

Solo Flight: Scanning the Instruments

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(From Chapter 2 in Rod Machado's Instrument Pilot's Survival Manual. For more information about Rod and his publication, visit his [Flight Simulator Partner](#) article)

There are three essential steps in the effective instrument scanning process. They are to be executed every time a major attitude change is made. All three steps should take approximately 10 to 15 seconds to complete. Here are the steps of the scan, in the order they should be done:

- Step 1: Select attitude, power, trim, and confirm
- Step 2: Radial scan the primary instruments
- Step 3: Trim using the VSI and monitor the Big-6

Essentially, the airplane is put in the desired attitude, power is adjusted and an initial twist of trim is applied to hold the airplane in this attitude. The correct operation of the most critical instruments is checked by a confirmation process. The primary instruments are then scanned in an organized fashion, and small corrections are made to fine tune the airplane to the proper attitude. The final trim adjustments are made, and the airplane's new attitude is monitored on the six main panel instruments, otherwise known as the BIG-6. This is the big picture of how the instruments are scanned in this three-step process. The specific details and reasons for each of the three steps follow.

- [Step 1 of the scan](#)
- [Step 2 of the scan](#)
- [Step 3 of the scan](#)

After reading about each step, click **Fly This Lesson Now** to practice your scanning technique in the cockpit.

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