

The term "**Kiting**" refers to flying your parachute overhead while you're on the ground. The exercise provides feedback that you'll be able to see, as well as feel through your harness and hands.

Brought to you by Axis Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy.

Photos by Niklas Daniel

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FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT

Kiting



Briane demonstrates hand placement (also see brakes are released)



Purpose

Safety and Performance:

- ▶ To learn how to control your canopy better after landing.
- ▶ To become more attuned to how your parachute works.

Briane builds a wall, letting the canopy rise slowly



Execution

Before you begin:

- ▶ Make sure winds are steady (8 to 12 mph).
- ▶ Find an open area away from anything that might cause turbulence.
- ▶ Disconnect your RSL in case you want to cut away the main.
- ▶ Release your brakes and stow them on the risers (in other words, stow your brakes in full-flight mode), which will prevent the toggles from tangling during the initial launch.
- ▶ Put on the rig and tighten your leg straps.
- ▶ Collapse your slider and move it into a position that allows you to see the canopy.

Setting up

With the wind at your back, spread your canopy out on the ground with the end cells pointing to the sky.

Getting Started

There are many ways to get the canopy to begin filling with air. We recommend putting both front risers in your left hand and the rear risers in your right. Pulling on the fronts makes the canopy rise, while pulling on the rears makes it fall back to the ground. Don't apply pressure to the fronts and rears simultaneously — this is the equivalent of pressing the gas and the brake on a car at the same time. Use your left hand to guide the canopy in the direction you want it to go. If you ever feel like the canopy is overpowering you, pull both rear risers in toward your belly button.

To begin, face your canopy and walk backward and away from it. You'll notice your lines tightening and that your lines and risers are crossed. As the parachute fills with air, your goal is to build a short wall on the ground with your canopy (at this point, you don't want it to take off overhead). Maneuver the canopy so that the nose fills with air while the tail of the canopy stays on the ground.

Getting the Canopy Overhead

Once you are comfortable with how your canopy is reacting to inputs, you can allow the canopy to inflate fully. Once the canopy is overhead, remove the toggles from the rear risers and fly the canopy with the brakes. By experimenting with brake and riser input to control the canopy's side-to-side movement, balance the canopy overhead.

During this time, you'll also need to manage the canopies pitch. If the wing falls toward earth in front of you, you'll need to get it back on centre by letting the brakes up into the full-flight position. If the wing surges upward and backward, or if it feels like it's getting above your head too quickly when you launch, you will have to shut down the power by providing input to the rear risers. The amount depends on how quickly the canopy is moving and how high the wind speed is.

Your goal is to react quickly, sensing how much input to apply by observing how the canopy is responding. Eventually, you can learn to control your inputs so that the canopy moves smoothly and at your will.

Helpful Hints

Stay relaxed. This will improve the feedback you'll get through your hands and, ultimately, your harness. Soon, you'll be able to anticipate the canopy's next move before it happens.

Walk to help get your canopy inflated. This will increase your sensitivity and balance and help with the launch. Do not try to muscle the canopy to get it overhead — taking a few steps back will usually do the trick. If you need to reduce the power of the launch, step toward the canopy.

Once you are proficient, try to walk in all four directions (forward, backward and toward both sides) while keeping the canopy overhead. Eventually you will be able to turn around, facing into the wind, the same way as you would when landing. The goal of controlling the canopy remains the same.

RSL is disengaged and mounted to cutaway cable housing to prevent tangling