

# FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | BELLY TO HEAD-UP TRANSITION

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

Jumpers can find information on the prerequisite moves mentioned in this article under the *AXIS Skydiving Articles* tab at [axisflightschool.com](http://axisflightschool.com).

### Ability to:

- Control fall rate on the belly (up and down)
- Perform a belly-to-back transition using a backflip
- Perform a back-to-belly transition using a front flip
- Back-fly proficiently

## EXECUTION

Stay altitude aware, as you will be falling more quickly when you transition to a vertical flying orientation than you would be on your belly. Check your altitude between each maneuver, and do not sacrifice altitude for stability at pull time. We recommend jumping with a visual altimeter and at least one audible altimeter.

Start in the neutral belly position facing perpendicularly to the aircraft's line of flight, so that if you inadvertently slide forward or backward you won't close in on another freefall group. Begin by stretching your arms out to your sides and keep them level or parallel with the horizon to prevent you from pushing on the wind with your hands.

The main upward driving force to lift the torso comes from the chest. Rotate your head down to look toward the ground while simultaneously bringing your knees—which should be slightly wider than shoulder-width apart—toward your chest. As you do this, flatten out your chest by rolling your shoulders forward. Flex your feet (create a 90-degree angle at the ankles) and keep your knees bent at around 90 degrees (which will help you begin to assume the neutral sit-fly position).

Focus on the feeling of the relative wind on your legs as it changes locations. It is essential to keep the pressure symmetrical for the duration of the transition. While on your belly, the air makes contact with your quads. As you pull your legs in toward your chest, the air will make contact with the insides of your thighs, then your hamstrings.

Once you reach the sit-fly orientation, shift your gaze to the horizon in front of you. Continuing to look at the ground after the transition is complete can produce a powerful backslide.

## HELPFUL HINTS

Most flyers who attempt this transition for the first time may successfully end up in the head-up orientation but usually backslide. To remedy this, as you transition to the vertical, bring your knees closer together (about shoulder-width apart). For more information, see "Foundations of Flight—Forward Movement in a Sit" and "Foundations of Flight—Backward Movement in a Sit" in the September and October 2015 issues of *Parachutist*.

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