14 Back-Fly Neutral Body Position

Pre-requisites

Before learning back-flying, you will need to get a brief from your instructor on the differences between entering and exiting the flight chamber to a back-fly position as opposed to a belly-flying position. You will also get information on the specific back-flying safety items. In addition, you must demonstrate each of the eight points of motion for belly-flying and be able to comfortably fly them along with entering and exiting the flight chamber with minimal instructor assistance. Even though back-flying is a different skill set than belly-flying, it is required that you can demonstrate proficiency on your belly before venturing down this path.

Objectives

The primary objective is to be able to safely and successfully demonstrate that you can hold a neutral and stable back-flying body position. Even though you will initially begin your training while on the net, the end goal for this skill is to show that you can fly this position while hovering at a constant wind speed off the net.

Back-flying is the most important position to be able to fly for any type of free-flying progression. It is considered to be your safety recovery position in the event of instability while learning other positions, so it is important that you become very comfortable in this orientation.

Preparation

Once your instructor has assisted you into the flight chamber, he or she will position you in the center of the tunnel on your back in the neutral position as briefed. At this point the wind speed will be controlled as such to keep you on the net until you have acquired control. It is likely that you will learn how to use your control surfaces before ever coming up off the net. These steps are taken in order for you to be successful once the wind speed is increased.
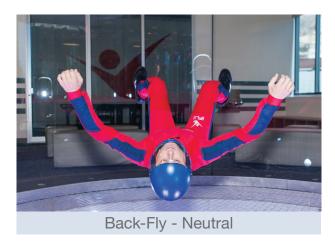
Technique and Drills
Keep these key elements in mind when learning this drill

Back-Fly - Neutral

- Your spine should be straight with your torso (from your hips to your shoulders) flat to the relative wind
- Your hips should be bent so that your thighs are at a 90° angle to your torso
- Your legs should be bent at the knee with your shin at a 90° angle to your thigh. Your shins should be parallel to the net.
- Your knees should be approximately shoulder-width apart with your toes pointed upward
- Your arms should extend out from the side of your body and bent at the elbow at 90°. This position should look something like a box shape
- Your arms should be pressed back slightly so they are almost parallel to the net, with the palms of your hands facing upward
- With your back flat to the airflow, your head should be tilted back to aid in this flat position and your gaze should be pointed upward toward the top of the tunnel
- Any corrections made should be small to begin with to learn the balance of control surfaces

Back-Fly - Neutral

Back-Fly - Neutral

Post-Flight Questions / Suggestions

- How did your performance match the initial objectives?
- Were you able to maintain stability while on your back, at a constant wind speed?
- What techniques did you feel comfortable with and what can you improve on during the next session?

What Skill is Next?

Typically when you first begin to back-fly, your instructor will teach you the methods of controlling yourself while you are on the net before increasing the wind speed and teaching you how to rise off the net. With that said, depending on when you feel comfortable flying off the net in a neutral position, you may or may not have been given the information and already practiced how to control and maintain a heading, turn left and right along with flying forward and backward movement. If you have not learned these skills, then naturally these will be next for you. If you have had some exposure to these skills, then your instructor will encourage you to become more proficient with each of the movements and begin applying more wind speed so that you can quickly become confident at more realistic free-flying speeds.