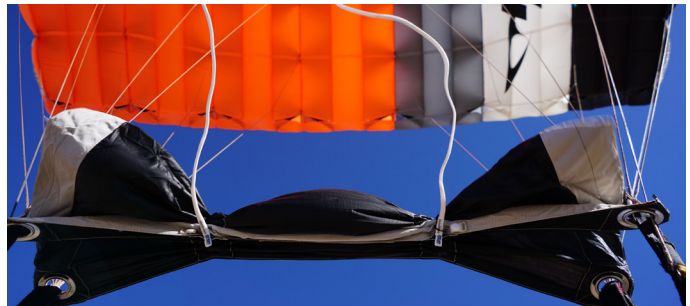


FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | COLLAPSING A SLIDER

Brought to you by Niklas Daniel and Brianne Thompson of AXIS Flight School at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. Photos by Niklas Daniel. Information about AXIS' coaching and instructional services is available at axisflightschool.com.



Equipment Orientation

A slider's main purpose is to slow your opening to a comfortable speed. Once the canopy is open, the slider serves no purpose.

After you deploy your main canopy, the slider will rest above your head where the risers meet the suspension lines. Unlike a standard slider, a collapsible slider has two sewn-in channels that each contain a cord with a tab that sticks out the trailing side. This allows you to change the shape of the slider to resemble a bowtie with two strings dangling behind. (There are variations such as one or multiple strings, a Velcro tab or the ability to split the slider in half and remove it entirely, but this article addresses the most common, two-tab version.)

Benefits

It is not necessary to collapse a slider in order to land safely, but doing so provides three major benefits:

- 1) The most obvious change is an increase in your visual field. Having a collapsed slider allows you to better see others and inspect your own canopy.

- 2) Decreasing the surface area of the slider reduces drag. This can help you by increasing your glide when attempting to make it back from a long spot and give you greater flare power.

- 3) The slider may move around excessively if left open, causing that familiar flapping sound on landing. This movement can be very distracting and can also create unwanted wear and tear on your lines, risers and soft links. By collapsing the slider, you may increase the longevity of your gear.

Execution

Once you have steered toward your desired heading using the method discussed in "Foundations of Flight—Heading Control Using Rear Risers During Deployment" (February 2018 Parachutist), you can tend to your harness and equipment. While maintaining altitude awareness and making sure your airspace is clear, tend to your slider before unstowing the toggles. Grab the center of your slider with one hand, and then grab one of the tabs with the other. Pull the string out to the side, past the rear riser until you see or feel the locking tab click into place. You can now repeat the process on the other side.

If you have long arms, you might be able to pull both tabs at the same time. If you have short arms, you can briefly wrap the kill line around your hand to shorten the stroke.

Next, release your brakes and perform a canopy controllability check (left turn, right turn, full flare) and be on your way.

In rare instances, the slider may re-inflate in flight. Since your toggles are now in your hands and the slider does not have to be collapsed for a safe landing, ignore it for the rest of the flight.

Remember!

When you get back to the packing mat, you must reconfigure the slider back to its original shape. Jumping with a collapsed slider will result in a hard opening. Always stow your brakes, open the slider and cock your pilot chute before handing your rig to your packer; do not rely on your packer to do these tasks for you.

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