



15 Back-Flying Forward & Backward

Pre-requisites

Back-flying forward and backward movement is one of the primary skills for back-flying that you will need to learn in order to control yourself while flying on your back.

Prior to learning how to move forward and backward while back-flying, you will need to be comfortable in the neutral back-flying position. It is quite possible that you will initially learn how to control this movement while still low to, or even on, the net before your instructor increases the wind speed to have you perform the skill off the net. It is common for people to learn how to control heading before learning to move forward and backward. However, each student learns differently, so it isn't a requirement to learn one before the other.

Objectives

The primary objective is to be able to safely and successfully begin in a neutral back-flying position, fly yourself forward toward the wall, stop and then fly backward, under control the whole time. Ideally, if you begin learning this skill while you are still on the net, you will eventually want to be at a point where your instructor can increase the wind speed so you can become proficient at flying forward and backward off the net.

Preparation

You should plan to enter the tunnel on your back into your neutral back-flying position. Ideally, you will want to position yourself either in the center of the tunnel or at one side, allowing space to complete either the forward or backward movement first. You will want to set yourself up so that you are not moving toward any doorway at any time, as they can be obstacles to overcome.

Technique and Drills

Keep these key elements in mind when learning this drill

Forward

- Begin in a neutral back-fly position, allowing enough space to complete a forward movement
- Forward movement is considered a movement toward your head
- Initiate the movement by extending your legs, keeping your lower legs perpendicular to the direction of the airflow and avoiding raising your feet up too much as your legs extend
- As you straighten your legs, you will need to bend your arms so that your elbows tuck down toward the side of your body
- Continuously manage your position to maintain the same altitude for the movement and avoid gaining too much lift or dropping down toward the net
- To stop the movement, reverse the inputs to almost initiate a backward move. Once your drive has stopped, return to a neutral back-flying position
- As you become more comfortable with this move, you can increase the speed of the wind, which can provide more power. You can also adjust your position slightly, by rotating your arms, placing your palms and forearm onto the wind so that your arms stretch down the side of your body. This along with extending your legs will increase the pitch of your body, which will vastly increase speed of your movement. Remember that the faster you are traveling, the more aggressive your stopping input will need to be to avoid contacting the wall



Back-Fly - Forward

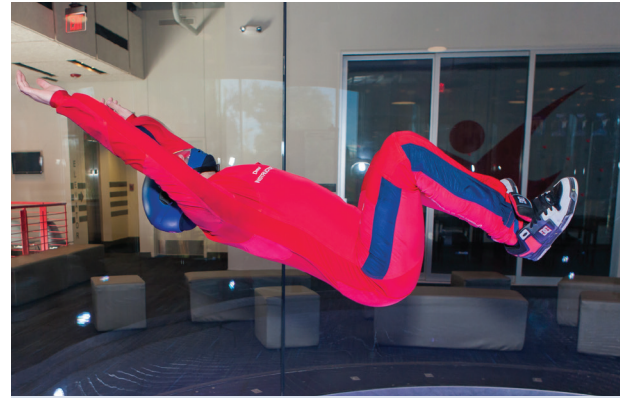
15 Back-Flying Forward & Backward

Technique and Drills

Keep these key elements in mind when learning this drill

Backward

- Begin in a neutral back-flying position, allowing yourself enough room to complete a backward movement
- A backward movement is considered a movement toward your feet
- Initiate the movement by bending your legs, bringing your knees toward your chest slightly and also pressing your feet down toward your bottom
- As you bend your legs, you will need to stretch your arms above your head slightly to help create a slight lifting sensation at your upper body. This will help adjust the pitch of your body to create the drive
- Continuously manage your position so that you maintain the same altitude for the movement and avoid gaining too much lift or dropping down toward the net
- To stop the movement, reverse the inputs to almost initiate a forward move. Once your drive has stopped, return to a neutral back-flying position
- As you become more comfortable with this move, you can increase the speed of the wind, which can provide more power. You can also adjust your position slightly, by fully extending your arms above your head and rolling your head and shoulders back, which will provide a slight arched shape at your upper body. This along with keeping your heels tucked toward your bottom will allow for a steeper body pitch, ultimately giving you more power. Remember, the faster you are traveling, the more aggressive your stopping input will need to be to avoid contacting the wall



Back-Fly - Backward

Post-Flight Questions / Suggestions

- How did your performance match the initial objectives?
- Were you able to maintain stability throughout each move and maintain the same heading and altitude at all times?
- What techniques did you feel comfortable with and what can you improve on during the next session?
- Are you at a point where you can have the wind speed increased and adjust your position to move faster?

What Skill is Next?

Once you can comfortably move forward and backward on your back, you will want to continue working on the key foundations of your back-flying. What skill you learn next will depend on what skills your instructor has had you learn up until this point. If you have not yet learned how to control your heading in a neutral position and turn left and right, this will be the next skill for you to learn. If at this point you are able to hold a stable, neutral position, turn left and right and now move forward and backward, you will learn fall-rate control, flying up and down next.

