

Snake River BASE Academy

Higher Education for Lower Freefall

BASE Canopy Drills

This drill set is intended to provide a starting point for practicing canopy skills that will be necessary in BASE jumping. These drills should be practiced with a BASE canopy, or other large 7 cell F-111 canopy, on a skydive (not a BASE jump) with plenty of altitude and awareness of other canopies. All of these skills may not be necessary for completing the Fundamentals of BASE Course, but they will quickly become survival skills as you progress into BASE jumping and move to more technical objects. Rental gear is available to practice these skills, and some rental fees can be credited toward new gear purchase. Snake River BASE is a dealer for every major manufacturer.

Canopy Heading Awareness and Correction Drill:

Prior to opening, identify the desired canopy heading. Immediately after the canopy opening, use riser input to turn the canopy onto the desired heading. Practice using hard riser input to make a stall correction, which uses less forward space to turn. Be aware that this will consume a lot of altitude, so be sure you are high enough to finish the turn. Practice turning to different headings--don't always choose a desired heading that is in line with your body position at deployment.

Stall Recovery Drill:

Practicing stalling your canopy with both riser and toggle input. Find the stall point both with brakes stowed and from full flight (with brakes unstowed). Practice passing the stall point and recovering from a stall, becoming aware of how the canopy behaves as it dives to recover, and also of how much altitude is used to recover from the stall.

Asymmetric Heading Control Drill:

After opening, unstow only one toggle. Practice correcting heading using one riser (with the other toggle stowed) so that the canopy flies straight. From this configuration, practice turns in both directions, learn to stall the canopy, and practice stall recovery. Be sure to try this drill with either toggle set, so that you are comfortable with both sides.

Braked Turns:

Practice making turns from half brakes. Carefully move one toggle up from a halfway position and the other down until you can initiate a turn that keeps the wing level over your head. Braked turns use less altitude and keep the wing level for landing. If possible, practice landing while still in a flat, braked turn.

Deep Brake Approaches With and Without Full Flight for Flare:

Deep brake approaches are necessary for many BASE landings, because the canopy must approach steeply through obstacles such as trees or power lines. Practice sinking the canopy in steeply. Try landing both in a steep sink (without letting the toggles up) and by letting the toggles up on final approach. You may not always be able to let the toggles up to full flight, so practice bringing the toggles up in a slow, controlled motion, to allow a flare from any point. Bringing the toggles up quickly can cause the canopy to dive quickly (and possibly into the ground), so be sure you practice stall recovery before trying this drill.

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Front Riser Landings:

Practice building airspeed with the front risers prior to landing, by holding down both front risers on final approach, then switching to toggles to flare the landing. This will give a stronger flare, which can be useful at high altitude or in rough landing areas. Be sure to keep the toggles in your hands while pulling on the front risers, so that you always have them ready to flare. Be sure to practice this dive and recovery several times at higher altitudes before landing this way.

Rear Riser Landings:

Practice landing your canopy using rear riser input only. Keep the toggles in your hands while you land, but prepare yourself to land on only rear risers. Once you have mastered this skill, try landing on one toggle and the other rear riser, learning to flare and land straight in with two different inputs (one on each side). Be sure to switch sides and practice with the opposite toggle/riser combinations so you can do this on either side.

Parachute Landing Fall:

Practice making PLF landings by keeping your feet and knees together, knees bent and rolling through the impact of landing. It's easiest to practice this by jumping from a table or chair onto the ground before trying to during a real landing. Try to dissipate the impact of a hard landing by rolling through your feet, calves, thighs, shoulders and back. Be sure to keep your hands and elbows tucked into your sides during this roll.

Downwind and Crosswind landings:

Being sure to alert other jumpers, practice landing in crosswind and downwind directions, using both toggles and risers.

Accuracy:

Practice landing your canopy accurately on a designated spot. Have a friend move the accuracy target between jumps so that you do not know where it is until you are under canopy. Practice accuracy using a steep, deeply braked straight in approach, rather than sashaying your canopy back and forth in turns. Try to keep the wing level throughout your approach. Be sure to practice accuracy from crosswind and downwind approaches also. Try to land as softly as possible, both from full flight and part brakes.

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