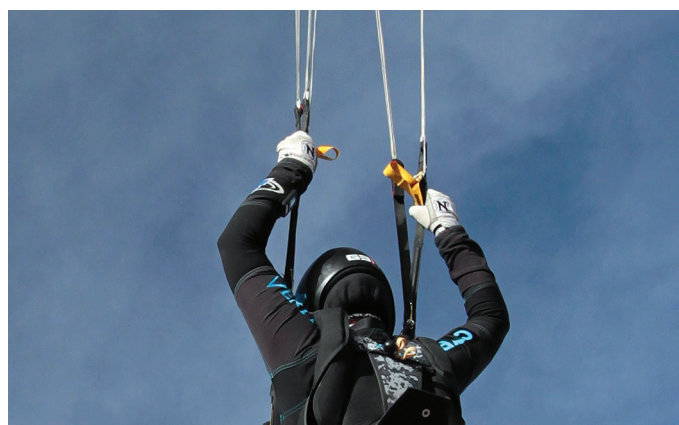
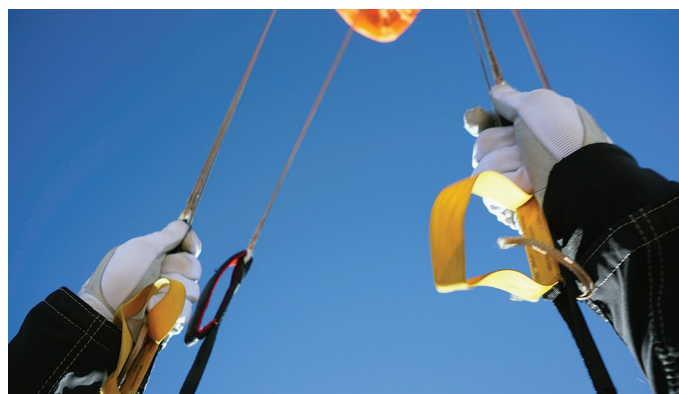


FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | HEADING CONTROL USING REAR RISERS DURING DEPLOYMENT

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



Application

Early in your skydiving career, you should get into the habit of controlling your parachute's heading during deployment. If you find yourself near another jumper on opening, you will be able to quickly and effectively turn away to avoid a canopy collision. In addition, it's a good idea to turn away from the aircraft's line of flight after a full-altitude jump, just in case the group behind you did not give adequate separation.

Execution

Because time is a factor, you should create a heading change quickly and calmly. Using rear risers is much faster than having to search for and then unstow your toggles. Also, if there's a collision, you may not want your hands stuck in the toggles, because you may have to cut away.

Typically, most jumpers will have their hands at the ready to catch the risers as they come out of the container. Most will grab either the front risers or all four risers. The trick is to transfer to the rear risers by feel as soon as you can. It does not matter whether you grab them thumbs up or thumbs down. What matters is finding them quickly and being ready to pull one down to create a heading change if necessary.

Do not pull both risers down at the same time; pull the riser down to your shoulder on the same side as the direction you wish to travel. Grab the rear risers up high but be careful not to accidentally unstow one or both of your toggles.

Small Parachutes

If you are an experienced pilot with a small wing or have a high wing loading, your wing will be very responsive, so you may want

to use the weight-shift technique instead of a rear riser for direction change during deployment, even if you still have the habit of placing your hands on your rears. As the parachute stands you up in the harness, try flexing your feet and orienting your toes in the direction you wish to go.

Wingsuit Flyers

If you are wearing a suit that does not allow you to reach your rears without unzipping, you can grab one of your mudflaps and give it a tug. Your canopy will not turn as quickly as it would if you used a rear riser, but it may still help in a pinch.

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