

FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | THE FLOATER EXIT



AXIS
Flight School



Brought to you by AXIS Flight School Instructor Brianne Thompson at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. Photos by Niklas Daniel.

Purpose

- To better understand “the hill” (the shift in the relative wind during the first few seconds after exit)
- Learn an essential formation skydiving skill (2-ways to big-ways)
- Learn a position used for hop and pops, camera flying and reserve-side AFF instruction

Preparation

Before exiting an aircraft, make sure you have received permission from the pilot to do so and that he’s configured the plane properly. If your aircraft has lights by the door, a green light means that you have *permission* to go, but it does not mean that you should go. As you check your location relative to the landing area, scan for hazards (such as other aircraft), as well.

If there’s a group ahead of you, provide it adequate separation through time before you exit (for this, you’ll need to know the groundspeed of the aircraft); don’t try to determine separation visually through the unreliable “45-degree” method.

Execution

This exercise presumes an exit from a side-door aircraft such as a Twin Otter; however, the principles following the launch apply to jumps from any aircraft.

Take a firm grip on the aircraft, and rest all of your body weight on the balls of your feet. As you climb out, you will expose your body to the airflow caused by the aircraft’s forward motion. Make sure you present a small profile to the wind in order to conserve energy and prevent falling off the plane prematurely.

Once you are ready to launch, look toward the nose of the aircraft and pivot your toes and hips toward the relative wind while arching by squeezing your gluteal muscles and lifting your chin. Beginning your arch while still standing on the airplane will help you present properly to the wind immediately after the exit.

Launch yourself off the aircraft with a positive push of your legs. If you merely let go, one or both of your feet will become a pivot point, and a turn on the hill will

surely follow. Try to keep the top surface of your shoulders parallel to earth as you exit, and continue to look at the aircraft. In addition, try to move your hands and feet at the same time; it’s important to launch and let go simultaneously.

Helpful Hints

Jumpers commonly present incorrectly during the first few attempts at this exit due to misunderstanding the mechanics of the relative wind. Because they expect to fly belly to earth, they will force the transition at the moment they leave the aircraft, causing them to go head low. Remember that you cannot alter the hill (the shift of the relative wind as gravity takes over from the forward throw of the aircraft) with your body. Be patient and focus on feeling the airflow over your flight surfaces rather than relying only on your visual sense.



To view the instructional video, use the QR code to the left or visit the Foundations of Flight page at parachutistonline.com.