



Runway alternation programme – 2020 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.

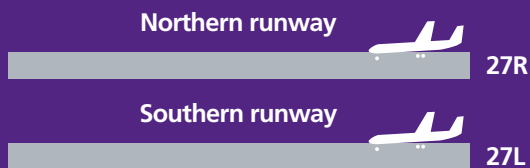
Day-time runway alternation

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.



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
6 Jan	27R	27L
13 Jan	27L	27R
20 Jan	27R	27L
27 Jan	27L	27R
3 Feb	27R	27L
10 Feb	27L	27R
17 Feb	27R	27L
24 Feb	27L	27R
2 Mar	27R	27L
9 Mar	27L	27R
16 Mar	27R	27L
23 Mar	27L	27R
30 Mar	27R	27L
6 Apr	27L	27R
13 Apr	27R	27L
20 Apr	27L	27R
27 Apr	27R	27L
4 May	27L	27R
11 May	27R	27L
18 May	27L	27R
25 May	27R	27L
1 Jun	27L	27R
8 Jun	27R	27L
15 Jun	27L	27R
22 Jun	27R	27L
29 Jun	27L	27R

Date (week commencing)	06:00 - 15:00	15:00 until last departure
6 Jul	27R	27L
13 Jul	27L	27R
20 Jul	27R	27L
27 Jul	27L	27R
3 Aug	27R	27L
10 Aug	27L	27R
17 Aug	27R	27L
24 Aug	27L	27R
31 Aug	27R	27L
7 Sep	27L	27R
14 Sep	27R	27L
21 Sep	27L	27R
28 Sep	27R	27L
5 Oct	27L	27R
12 Oct	27R	27L
19 Oct	27L	27R
26 Oct	27R	27L
2 Nov	27L	27R
9 Nov	27R	27L
16 Nov	27L	27R
23 Nov	27R	27L
30 Nov	27L	27R
7 Dec	27R	27L
14 Dec	27L	27R
21 Dec	27R	27L
28 Dec	27L	27R

Please note: We are able to 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.



- 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)
6 Jan	09L	27R
13 Jan	27R	09L
20 Jan	09R	27L
27 Jan	27L	09R
3 Feb	09L	27R
10 Feb	27R	09L
17 Feb	09R	27L
24 Feb	27L	09R
2 Mar	09L	27R
9 Mar	27R	09L
16 Mar	09R	27L
23 Mar	27L	09R
30 Mar	09L	27R
6 Apr	27R	09L
13 Apr	09R	27L
20 Apr	27L	09R
27 Apr	09L	27R
4 May	27R	09L
11 May	09R	27L
18 May	27L	09R
25 May	09L	27R
1 Jun	27R	09L
8 Jun	09R	27L
15 Jun	27L	09R
22 Jun	09L	27R
29 Jun	27R	09L

Date (week commencing)	Runway to be used (primary)	Alternative (secondary)
6 Jul	09R	27L
13 Jul	27L	09R
20 Jul	09L	27R
27 Jul	27R	09L
3 Aug	09R	27L
10 Aug	27L	09R
17 Aug	09L	27R
24 Aug	27R	09L
31 Aug	09R	27L
7 Sep	27L	09R
14 Sep	09L	27R
21 Sep	27R	09L
28 Sep	09R	27L
5 Oct	27L	09R
12 Oct	09L	27R
19 Oct	27R	09L
26 Oct	09R	27L
2 Nov	27L	09R
9 Nov	09L	27R
16 Nov	27R	09L
23 Nov	09R	27L
30 Nov	27L	09R
7 Dec	09L	27R
14 Dec	27R	09L
21 Dec	09R	27L
28 Dec	27L	09R

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.