



Runway alternation programme – 2016 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.

Daytime 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
4 Jan	27L	27R
11 Jan	27R	27L
18 Jan	27L	27R
25 Jan	27R	27L
1 Feb	27L	27R
8 Feb	27R	27L
15 Feb	27L	27R
22 Feb	27R	27L
29 Feb	27L	27R
7 Mar	27R	27L
14 Mar	27L	27R
21 Mar	27R	27L
28 Mar	27L	27R
4 Apr	27R	27L
11 Apr	27L	27R
18 Apr	27R	27L
25 Apr	27L	27R
2 May	27R	27L
9 May	27L	27R
16 May	27R	27L
23 May	27L	27R
30 May	27R	27L
6 Jun	27L	27R
13 Jun	27R	27L
20 Jun	27L	27R
27 Jun	27R	27L

Date (week commencing)	06:00 - 15:00	15:00 until last departure
4 Jul	27L	27R
11 Jul	27R	27L
18 Jul	27L	27R
25 Jul	27R	27L
1 Aug	27L	27R
8 Aug	27R	27L
15 Aug	27L	27R
22 Aug	27R	27L
29 Aug	27L	27R
5 Sep	27R	27L
12 Sep	27L	27R
19 Sep	27R	27L
26 Sep	27L	27R
3 Oct	27R	27L
10 Oct	27L	27R
17 Oct	27R	27L
24 Oct	27L	27R
31 Oct	27R	27L
7 Nov	27L	27R
14 Nov	27R	27L
21 Nov	27L	27R
28 Nov	27R	27L
5 Dec	27L	27R
12 Dec	27R	27L
19 Dec	27L	27R
26 Dec	27R	27L



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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.

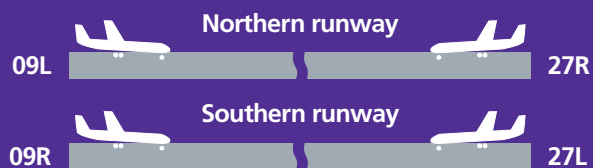
That flexibility gives us the ability to operate night-time runway alternation on a four-weekly cycle.

- **Week 1:** Aircraft fly in from the west to land on the southern 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 northern 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.



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)
4 Jan	27L	09R
11 Jan	09L	27R
18 Jan	27R	09L
25 Jan	09R	27L
1 Feb	27L	09R
8 Feb	09L	27R
15 Feb	27R	09L
22 Feb	09R	27L
29 Feb	27L	09R
7 Mar	09L	27R
14 Mar	27R	09L
21 Mar	09R	27L
28 Mar	27L	09R
4 Apr	09L	27R
11 Apr	27R	09L
18 Apr	09R	27L
25 Apr	27L	09R
2 May	09L	27R
9 May	27R	09L
16 May	09R	27L
23 May	27L	09R
30 May	09L	27R
6 Jun	27R	09L
13 Jun	09R	27L
20 Jun	27L	09R
27 Jun	09L	27R

Date (week commencing)	Runway to be used (primary)	Alternative (secondary)
4 Jul	27R	09L
11 Jul	09R	27L
18 Jul	27L	09R
25 Jul	09L	27R
1 Aug	27R	09L
8 Aug	09R	27L
15 Aug	27L	09R
22 Aug	09L	27R
29 Aug	27R	09L
5 Sep	09R	27L
12 Sep	27L	09R
19 Sep	09L	27R
26 Sep	27R	09L
3 Oct	09R	27L
10 Oct	27L	09R
17 Oct	09L	27R
24 Oct	27R	09L
31 Oct	09R	27L
7 Nov	27L	09R
14 Nov	09L	27R
21 Nov	27R	09L
28 Nov	09R	27L
5 Dec	27L	09R
12 Dec	09L	27R
19 Dec	27R	09L
26 Dec	09R	27L

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.