

FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | BACK-FLY FLOATER EXIT



back-fly. 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.

AXIS
Flight School



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

Purpose

- Better understanding of “the hill” (the directional shift in the relative wind immediately after exit)
- Introduction to freefly exits

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 are required to 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).

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 tail of the aircraft and pivot your heels and butt toward the relative wind by rotating your waist forward (tailbone into the wind). While still standing on the airplane, assume the back-fly-neutral position as much as possible to help you present properly to the wind immediately after the exit. Do this by raising your right knee to about waist level and press your right heel firmly into the relative wind.

Launch yourself from the aircraft with a positive push of your left leg. If you merely let go, your left foot 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

A common misconception is that exiting the aircraft in this manner results in a head-up or sit-fly position. However, the relative wind—not the ground—determines your body position, which in this case is a