



## 46 Head-Down Forward and Backward

### Pre-requisites

This skill is one that you will have some familiarity with as you will learn and understand the majority of the elements while you are learning supported and basic head-down flight. Your natural body position will determine what your coach will have had you focus on during the learning stages of your neutral position. You will be familiar in the methods of stopping any unwanted forward and/or backward drive in order to demonstrate control.

Prior to learning specific forward and backward movements, you will need to ensure that you have a stable neutral head-down position first.

### Objectives

The primary objective is to be able to safely and successfully begin in a neutral head-down position off the net, then on the signal from your coach, fly forward approximately 3-5 feet from your original position and stop. Next, on the signal from your coach, fly backward 3-5 feet back to your starting point. You should be able to complete each movement without losing your heading, gaining or losing any altitude, or needing to “bail” for any instability.

### Preparation

You will need to set yourself up in the center of the tunnel, head down at roughly waist height above the net. On your coach's signal, you will initiate either a small forward or backward movement, which will place you close to one side of the tunnel. Ensure that the movements you are planning to perform provide you with enough space to complete the movement without contacting the tunnel wall. It is always recommended that you not fly forward any closer than 2 feet from the wall. This will allow your head to clear the wall if you need to “bail” to your sit-fly for any reason.

### Technique and Drills

*Keep these key elements in mind when learning this skill*

#### Forward

- You will begin in a head-down, neutral position with enough space in front of you to perform this maneuver. Ideally you will start with your back close to the tunnel wall
- Initiate the forward movement by extending your back leg and pushing your arms slightly back
- Keep your spine straight throughout the entire movement
- Stop the movement before reaching the opposite side of the tunnel by returning your back leg to neutral, extending your front leg slightly, and returning your arms to neutral
- Use small inputs to begin with until you become comfortable with this movement



Head-Down Neutral



Head-Down Forward

Head-Down Forward and Backward

## 46 Head-Down Forward and Backward

### Technique and Drills

*Keep these key elements in mind when learning this skill*

#### Backward

- Begin in a head-down, neutral position with enough space behind you to perform this maneuver. Ideally you will start with approximately 2 feet between you and the tunnel wall
- Initiate the backward movement by extending your front leg out and pushing your arms slightly forward
- Keep your spine straight throughout the entire movement
- Stop the movement before reaching the opposite side of the tunnel by returning your front leg to neutral, extending your back leg slightly, and returning your arms to neutral
- Use small inputs to begin with until you become comfortable with this movement



Sit-Fly Backward

### Post-Flight Questions / Suggestions

- How did your performance match the initial objectives?
- Were you able to maintain stability for both movements consistently?
- Can you complete the movements without turning, gaining or losing altitude?
- What techniques did you feel comfortable with and what can you improve on during the next session?

### What Skill is Next?

During the learning phase of supported and basic head-down, you will have the opportunity to become familiar with some of the concepts of each of the head-down movements. This is because your coach will be giving you some insights in to each of these skills to help you master the neutral body position. As you become a more competent head-down flyer, you will master each of the movement skills as your coach gives you specific headings or heights to maintain and move to at certain speeds.

While mastering the forward and backward skill, your coach will also have you mastering up / down movement as well as heading control. Once you feel comfortable with these skills, you will next work on head-down turns.

