

■ FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | 2-WAY BELLY STAR EXIT

Brought to you by Niklas Daniel and Brianne Thompson of AXIS Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. Photos by David Cherry. Information about AXIS' coaching and instructional services is available at [axisflightschool.com](http://axisflightschool.com).



**Prerequisites**

- To set up for a successful skydive
- To perfect a fundamental exit technique used extensively in formation skydiving
- To facilitate an easier transition into larger formation exits

**Purpose**

- Increase air awareness, stability and mobility
- Improve performance in vertical and mixed formation skydiving and dynamic tunnel flying

**Execution**

**Setting up in the door:**

**Person 1—The Outside Jumper** (*aka Floater*)

If you're the outside jumper (equivalent to the outside center position in 4-way formation skydiving), climb out fully and rest your body weight on the balls of your feet. Hold the bar with both hands about shoulder-width apart, palms toward the sky. Then trail your left leg, present your hips to the relative wind and establish eye contact with the inside flyer.

**Person 2—The Inside Jumper** (*aka Diver*)

As the inside jumper (equivalent to the inside center position in 4-way), take high grips on the outside jumper's upper arms. (Your palms rest on the outside jumper's triceps.) Place your left arm outside of the other jumper's

arm and your right arm inside. Put your left foot forward and your right foot back and face toward the tail at a 45-degree angle while lowering your hips toward the door. Get your hips as close to the threshold as possible. Your goal is to lead with your hips, not your shoulders, through the door. Once your hips go over the threshold, the rest of your body will follow naturally. Leading with your hips will help ensure that you present your body to the relative wind on exit. It also prepares you for flying 4-way, because lining up close to the door in this position allows the tail flyer to take grips.

**The exit:**

**Person 1—The Outside Jumper**

No matter who gives the exit count or whether you are in a 2-way or 4-way, you should bend your knees on "set," which allows your legs to spring you from the plane with a lot of power. Your goal is to jump up and away from the airplane while aggressively presenting your hips to the relative wind, which will improve your presentation. If you are launching a 4-way, this also allows room for the person flying the point position to exit. (This exit is designed for aircraft with high tails and large doors such as Twin Otters. Jumpers should not perform exits with high, aggressive launches on low-tailed aircraft such as PAC 750s or King Airs due to the possibility of colliding with the tail.)

**Person 2—The Inside Jumper**

If you are the inside jumper, aggressively drive your hips down and through the door opening. Think of driving your left knee and shoulder down while simultaneously getting your right side up. You'll want to present your hips to the relative wind and maintain a strong star-formation shape with your teammate. Be proactive getting through the door instead of letting your teammate yank you out. The goal is for both flyers to be at a 45-degree angle to the plane while still on the hill.

**Helpful Hint**

The outside jumper jumps up and away from the plane and the inside jumper drives down to ensure that both flyers are on the same level on the relative wind. Remember that just because the wind on the hill is coming from a different direction, the laws of freefall don't change: The flyers must be on the same level in relation to the wind when flying in formation. Presentation is key when launching a piece just as it is when launching a solo. As long as both flyers present to the relative wind, holding grips will not hinder the exit in the slightest.

*The authors intend this article to be an educational guideline. It is not a substitute for professional instruction.*