wag.

This can be replaced with a thinner foam tape such as 3M Scotch double-sided foam tape part number MMM114.

- Tail servo may be missing teeth on a gear from previous crash damage.
- If using a GWS IPS motor with a 3x2 propeller for a tail, then the prop may be too large. Try trimming the propeller by a little to check if the tail wag decreases.

34.12. Tail swings 30-90 degrees abruptly then rights itself with HH gyro while hovering.

This could be caused by radio glitches. Make sure your motor leads are short and routed away from the receiver.

The radio receiver crystal may have been damaged in a previous crash. Try replacing the crystal or entire receiver.

The one-way bearing in the autorotation hub may be loose.

34.13. Tail servo responds in one direction only

Tail servo responds properly when tail swings one direction but tail servo fails to respond in other direction.

The gyro may be damaged.

34.14. Heli twitches randomly in roll/pitch/yaw

This can be caused by radio interference. This can be diagnosed by temporarily wrapping the radio or gyro in aluminum foil to see if the glitching stops. If the glitching stops, then this component is probably too close to the motor and/or ESC and should be moved to a different location.

34.15. Excessive tail vibration

If the tail is vibrating left/right (usually noticeable by looking at the vertical tail fin) then this is usually caused by problems in the main rotor system, such as a bent main rotor shaft or unbalanced main rotor blades.

If the tail is vibrating up/down, then this is usually caused by problems in the tail rotor system, such as a bent tail rotor shaft or damaged tail rotor blades.

- On a Corona, the gear on the hollow TR shaft (56633) can become chipped, and it's very hard to notice because the gear is inside the tail case. Try cleaning the old lithium grease out of the tail case with a Q-tip and check for orange pieces of plastic in the old grease. If you do find these plastic bits, then the TR shaft (56633) should be replaced.
- Tail vibration can be caused by tail blade holders being too tight. Some helicopter upgrade tail hubs promise "dual or triple ball bearings which remove all slop..." This is a bad idea.

Most variable-pitch tail rotors are designed as a flapping hinge rotor which require slop in the tail blade holder.

If this slop is removed, then this destroys the ability of the flapping hinge to equalize the thrust from both tail rotor blades. This causes high-speed vibrations which may weaken the tail blade holder screw and eventually shear it.

For more information on flapping hinges, search the web for the phrase "delta three angle" or go to the following URL: www.scotiabladerunners.ca/delta.htm

34.16. Tail drifts as battery discharges

Tail holds fine at the beginning of a flight, but starts to drift as the battery discharges. This is normal for a yaw rate gyro. Heading hold gyros do not have this problem.

34.17. Tail motor runs at low throttle

The heli tail runs even at low throttle when using a heading hold gyro and a tail motor. This is normal. The heading hold gyro does not output zero throttle unless it receives a full left rudder stick. This is why you need to hold full left rudder to initialize the tail ESC.

34.18. Motor does not start turning till about 40% throttle

If you are using a Castle Creations controller, then the controller is probably in auto calibrating throttle mode. This is not correct. See the Helicopter and Transmitter setup section for correct ESC programming parameters.

Chapter 35. Useful Equations

This is a section with various bits of math which are useful for calculating various parameters of helicopters.

35.1. Calculating headspeed

There are three steps to calculating the headspeed:

1. Calculate the motor rpm
2. Check the motor's maximum rated RPM.
3. Calculate the gear ratio

In order to calculate the motor RPM, you need to know two things: the motor Kv constant, and the battery voltage.

The Kv constant is the no-load RPM/V, or basically the RPM of the motor at a given voltage with no load. If you multiply this by the voltage, then the result is the motor speed at the voltage with no load.

As the helicopter takes off, the load on the motor will increase, so the motor RPM will drop by about 15%. So this unloaded RPM should be multiplied by about 0.85 to calculate the loaded motor RPM.

For example, a Hacker B50-18S has a Kv of 2006, so the no-load motor speed on 8 cells (9.6 volts) is: $2006 * 9.6 = 19257.6$ RPM. Under load the motor RPM will drop to about $19257.6 * 0.85 = 16369$ RPM.

The second step is to check the motor's maximum rated RPM. For the Hackers this is about 60,000 rpm, so 19257.6 RPM is well below the motor's maximum rated RPM.

The third step is to calculate the gear ratio. The ECO 8 has a 180 tooth main gear and if the motor pinion is 18 tooth, then the gear ratio will be 180:18 or 10:1.

The final headspeed will be the motor RPM multiplied by this gear ratio, multiplied by about 0.85 to simulate the loading effect of the main rotor blades.

So: 2006 (motor Kv) * 9.6 (battery voltage) * $0.85 = 16369$ RPM motor speed

$16369 * 180$ (main gear teeth) / 18 (motor pinion) = 1636.9 RPM head speed

35.2. Estimating amperage draw

Helicopters generally need about 100 watts per kg to hover. This can vary by about -20 to +100% depending on the drivetrain, blade airfoil, motor efficiency, headspeed, etc.

So, given the helicopter's weight and cells:

estimated amp draw = (helicopter AUW in grams) / voltage

An ECO 8 AUW is around 1500 grams, and uses 8 cells, so:

estimated amp draw = $1500 / (9.6 * 10) = 15.6$ amps

Note: This amperage figure is NOT the maximum required during hovering, only the average figure. For example, if you reduce power while hovering and the helicopter starts descending in its own downwash, then you will need substantially more current to halt the descent because the blades are less efficient in turbulent air. Therefore, you need a battery/ESC combo that can handle about twice the hovering current in order to have a reasonably safety margin for recovering from bad situations.

Note: The 100 watts/kg figure is very dependent on headspeed. This 100 watts/kg figure is reasonable for:

- FP wide bladed micros at 1200 rpm of head speed
- FP and CP narrow bladed microhelis at 2000 rpm of head speed
- nonmicro helis at 1400 rpm of head speed.

Power consumption is very dependent on motor and headspeed. For example:

ECO 8 w/Mega 16/25/3 @ 1400 rpm: 105 watts/kg

ECO 8 w/Mega 22/20/3 @ 1600 rpm: 174 watts/kg

Chapter 36. Electric Helicopter & Parts Vendors

These are vendors which are mentioned frequently on various popular Internet discussion forums. I do not necessarily endorse any vendors on this list. For brevity, any e-heli vendors who also stock servos/motors/etc. will not be listed again in the servos/motors/etc. section.

Lite Machines Corona and replacement parts

- (US) www.litemachines.com
- (US) www.roffeetvhobby.com
- (DE) www.rc-city.de

Mikado Logo 10

- (US) www.fxaeromodels.com
- (US) www.cyberheli.com
- (US) www.aero-model.com
- (DE) www.rc-city.de
- (HK) www.cyberheli.com
- (DE) www.nennos-helishop.de

Ikarus ECO Piccolo and Piccolo Fun

- (US) www.dreamhobbies.com
- (US) www.fxaeromodels.com
- (US) www.hobby-lobby.com
- (DE) www.rc-city.de
- (UK) www.modelhelicopters.co.uk

Ikarus ECO 8/16

- (US) www.dreamhobbies.com
- (US) www.fxaeromodels.com
- (US) www.hobby-lobby.com

- (DE) www.rc-city.de

MS Composit Hornet & Hornet II

- (US) www.fxaeromodels.com
- (US) www.edogfight.com
- (US) www.aeromicro.com
- (US) www.hobby-lobby.com
- (UK) www.skylinemodels.co.uk
- (DE) www.rc-city.de

Robbe Eolo R22

- (US) www.rchover.com
- (UK) www.rchelibits.co.uk

Quick EP 10 & Sweet 16

- (US) www.quickheli.com

Feda Skylark/Century Hummingbird/GWS Dragonfly

- (US) www.centuryheli.com
- (US) www.balsaproducts.com
- (US) www.gwsparts.com
- (UK) www.sussex-model-centre.co.uk

Motor vendors

- (US) www.towerhobbies.com
- (CA) www.icare-rc.com
- (US) www.megamotorusa.com
- (US) www.aveox.com

- (UK) www.overlander.co.uk
- (UK) www.puffinmodels.com
- (US) www.hackerbrushless.com
- (US) www.medusaproducts.com
- (JP) www.aircraft-world.com
- Also check the [RC Groups](#) sponsor links

ESC vendors

- (US) www.dionysusdesign.com
- (US) www.castlecreations.com
- (US) www.kontronikusa.com
- (US) www.hackerbrushless.com
- (DE) www.schulze-elektronik-gmbh.de
- (CZ) www.mgm-compro.cz

Servo vendors

- (US) www.servo-city.com
- (US) www.balsaproducts.com
- (US) www.nesail.com
- (US) www.towerhobbies.com
- (US) www.horizonhobby.com
- (US) www.shredair.com
- (US) www.hobbyclub.com
- (US) www.brucknerhobbies.com
- (UK) www.inwoodmodels.co.uk

Batteries and related supplies

- (US) www.dynamoelectronics.com
- (US) www.batterystation.com

- (US) www.eflightpacks.com
- (US) www.nicdlady.com
- (US) www.modelelectronicscorp.com
- (US) www.cheapbatterybags.com
- (US) www.edogfight.com
- (US) www.b-p-p.com
- (ES) www.rcmaterial.com
- (DE) www.orbitronic.de
- (DE) www.schulze-elektronik-gmbh.de

BEC manufacturers

- (US) www.koolflightsystems.com (UBEC)
- (US) www.firmtronics.com (SBEC)
- (ZM) www.medusaproducts.com

Main rotor blades

- (US) www.carbonblades.com (FP microheli)
- (US) www.like90.com (FP & CP microheli)

Carbon Fiber tubes and rods

- (US) www.cstsales.com
- (US) www.acp-composites.com
- (UK) www.atmayneline.com

Other Suppliers

- (US) www.microheli.com (Micro heli upgrades)
- (US) www.sparrowproducts.com (Micro heli upgrades)
- (US) www.ballistictechnology.com (Corona upgrades)

- (US) www.chopper-1.org (Corona upgrades)
- (US) www.jameco.com (Connectors, etc)
- (UK) www.maplin.co.uk (Connectors, LEDs etc.)
- (UK) www.modelfixings.co.uk (Bearings, screws etc.)
- (US) www.geocities.com/pierrehollis/microhelistarts1.htm (upgrades)
- (US) www.chopper-1.org (Corona upgrades)
- (US) www.heliworkz.com (Zoom upgrades)
- (JP) ks.jp.org (K&S aftermarket parts)
- (DE) www.wes-technik.de (micro parts)
- (DE) www.micro-heli.tuning.com (micro parts)

Hobby Associations

- www.ircha.org Int'l Radio Controlled Helicopter Assoc
- (US) www.modelaircraft.org Academy of Model Aeronautics
- (UK) www.bmfa.org British Model Flying Association
- (UK) www.befa.org.uk British Electric Flight Association

Useful Webpages & Forums

- www.rcgroups.com RCgroups discussion forums
- www.pgoelz.com Paul Goelz's Piccolo site
- www.logoheli.com Glen Peden's Logo site
- www.ikarus-germany.com Piccolo and ECO 8/16 forums
- www.rchelispot.com RC Helicopters in general
- www.dream-models.com ECO 8/16 information
- www.hornet-heli.com MS Composit Hornet Forums
- www.daddyhobby.com Singapore Helicopter forum
- [Brushless motor info:](#)
- [Helicopter rotor head dynamics:](#)

Aerobatics:

- 3-D Aerobatics
- Inverted

Magazines

- www.rotory.com Rotory
- www.modelheliworld.com Model Helicopter World
- www.mht.net Model Helicopter Technique
- www.rotorworld.co.uk Rotorworld

Chapter 37. Terminology

Glossary

120 CCPM	A type of CCPM using three servos arranged at equal 120 degrees from each other. The advantage of 120 CCPM is the load of the swashplate is evenly distributed across all three servos resulting in more precise control. 120 CCPM requires a special transmitter ("computer radio") which supports this mode.
90 CCPM	A type of CCPM using three servos arranged at 90 degrees to each other (and one spot empty). On an ECO 8/16 using 90 CCPM there is a servo at the left, right, and front positions of the swashplate.
3D flying	A maneuver which requires the constant harmonized input of three or more controls simultaneously during the maneuver.

There is a good discussion of this at runryder.com/helicopter/t6270p1

A

AR Pin	Antirootation pin.
AR Arm	Antirootation arm.
Autorotation	A controlled, unpowered helicopter descent (and landing). A helicopter is a brick with a rotor, so it doesn't glide well when unpowered. The autorotation is the closest to gliding possible. The autorotation consists of a steep descent using negative pitch to keep the rotor blades spinning followed by a slight flaring performed with positive pitch to convert the momentum of the blades into lift to soften the landing.
Autorotation Gear	Autorotation gear. A gear with a one-way bearing so the motor can only drive the main shaft in one rotational direction. Required for performing autorotations.
AR Gear	See Autorotation Gear
ATV	Adjustable Travel Volume. This is the amount of servo travel from one servo endpoint to the other. This can be reduced or increased by changing the servo endpoints.
AUW	All Up Weight. The weight of the heli when ready to fly, including batteries.
AVCS	Angular Vector Control System. Basically Futaba's own terminology for "heading hold". Their website describes it as "an advanced version of heading hold which doesn't have the

temperature related drift problems of most of the older HH gyros."

B

Ball-Link Pliers

A special plier made especially for handling ball links. It can quickly remove the ball joint from a ball link without damaging either part. One jaw has a U-shaped cut in it and the other jaw has a small cup on it to hold the ball joint.



Ball Link Pliers

BEC

Battery Eliminator Circuit.

On a nitro helicopter, there is a 4.8 volt "receiver pack" that powers the receiver, gyro, and servos. On an electric helicopter, we already have a very large battery which powers the main motor. However, the voltage of this main motor battery pack is typically more than 4.8 volts. So, the BEC will take the voltage of the main battery pack and regulate it down to 4.8 volts to power the receiver, gyro, and servos. This eliminates the need for a separate 4.8 volt receiver pack.

There are two types of BECs: linear BECs and switching BECs.

A linear BEC reduces the main battery voltage to 4.8 volts by applying a resistive load and wasting the excess power as heat. Therefore linear BECs are typically less than 50% efficient and become very warm or hot. A linear BEC will generate more heat (waste more power) as the input voltage rises, so linear BECs should not be used above ~10 volts.

A switching BEC will rapidly pulsing the main battery voltage to create an average voltage of 4.8 volts. This is typically more than 90% efficient and therefore switching BECs will run cooler than a linear BEC. The efficiency of the switching BEC stays fairly constant at higher voltages, so most switching BECs can be used with 35 volts of input or more.

Note: Most BECs are rated for 5 volts of output. The extra 0.2

volts will not harm the electronics equipment. From an electronics point of view, a 5 volt regulator is easier to build than a 4.8 volt regulator since the parts are more easily available, so most BECs output 5 volts instead.

Bell-Hiller Mixer	The seesaw arm on the head of a CCPM helicopter which isolates the height component of the swashplate position and controls the main blade pitch.
BL	Brushless, usually in the context of brushless motors.
Boom Strike	A type of helicopter crash where the main rotor blade hits the tailboom. This may dent/bend the tail boom and damage the main rotor blades

C

C-rate (1C, 2C, etc. charging & discharging rate)	This refers to a charging or discharging rate in terms of the capacity of the battery pack. For example, a 2C rate for a 2400 maH battery pack would be 4800 ma or 4.8 amperes. A 1/10 C rate for a 2400 maH battery pack would be 240 milliamperes.
Collective Pitch Compensator	The assembly with two seesaw arms directly above the swashplate
CCPM	Cyclic/Collective Pitch Mixing. A type of control system where the swashplate controls both main blade pitch and flybar pitch. The swashplate relative tilt controls the pitch of the flybar as the main rotor rotates, and the absolute height of the swashplate controls the pitch of the main rotor blades. See Also Mechanical mixing, Electronic Mixing.
Carbon Fiber	usually in the context of rotor blades, frames,tubes, rods, or sheets
CG, CofG, Center of Gravity	The point at which an object's center of mass appears to be; its balance point
Coning Angle	Some helicopters like the FP Piccolo are designed so the rotor blades are flexible and will bend upwards in flight. The amount which the blade bends upwards is called the coning angle. The coning effect is good for beginner helicopters because it makes hovering more stable, but is bad for forward flight because it makes the helicopter pitch up which makes forward flight difficult
CP	Collective Pitch. A helicopter that adjust vertical lift by changing the pitch of the main rotor blades.

D

Disc Loading	The weight of the helicopter divided by the rotor disc size
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Similar to the "wing loading" figure for airplanes. "High disc loading" means the helicopter is heavy for its rotor size, or conversely, the main rotor blades are short for its weight.

E

eCCPM	See Also CCPM.
eHeli	Electric Helicopter - hard to figure out, isn't it?
Electronic Mixing	A control system where the radio transmitter controls the mixing between the roll/pitch servos and the main rotor pitch servo. Also called colloquially eCCPM. See Also CCPM.
EPA	EndPoint Adjustment. This allows you to set the servo minimum and maximum positions.
ESC	Electronic Speed Control. Basically, the motor controller for brushed and brushless motors. There are two basic types of ESCs: brushed motor ESCs and brushless motor ESCs. A brushed motor ESC is basically a switching voltage regulator connected to the motor. It outputs a variable voltage which is proportionally relative to the throttle value. A brushless motor ESC is basically a three-phase AC motor controller. It electrically commutates the three phases of a brushless motor at a frequency proportional to the throttle value.
ESD	Electrostatic Discharge. This usually refers to the static electricity which builds up on the tail belt, most often on Logo 10s. Some people have reported "ball lighting" shooting away from Logo 10s on humid days.

F

Flybar	The metal or CF rod which holds the smaller paddles to the main rotor head
Flybar Paddles	The smaller blades (not the main rotor blades) on the main rotor of a helicopter.
FF	Forward Flight
FP	Fixed Pitch. A helicopter that adjusts altitude by changing the speed of the motor driving the main rotor

G

GE	Ground Effect. When a helicopter is hovering at approximately less than one rotor length above the ground, the heli will become a little more skittish, as though it is trying to balance on a ball. This is the ground effect
GF	Glass fiber (fiberglass) usually in the context of rotor blades.
Governor, Govenor Mode	<p>A feature of an ESC which will try to keep the motor speed constant despite variable load placed on the motor. This is like the cruise control on a car as it's going up and down hills. Even though the load on the motor is variable as the car goes up and down hills, the cruise control will try to maintain the same speed. The governor mode on an ESC will try to do something similar. Even if the heli is doing wild maneuvers and the load on the main rotor blade is highly variable, it will try to maintain a constant head speed.</p> <p>If using a governor mode, the throttle curve should not be set to 100%. This is because the governor mode needs a little bit of extra power so it can maintain headspeed. Using the cruise control analogy, if you set the cruise control of a car to its maximum speed the cruise control cannot maintain the maximum speed going up hills. Similarly, if you set the throttle to 100% RPM then the governor mode will not be able to maintain it when the rotor is heavily loaded.</p> <p>This is why the motor pinion should be selected so the desired headspeed can be achieved at 90 to 95% of the throttle - so the governor mode can work properly.</p>

H

Heading Hold Gyro	A gyro which attempts to "lock" the heading of the gyro and keep the helicopter pointed in the same direction until you choose to turn it via the rudder. See Also Yaw-Rate Gyro.
HH	Heading Hold (gyro)
HS Head Speed	The RPM of the main rotor. Most nonmicro helicopters need between 1200-2000 RPM of headspeed to fly. If the headspeed is too low, then the heli will not lift off or will require extra pitch to fly, which will make the heli very unstable. For aerobatics, most people raise their headspeed to about 1800-20000 RPM. Most helicopter rotor hubs are only rated for a maximum of 2000 RPM. If you exceed 2000 RPM, this places excessive stress on the main rotor hub and the heli is likely to throw a blade
Hunting	See Also Wag.

I

Idle-up Mode A transmitter mode which has a different throttle and pitch curve than the regular mode. For electric helicopters, we normally use the "normal" mode to arm the ESC and spool up the helicopter, and use an idle-up mode with a flat throttle setting for regular flying.

Some transmitters have multiple idle-up modes. For example, the Futaba 9C has idle-up1, idle-up2, and idle-up3 modes. The additional idle-up modes can be programmed for a low headspeed for duration flight, high headspeed with full negative pitch range for aerobatics, etc.

K

Kv The no-load RPM per volt of the motor. For example, if a motor is rated at Kv = 3000 and is being run on a 10 cell (12 volt) battery, then the motor will spin at 36,000 rpm. The headspeed can then be calculated by calculating the gear reduction ratio of the pinion/main gear combination. This is very important because a helicopter only flies well in a certain range of headspeed.

L

Lead/Lag bolt The bolt which allows the main rotor blades to swing horizontally so it can either lead (swing ahead) or lag (swing behind) the main rotor head.

LHS Local Hobby Shop

Loctite A threadlocking adhesive used to ensure screws do not unscrew themselves. Technically, it is an anaerobic adhesive.

Loctite 242 (blue) is removable and used for screws which may require removal later to repair crash damage.

Loctite 262 (red) is permanent and used for screws which will never require removal. If you wish to disassemble parts which have been loctited, then you should weaken the adhesive first by heating the metal parts to about 212F/100C. This can be easily done by touching the metal parts with a hot soldering iron or a hair dryer.

LVC The low-voltage cutoff point of the ESC, if it has one. For a heli, you want an ESC with no or very low LVC

When the battery voltage drops down to the low-voltage cutoff point, the ESC will either stop or throttle down the main motor, which is undesirable for a helicopter. For a heli, you want an ESC with no or very low LVC.

M

mCCPM	See Also Mechanical mixing.
Mechanical mixing	A type of control system where the roll/pitch and main blade pitch are not mixed at the transmitter but are instead mixed mechanically at the helicopter. JR transmitter manuals refer to this as mCCPM. See Also CCPM.
Micro Helicopter	This is a rather subjective term, but in this guide it refers to any helicopter under 400 grams AUW. This includes the Ikarus Piccolos, MS Hornets, Century Hummingbird, Feda, GWS Dragonfly, MIA Housefly, Wes-Technik Helistar LH35, etc.

O

Outrunner motor	A motor where the outside of the can rotates. This is also called "rotating can" or "external rotor" by some distributors.
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P

Pusher tail rotor	A tail rotor that pushes air away from the tail boom. Most helicopters including the Corona, ECO 8, Logo 10 use a pusher tail rotor. See Also Tractor tail rotor.
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R

Revo mix/Revo mixing	A mixer which adds a percentage of the main rotor throttle to the tail rotor throttle to prevent the heli from spinning. This is only used with yaw rate (non-heading hold) gyros because the yaw rate gyro only dampens tail movement and cannot maintain the direction of the tail. If using a heading hold gyro, this option should be DISABLED on the transmitter
RFI	Radio Frequency Interference. RFI causes little "glitches" in your control and the heli will twitch abruptly in one direction or another and/or the tail may suddenly jerk around.

S

Slop	The amount of "free play" in a control system. A common example of this is a door knob. If you gently twist the doorknob back and forth, you can feel a few degrees of looseness before the internal mechanism engages. These few degrees of looseness is the sloppiness or "slop" in the mechanism.
Swashplate	The control mechanism component which mechanically joins the non-rotating control portions to the rotating control portions of the main rotor.

T

Threadlock	See Also Loctite.
Throttle Hold (switch)	For electric helicopters, this switch is usually set to force a zero throttle setting regardless of the throttle stick position. This is useful as a safety switch to prevent the motor from spooling up while connecting the battery, and also to quickly kill the motor when the helicopter is crashing when using an idle-up mode.
Throw a Blade	Refers to a main rotor blade being flung off the rotor head (usually with the blade grip) at very high speed while the head is spinning. This is very, very dangerous.
TL Translational Lift	The extra lift produced by the main rotor when a helicopter is moving horizontally or when hovering in windy conditions. When a helicopter stops moving horizontally it tends to drop, because it loses the extra lift.
TR	Tail rotor
Tractor tail rotor	A tail rotor that pulls air towards the tail boom. The Hummingbird Elite series uses a tractor tail rotor. See Also Pusher tail rotor.

W

Wag	A rhythmic back-and-forth tail movement that will not stop. This may occur with heading hold gyros when the setup is not correct. In this case, the gyro overshoots the correct tail position, so it constantly keeps moving the tail.
Woodies	Wooden main rotor blades

Y

Yaw-Rate Gyro	A type of gyro which dampens but not eliminates unwanted yaw rotation. If a gust of wind blows the tail of a helicopter with a yaw-rate gyro, the gyro will make the tail rotor 'push back' against the wind to reduce the amount of unwanted tail movement, but since it does not keep track of total tail movement, it cannot return the tail back to its original position. See Also Heading Hold Gyro.
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