

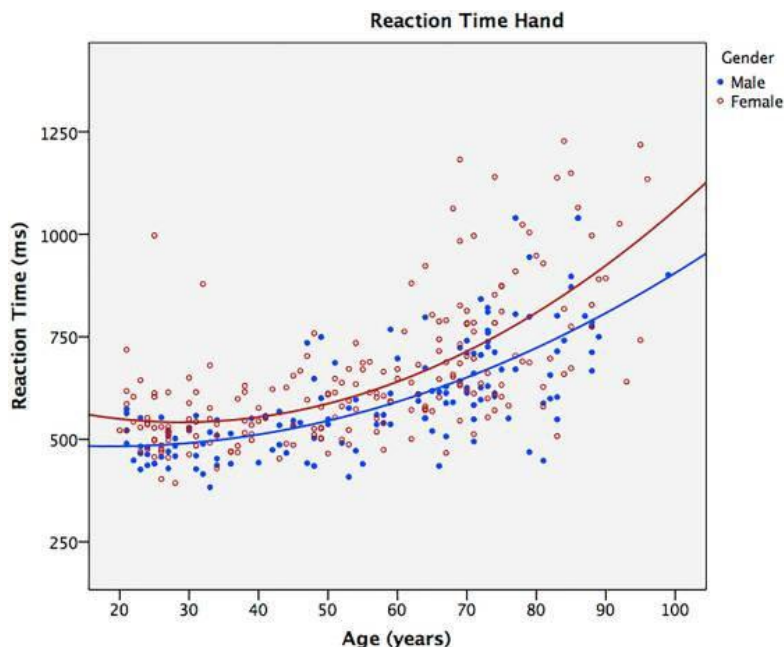


Reaction Time & the Senior R/C Pilot

--David P. Andersen & Roy Maynard

During WW1, the German Luftwaffe ran experiments to determine criteria for fighter pilots. One of their experiments measured reaction time. They found that the fastest reaction time began at age 14. Recent experiments on automobile drivers showed that reaction time and decision times begin to decline at age 24.

Reaction time and the speed at which we make decisions are especially important for us R/C modelers, especially for tasks like takeoffs and landings. It is not uncommon to hear senior modelers complain about losing their ability to land. Modelers in their 80's and 90's are not uncommon but not all people slow with age.



In addition, prescription and over-the-counter medications can slow reflexes.

Here are some suggestions for elderly RC pilots to deal with their slowed reflexes

- Avoid flying while other models are in the air. Distractions slow responses. And keeping the plane closer allows you to see it better.
- Ask a skilled flying companion to do the take-offs and landings.
- Fly with a spotter who can take control if needed.
- Fly slower and more stable airplanes perhaps with high wings, dihedral and a flat bottom airfoil. Consider including a gyro to correct for turbulence and cross winds.
- For scale modelers, select models of trainers. They tend to be more forgiving as were their full size counterparts.
- Avoid complex maneuvers. Devote your flight to flybys and single loops and rolls.
- Maintain a safe altitude. The old expression is "fly at least two mistakes high." Well, maybe one is enough.

For more information on driver and pilot reaction times Google "reaction time and age."