

The Flying Electrons Inc.

R/C Airplane Startup Expense Estimate

How often have you seen or heard about radio control aircraft and wondered, "How much does it cost to get started in R/C?" The following is a break down of items and costs.

The first item to consider is the aircraft. Although most dream of flying a P-51 Mustang or an F-14 Tomcat, the reality is you are going to have to start out with a trainer type aircraft. Trainer aircraft feature a high-wing configuration for stability, which makes the training easier.

Following is a fairly thorough list of items required to make a .40 size airplane ready for flight;

- Airplane Kit
- Engine
- Radio Control System
- Glue and Covering Material
- Control Rods
- Hinges
- Wheels
- Fuel and Fuel Tank
- Basic field equipment
- Basic building equipment.

This list represents an airplane that would need to be constructed from a kit, as opposed to an almost-ready-to-fly (ARF) model.

An ARF is typically pre-built from balsa and plywood, just like a kit, and is pre-covered. On average an ARF may require about 15-20 hours of assembly time and actually cost less than a kit to build because you don't need covering or most of the miscellaneous items such as fuel tank, wheels, hinges, etc. If you are looking for a quick way to start flying an ARF is the way to go.

Most people already possess basic building equipment, so that cost is minimized. Basic field equipment includes:

- Glow plug battery connector & charger
- Manual fuel pump
- Electric starter
- 12 volt battery and charger.

A cost estimate of a kit-built airplane and field package is approximately \$450. An ARF model would be slightly less. This includes the airplane, radio, engine, field kit (including electric starter), battery, fuel pump, glow plug heater, fuel and a flight box.

The Electrons ask that anyone interested in model aviation please seek out a club and get instruction from an experienced modeler. It is extremely difficult, not to mention expensive to try and learn how to fly without one.

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