

FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | 2-WAY BELLY CAT-ACCORDION MOVE

Brought to you by Niklas Daniel and Brianne Thompson of AXIS Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. Photos by Isaac Hansen. Information about AXIS' coaching and instructional services is available at axisflightschool.com.



Purpose

A caterpillar (aka cat or cat-accordion) formation is a part of every belly discipline including mixed formation skydiving. Jumpers of all experience levels need to be able to execute this maneuver when flying belly formations.

Prerequisite

Proficiency at belly flying, including the specific skills of backward drive (see “Foundations of Flight—Backward Movement, Belly Flying,” July 2013 *Parachutist*) and level control (“Foundations of Flight—Level Changes While Belly Flying,” June 2011 *Parachutist*).

Execution

Begin in a 2-way star.

Flyer A will be the tail of the cat and should provide a solid base by flying at a

consistent fall rate with no movement from his slot. This jumper should prepare to assist Flyer B into position at the head of the cat if necessary.

Flyer B will be the head of the cat. When moving into position, this jumper should first present a sidebody to the tail and think about lining up her hip with Flyer A's nose. She'll then turn another 90 degrees to finish outfacing at the head of the cat. Flyer B should try to align both of her knees with her partner's shoulders.

Both flyers should try to maintain eye contact during the entire move. Once in position, Flyer B maintains eye contact by looking over her shoulder back at her partner. Flyer B then squeezes her knees slightly to encourage a slight backslide. Squeezing the knees also provides a greater range in body position that allows the jumper to increase the arch slightly.

Flyer A then takes an outside grip on the leg that Flyer B presents first and an inside grip on the other leg. (In this example, Flyer B is turning right, so Flyer A's grips are left outside and right inside.) Avoid taking double inside grips. That can force the elbows in and cause a bit of imbalance.

Helpful Hints

Maintaining eye contact during the entire outfacing move is difficult. However, both flyers should continue to look toward each other the entire time.

The authors intend this article to be an educational guideline. It is not a substitute for professional instruction.