

FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | TOE-KNEE DRILL

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



Purpose

To enhance the communication and relative-work skills of those jumpers who are proficient in sit flying but struggle with taking grips.

Prerequisites

Heading control, level control and the ability to move forward and backward while flying head up.

Execution

Have a plan. Before the jump, determine who will start the exercise. Stay altitude aware: Check your altitude every six seconds or between each maneuver.

Jumper A (initiates the exercise):

- **Level**—In this exercise, you will fly on two distinct levels. First, fly on level with your partner, which will signal the start of the drill. Next, slow your fall rate to

rise (in relation to your partner) a couple of feet. Your feet should be level with your partner's knees.

- **Slot**—Maintaining your current level, drive forward toward your partner. Make sure to stop before arriving. Exaggerate how slowly you execute this move during your first few attempts.

- **Dock**—Place your toes on your partner's knees, but do not use your partner to stop yourself. The contact should be light. Once you've built the formation, fly it for a few seconds.

During the entire move, maintain eye contact and communication with your partner. Avoid looking directly at your partner's knees, which could cause you to backslide.

Jumper B (the target/base)

Be a good target:

- **Level**—Maintain a consistent fall rate.
- **Slot**—Avoid any rotational and translational movements. You are the base ... be patient.

- **Dock**—As jumper A makes contact, anticipate that the added weight will push your knees down slightly. Resist any changes in your body posture by flying strong. This serves as a great stability drill. Fly strong and do not let the other flyer upset your stability. Once Flyer A and B make contact, reverse roles.

Helpful Hints

If you and your partner are not quite ready for the toe-knee drill, try the toe-to-toe drill as an easier alternative. Target one another's feet, with one person setting the base, then switch roles after contact. This drill is far less challenging because the levels remain the same and communication is easier.

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