

A Day in the Life of a Commercial Pilot

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Commercial Pilots have an opportunity to travel all over the world, spend years building their careers from the ground up, and have a chance at a life others only dream of. After years of [flight training](#) and fulfilling required flying hours, commercial pilots are some of the most esteemed and respected people in the sky.

Personality

Pilots are charming, prestigious, responsible, and adventurous. Since pilots travel to different time zones, climates, and cultures on a daily basis, their personal regimens are demanding.

Pilots are required to calmly handle emergency situations. They must have good vision, hearing, and reflexes. These types of responsibilities have their benefits too, commercial pilots are paid significantly higher than other pilots and represent approximately 60% of all employed pilots.

Commercial pilots fly large aircrafts, like Boeing 707's or 747's that can carry 200 passengers on average.

Seniority is everything in this business, so young aspiring pilots should do well to learn everything they can from their senior pilots.

The Routine

The following is a sample routine of a commercial pilot and flight engineer:

Pilots check in with operations about an hour before departure. They receive the weather for departure and destination as well as the flight plan.

At the assigned gate, they walk the jetway to the plane and stow their belongings. They check the aircraft logbook to see if maintenance has signed off the aircraft.

Next is the cockpit inspection. Circuit breakers and switches checked and on. Fire Axe and life vests on board, extinguishers charged, PBE sealed. Headsets and proper numbers on board.

Next are the systems checks. These include fuel, hydraulic, fire detection, suppression, electrical, etc.

Then the pilots check the pitot probes, landing gear, tires, engines, APU extinguisher pressure, engines, cowling latches, vortex generators, and lights. They check for fuel or hydraulic leaks.

There is a before starting engine checklist and then after the passengers are on board and clearance is granted, there is an after start checklist. Then the pilot moves to the runway.

Once clear of the runway, they extend their flaps and check flight controls, and run taxi and before takeoff checklists.

Then the continuous ignition is on and the power is advanced to takeoff power. Climb power is set and through 10,000 feet.

The Schedule

Here is a sample schedule posted by a pilot on a [civil aviation discussion forum](#):

Depending on my schedule I have off between 13-17 days a month, the days I work are spent away from home in a hotel.

For December I ended up with 12 days off because I wanted to be sure to get Christmas off.

We typically fly the same sequence of trips week after week for a month. This month my sequence is:

- Day 1 ATL-MLI-ATL-TOL (1pm-10:30pm, hotel)
- Day 2 TOL-ATL-MCO (5pm-12am, hotel)
- Day 3 MCO-ATL-LGA-ATL (1pm-9:30pm, home)
- Day 4 ATL-BOS-ATL (1pm-8pm, home)

Most airlines allow crewmembers to drop and trade trips to allow for more flexibility.

Let's say I had tickets for a show and I end up being scheduled to work on that day. I can offer to work a different trip in exchange for dropping the original one.