



72 Head-Up Carve Switches

Pre-requisites

To properly master this skill, you should first feel comfortable in-face and out-face carving head-up in both directions as this move will provide you with a smooth transition from one direction or position to another following a proper dynamic line.

You will find it easier to fly the switch if you are already capable of changing levels as you are carving by simply leaning more or less on the wind, while maintaining the same general carving position (avoid bending at the hips).

A well performed Head-up Switch will consist of a properly timed level change that will peak at the center of the tunnel, followed by a descent to either an in-face or out-face carve in the opposite direction.

Objectives

To feel comfortable flying a Head-up Switch, you should aim for the following objectives:

- While you in-face or out-face carve, accomplish a level change by leaning more on the wind. As you do so, induce a drive towards the center of the tunnel.
- The highest point of your level change should take place in the middle of the tunnel.
- If you are to looking to switch from an in-face to another in-face carve in the opposite direction, carry out a 180° turn at the center of the tunnel. This applies for an out-face to out-face switch as well.
- As you cross the center of the tunnel, conclude the move with a descent back to your initial level as you carve in the opposite direction.

Preparation

To begin, simply initiate a carve in any direction. Subsequently, increase your level while maneuvering your body toward and through the center of the tunnel.

As you cross the center of the tunnel, begin your descent to continue a carve in the opposite direction.

Once you feel comfortable flying this drill, try to time the switch to follow a proper dynamic line, making sure you always look in the direction of your carve.

Technique and Drills

- Before attempting the switch, an excellent drill is to simply carve in one direction while adjusting levels up/down. This drill will familiarize yourself with the skill and the feeling necessary for a proper level change. Keep in mind though that this will be most helpful if you are maintaining the same carving position and keeping your hips out. You should aim to avoid almost entirely the use of your arms to achieve the lift.
- To perform the level change, simply lean a little more on the wind by presenting more back/front surface area to the wind, and tilting your head backwards/forwards. You will be amazed at how much lift you can get by simply leaning your head on the wind!
- Once comfortable with the previous drill, aim to reach the peak of your level change at the center of the tunnel. At this point, you will want to become vertical and straightened out (both legs down) to begin a descent and lead a carve in the opposite direction.
- As you descend, be sure to lean on the wind in a properly timed fashion in order to continue the carve as you return to the initial flight level.

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Start In-Face Carving



Gain Altitude, Pass Through Center



Out-Face Carve Opposite Direction

Post-Flight Questions / Suggestions

- Were you able to adjust levels while carving without bending at the hips?
- For an in-face to in-face or out-face to out-face carve, were you able to perform the 180° turn at the peak of the level change, at the center of the tunnel, while completely straightened out (both legs down)?
- Were you able to continue the carve in the opposite direction, while descending back to the level of the original carve?
- Did you find yourself struggling for lift to perform the switch? Were you using your back and head for the level change, or did you find yourself using your arms? Were you bending at the hips?
- What techniques did you feel comfortable with and what can you improve on during the next session?

What Skill is Next?

Once you learn how to perform the Head-Up Switches in every combination (i.e, Out-Face to In-Face, In-Face to Out-Face, etc...) you will surely notice a new degree of freedom when it comes to your Head-Up dynamic flying. You will also, if you haven't already, start stepping into the world of head-down flying!

