

Foundations of Flight

Two-Way Head-Down Flower Exit

Brought to you by Niklas Daniel of AXIS Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy with his teammate from Arizona Arsenal, Steve Curtis. Photos by Travis Mills.

AXIS
Flight School

The 2-way flower is a great exit for jumpers just learning to fly head down. Though there are different ways to launch it, this one, launched from a left-door aircraft such as a Twin Otter using front- and rear-float positions, is the most basic.



Execution



Getting into position

Jumper A takes the front-float position (closest to the wing), and Jumper B takes the rear-float position (closest to the tail). Both will take a grip on the other as if playing a game of “thumb war,” grabbing only the fingers to keep the grip flexible.

Jumper A holds the bar with his left hand, palm facing out the door. He extends his left leg, keeping his head, torso and extended leg in a straight line so that he'll be in a good position after the exit.

Jumper B also holds the bar with his left hand with his palm facing up. His right arm will cross over his left to be presented to Jumper A. This allows the rear floater to position much of his body outside the plane, ensuring a good launch. (Shorter jumpers may find this position to be difficult.)



Exit and presentation

Keep good eye contact, and leave together on the count, which either jumper can give. As both jumpers leave, they need to focus on staying parallel to the aircraft by flicking their hips out and keeping their inside shoulders near the plane. If the jumpers lead with their shoulders, they will pivot sideways and poorly present themselves to the relative wind.

Once they've cleared the plane, experienced jumpers can immediately move on to the next point. Jumpers who are learning the exit should take additional elbow grips with their left hands, making sure to keep their bodies squared off with one another. The jumpers can correct an unwanted turn (carve) just by paying attention to their shoulders, making sure that they are not twisting.

Both jumpers should maintain strong legs and keep the grips low, at about belly-button level. This ensures that the 2-way piece will fly smoothly. The jumpers should focus on flying on the crowns of their heads, not their foreheads.

Helpful Hints

It is possible to over-rotate this exit. To prevent this, the distance between the jumpers should be the same at their shoulders as at their hips. The jumpers can help keep their shoulders and hips equidistant by concentrating on keeping their hips in by engaging their cores and maintaining a straight spine.