Runway alternation programme – 2024 landings

For the communities living beneath the flight paths used by incoming aircraft, runway alternation provides predictable periods of noise relief.

At its heart, runway alternation is straightforward: for part of the day we use one runway for landings and the other for take-offs. Halfway through the day we switch over. If you were living or working under an incoming flight path during the morning, you're unlikely to be under one during the afternoon. And vice versa.

To help our neighbours plan ahead, we produce this annual schedule of runway alternation. Although we do our best to adhere to the programme, it's not always possible. Sometimes delays mean some arrivals can land out of the alternation pattern, or occasionally we have to suspend runway alternation due to bad weather or emergency repairs to one of the runways.

Day-time runway alternation

Day-time runway alternation happens only when we're on what's known as 'westerly operations'. During westerly operations the wind usually blows from the west and aircraft arrive from the east over London. Westerly operations account for about 70% of the year at Heathrow.

At Heathrow, 'day-time' runs from 06:00 till the last aircraft departs at the end of the day. The halfway point – the time when we switch runways – is 15:00.

Day-time runway codes

The day-time schedule uses the runway codes 27R and 27L.

Northern runway 27R

Southern runway 27L

27R = aircraft approaching the northern runway from the east
27L = aircraft approaching the southern runway from the east

Day-time runway alternation

Date (week commencing)	06:00 - 15:00	15:00 until last departure	Date (week commencing)	06:00 - 15:00	15:00 until last departure
1 Jan	27R	27L	8 Jul	27L	27R *
8 Jan	27L	27R	15 Jul	27R	27L
15 Jan	27R	27L *	22 Jul	27L	27R
22 Jan	27L	27R *	29 Jul	27R	27L *
29 Jan	27R	27L	5 Aug	27L	27R *
5 Feb	27L	27R	12 Aug	27R	27L
12 Feb	27R	27L *	19 Aug	27L	27R
19 Feb	27L	27R *	26 Aug	27R	27L *
26 Feb	27R	27L	2 Sep	27L	27R *
4 Mar	27L	27R	9 Sep	27R	27L
11 Mar	27R	27L *	16 Sep	27L	27R
18 Mar	27L	27R *	23 Sep	27R	27L *
25 Mar	27R	27L	30 Sep	27L	27R *
1 Apr	27L	27R	7 Oct	27R	27L
8 Apr	27R	27L *	14 Oct	27L	27R
15 Apr	27L	27R *	21 Oct	27R	27L *
22 Apr	27R	27L	28 Oct	27L	27R *
29 Apr	27L	27R	4 Nov	27R	27L
6 May	27R	27L *	11 Nov	27L	27R
13 May	27L	27R *	18 Nov	27R	27L *
20 May	27R	27L	25 Nov	27L	27R *
27 May	27L	27R	2 Dec	27R	27L
3 Jun	27R	27L *	9 Dec	27L	27R
10 Jun	27L	27R *	16 Dec	27R	27L *
17 Jun	27R	27L	23 Dec	27L	27R *
24 Jun	27L	27R	30 Dec	27R	27L
1 Jul	27R	27L *			

* Single runway operations are expected overnight on the northern runway from approx. 22:30 (Sunday night to Friday morning) during southern runway resurfacing. Please see our X channel **@HeathrowRunways** or **www.heathrow.com/runwayresurfacing** for updates.

We use both runways for arrivals between 06:00 and 07:00 because this hour is the busiest time of day for arrivals into Heathrow.

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Night-time runway alternation

Since so few aircraft take off or land at night, there's more scope for runway alternation. It doesn't matter whether aircraft are coming in to land from the east or the west, we can still alternate runways.

That flexibility gives us the ability to operate night-time runway alternation on a four-weekly cycle.

- **Week 1**: Aircraft fly in from the west to land on the northern runway
- **Week 2**: Aircraft fly in from the east to land on the northern runway
- **Week 3**: Aircraft fly in from the west to land on the southern runway
- **Week 4**: Aircraft fly in from the east to land on the southern runway.

Since weather conditions could interfere with this pattern, we always specify a primary and a secondary (alternative) runway in our schedule. The secondary runway is not actually a different runway. It's the primary runway approached from the opposite direction.

Night-time runway codes

The night-time schedule uses the runway codes 09L, 27R, 09R and 27L.

Northern runway
09L ————— 27R

Southern runway
09R ————— 27L

09L = aircraft approaching the northern runway from the west
27R = aircraft approaching the northern runway from the east
09R = aircraft approaching the southern runway from the west
27L = aircraft approaching the southern runway from the east

Night-time runway alternation (from after the last departure until 06:00am)

Date (week commencing)	Runway to be used (primary)	Alternative (secondary)	Date (week commencing)	Runway to be used (primary)	Alternative (secondary)
1 Jan	09L	27R	8 Jul	27L *	09R *
8 Jan	27R	09L	15 Jul	09L	27R
15 Jan	09R *	27L *	22 Jul	27R	09L
22 Jan	27L *	09R *	29 Jul	09R *	27L *
29 Jan	09L	27R	5 Aug	27L *	09R *
5 Feb	27R	09L	12 Aug	09L	27R
12 Feb	09R *	27L *	19 Aug	27R	09L
19 Feb	27L *	09R *	26 Aug	09R *	27L *
26 Feb	09L	27R	2 Sep	27L *	09R *
4 Mar	27R	09L	9 Sep	09L	27R
11 Mar	09R *	27L *	16 Sep	27R	09L
18 Mar	27L *	09R *	23 Sep	09R *	27L *
25 Mar	09L	27R	30 Sep	27L *	09R *
1 Apr	27R	09L	7 Oct	09L	27R
8 Apr	09R *	27L *	14 Oct	27R	09L
15 Apr	27L *	09R *	21 Oct	09R *	27L *
22 Apr	09L	27R	28 Oct	27L *	09R *
29 Apr	27R	09L	4 Nov	09L	27R
6 May	09R *	27L *	11 Nov	27R	09L
13 May	27L *	09R *	18 Nov	09R *	27L *
20 May	09L	27R	25 Nov	27L *	09R *
27 May	27R	09L	2 Dec	09L	27R
3 Jun	09R *	27L *	9 Dec	27R	09L
10 Jun	27L *	09R *	16 Dec	09R *	27L *
17 Jun	09L	27R	23 Dec	27L *	09R *
24 Jun	27R	09L	30 Dec	09L	27R
1 Jul	09R *	27L *			

* De-alternation to the northern runway is expected overnight (Sunday night to Friday morning) during southern runway resurfacing. Please see our X channel @HeathrowRunways or www.heathrow.com/runwayresurfacing for updates.

Please note: There is a transitional period from a Sunday to Monday morning – this means that Monday morning flights before 06:00 will still be following the previous week's runway pattern.

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