



# Getting your model flying fix in winter - Indoors

**DON'T YOU JUST** love winter – not! Cold, wet and windy outdoor conditions are just not compatible with flying radio controlled model aircraft and during the middle of winter, summer can seem so far away. Usually the only way to get some hours on the transmitter is by using a flight simulator to keep your flying skills honed.

However, there is still a way to fly real models and get together with fellow flyers for a few hours. During winter, many model flying clubs hold indoor events, providing a good opportunity to socialise and participate in a different type of model flying than club members may be used to. Indoor flying events are very popular in Europe and Northern Hemisphere countries where flying outdoors in winter just isn't an option.

Indoor flying is quite different to regular outdoor flying. Obviously, the aircraft itself is a lot smaller with a more restricted flying area to manoeuvre in. The original indoor model was a scratch built balsa and paper, ultra light, free flight aircraft. These small and delicate craft, once hand launched, appear to float through the air, carried along by the upwards thermal air currents

within the indoor flying area. Designed to fly within the restricted areas of school gyms, warehouses, and arenas, these models can remain in the air for long periods, just gently wafting around before landing in an equally calm manner.

Another type of indoor model is powered by rubber bands. They are also a 'Free Flight' aircraft and, like the glider types, fly without any radio controls. A tweak to the rudder prior to launch dictates the direction they will fly in.

Though very different from flying outdoor sports sized planes, indoor model flying can be equally enjoyable.

Indoor flying, perhaps because it is a less public pastime than outdoor flying, is generally considered a fringe sector of the model flying scene. It is however, becoming more and more popular. This is largely due to radio controlled components having become smaller, lighter, cheaper and more accessible.

Advances in electric motors and batteries have meant that indoor models are able to be made smaller, lighter, carry more power and enjoy longer flight times – all of which makes this avenue of the sport more

**Contributed by Janice Angus**

attractive to a wider group of people.

It is now possible to buy straight off the shelf, ready to fly indoor or micro models that come complete with batteries and chargers. The only additional hardware required is a transmitter. These models are often made of EPO (a robust type of polystyrene) which means they can withstand hitting walls and other obstacles without suffering major damage. In many cases, a quick application of "foam friendly" super glue is all that is needed to repair any damage and get your plane back in the air after a mishap.

Both fixed and rotary wing indoor models are available. These extend from a docile Cub to a nippy Mustang or a nimble helicopter. If you want something less conventional, a remote controlled bird, complete with flapping wings and chirping sounds may

appeal. You just need to make sure that the aircraft you buy is suitable for the site you will be flying in.

The most common venues are school gymnasiums, public sports halls and empty



Ned Verrall hand launching his glider – indoor flying is great for all age groups.



A Bird in the Hand – Mike Knowles with his flapping bird, complete with tweet.



An indoor UFO – this novel aircraft is controlled by an iPad, not a conventional transmitter and is very stable and easy to fly.

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aircraft hangers. These all vary in size and can present their own types of flying challenges – walls tend to jump out when you least expect them and being able to fly your model within the available space may take a bit of practice.

It is quite common at indoor model flying events to have allotted times for specific types of aircraft to fly at once. Having a confined space with 20 or so aircraft in the air altogether is not always conducive to safe flying and care is required to avoid damage to people and aircraft.

Flying inside where it's warm and dry is a lot of fun especially when it is raining cats and dogs outside. If the thought appeals and you want to find out more about what events might be scheduled in your area then contact your local model aero club.

**KiwiFlyer** is published every two months by Kiwi Flyer Limited.  
**Editor:** Michael Norton  
**Subscription rates:** KiwiFlyer is delivered free to every NZ aircraft operator and aviation document holding business. Others may subscribe for just \$25 (6 issues).  
**All correspondence or enquiries to:**  
 Kiwi Flyer Limited, PO Box 72-841, Papakura, Auckland 2244.  
 Phone: 0800 KFLYER (0800 535 937) Fax: (09) 929 3079  
 Email: editor@kiwiflyer.co.nz Web: www.kiwiflyer.co.nz  
**Advertising deadline** for the October / November issue is 7th October.  
 A rate card is available from www.kiwiflyer.co.nz  
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 KiwiFlyer is printed by GEON & distributed by Gordon & Gotch. ISSN 1170-8018

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