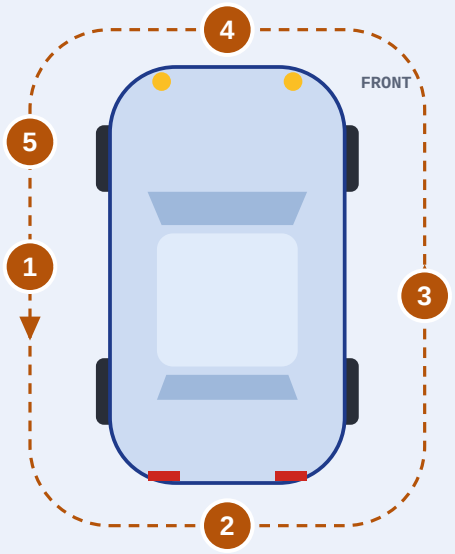
START TODAY · 10 MINUTES · FREE

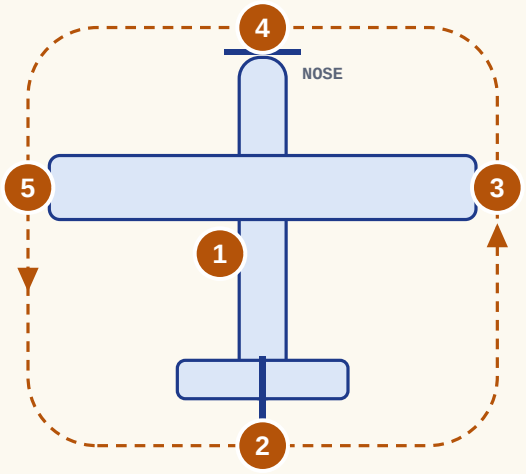
Preflight your car

Pilots walk around the airplane before every flight, in the same order, with a checklist. Walk your car the way the Cessna 172 manual walks the airplane, and you have started training.

YOUR CAR · START AT THE DRIVER'S DOOR



A CESSNA 172 · START AT THE CABIN DOOR



The 172N manual walks this loop in eight steps, from the Cabin around to the Left Wing, grouped into five stops here. 172N POH, Section 4.

	YOUR CAR (THE SAME STOP ON A 172)		WHAT THE PILOT CHECKS THERE
1	**Driver's door** (Cabin) Door-jamb sticker: seats, most weight in people and cargo, tire pressures. Owner's manual in the glovebox. Key to ON for one minute, engine off: name every warning light, then key out.	☐	*Control wheel lock off, ignition and avionics off, master on to read the fuel gauges, then off. Baggage door.*
2	**Rear of the car** (Empennage) With a helper: tail lights, brake lights, turn signals. Trunk latched. Nothing hanging or leaking underneath.	☐	*Rudder gust lock off, tail tie-down off, the control surfaces free and secure.*
3	**Right side** (Right wing) Both tires on this side: pressure, tread, cuts. Mirror and glass. The fuel door, if it is on this side: grade, cap tight.	☐	*Aileron, wing tie-down off, main tire, a fuel sample for water and grade, the fuel checked by eye, the cap.*
4	**Front of the car** (Nose) Hood up, engine off and cool: pull the oil dipstick, wipe it, check the level. Headlights. Windshield clean.	☐	*Oil on the dipstick (never under four quarts), fuel strainer drained, propeller, landing light, air filter, nose tire, tie-down, static port.*
5	**Left side** (Left wing) Both tires on this side. Mirror and glass. The fuel door, if it is on this side. Back at the door: done.	☐	*Tire and fuel as on the right; pitot cover off, fuel vent, stall-warning opening (a suction check), tie-down, aileron.*

A parked exercise, start to finish.

Level ground, engine off and cool, parking brake set, nobody near the car. Key out and in your pocket, except for the one-minute ignition-on light check at stop 1.

Never open a hot radiator or touch a hot engine. Under 16? Do it with an adult.

Read each line out loud and tick it. Write numbers, not "fine." Same order, every time.

Next: Lesson 2 of the free guide Driving to flying. Scan the code.

THE FREE GUIDE

Pilot Career Solutions teaches in ground and simulator settings only, never in a real aircraft.