



51 Sit-to-Head Backflip

Pre-requisites

At this point in your progression, you should be confident at flying up off the net in a head-down orientation, controlling any movements, and also have been trained to fly both the sit-to-head front flip and the sit-to-head cartwheel transitions. Now you are ready to begin learning the sit-to-head backflip maneuver.

A variant of this skill is very commonly used in tunnel flying and skydiving to transition between sit-flying and head-down. People who aren't as confident completing a cartwheel maneuver will tend to fly a backflip rotation with a slight turn, which will allow them to maintain a visual reference throughout the transition.

Objectives

The primary objective is to be able to safely and successfully transition from a neutral sit-flying position through a backflip maneuver and finish in a neutral head-down position in the center of the tunnel without generating any lift or movement.

Preparation

You will start in the center of the tunnel in a neutral sit-flying position. For your early transitions, your instructor will manage the speed of the wind so it is appropriate for the orientations but not so high that you gain any altitude during the move. Your instructor will be assisting you early on and will aim to keep you approximately waist to chest height above the net. Your head-down position must be very solid and you should be comfortable with the sit-to-sit backflip transition. These elements will set you up for a more successful sit-to-head transition.

Technique and Drills

Keep these key elements in mind when learning this skill

- Start in the center of the tunnel in a neutral sit-flying position slightly off the net
- Allow your arms and your shoulders to relax forward slightly; this will allow your upper body to initiate the transition and fall backwards
- Try to avoid rotating your head back or arching your chest as these may prevent your upper body from descending
- As you start to rotate, allow the wind to lift your legs with the surface area that is presented and begin to adjust your legs toward their "daffy" position
- As you near the end of the rotation, pick a reference point on the wall of the tunnel to aid in stopping your torso from rotating
- To stop the rotation, extend your front "daffy" leg into the airflow and also push your arms forward slightly to brake against the wind
- You should focus on the rotation of the transition happening around your waist point; your upper and lower body should switch places
- Assume a neutral head-down position once the rotation has stopped

Post-Flight Questions / Suggestions

- How did your performance match the initial objectives?
- Were you able to consistently transition without creating any unwanted lift or drive?
- Are you ready to perform the transitions without an assisted grip by the instructor?
- What techniques did you feel comfortable with and what can you improve on during the next session?

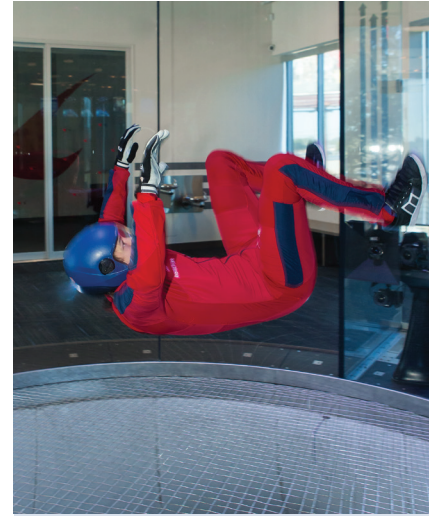
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What Skill is Next?

This maneuver is one of a few sit-to-head transitions that you will learn and is a commonly used transition when free flying with others. Ideally, you have had the opportunity to practice and become competent with the other sit-to-head transitions, giving you different options to maneuver to head-down flight depending on the circumstance.

During the learning stages of each of these transitions to head-down, it is possible that you will have already been given some opportunity to begin also learning the rest of the head-to-sit transitions other than the standard “bailing” move the head-to-sit front flip. If this is the case great! If not, then the next skills for you to begin are the head-to-sit cartwheel and the head-to-sit backflip.

