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# Sitfly basics

SITFLYING IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR AND WIDELY USED FREEFLY BODY POSITIONS. IT CAN BE LEARNED RELATIVELY QUICKLY AND MAKES GROUP FREEFLY JUMPS EASILY ACCESSIBLE

WORDS ALLY MILNE

**L**ike learning any new position it can be learnt quicker by receiving good-quality coaching and wind tunnel tuition at an early stage.

Progress in any discipline is related directly to the amount of coaching you receive and the effort you put in.

A solid core body position allows a person to learn all the other manoeuvres much easier than someone with a poor body position. Learning the basic neutral position in any discipline is like laying the foundation of a house. There's no point putting the walls or roof in if the foundations aren't strong.

One of the main reasons that we may have difficulty learning the sitfly body position is that we already have muscle

memory from sitting in a chair. When we sit in a chair our spine is often curved, our head forward and our heels close together. These are all things we must try to avoid when sitflying in the air.

A good sitfly basic body position has strong legs, relaxed arms and 90° angles between the upper body and thighs and the upper and lower legs, just as in back flying. The strength required to hold the position can be practised on the ground against a wall. Practice on the ground is free, practice in the air is expensive! To help the lower legs reach a 90° angle, you need to press your heels forward. This will help keep them stronger and prevents them folding up underneath your thighs, which can cause you to slide backwards.



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# “ Learning the basic neutral position in any discipline is like laying the foundation of a house ”



## Sitfly troubleshooter

### ► Sore shoulders

This is often caused by lots of sitflying and grip taking (especially in the tunnel). Ensure you are flying with your arms in an efficient position to the side of the body. Once you have mastered the core stable position you can bend your arms at the elbows, which will reduce the lever effect of having straight arms. This works on the principle that a 10kg bag of sugar is easier to hold with bent arms rather than straight ones.

### ► Sliding backwards

This is caused by two factors mainly. The primary cause of drive is usually the torso: ensure this is straight. A secondary cause of backsliding is having the lower legs tucked under the thighs. Push your heels forward to correct this.

### ► Involuntary turning

Can be caused by a number of factors. Ensure your heels are out and keep them and your knees wide. Try to ensure even air pressure on the arms, and if required point the shoulders at a fixed point. You can always try to turn the opposite way too.

### ► Keep falling off

This could be caused by anything! Ensure good angles between the legs and thighs and keep the legs strong. If you're still stuck it might be worth getting an FF coach to jump with you and take a look. A coach jump can often sort a problem straight away and save you many jumps trying to guess a solution. You may even get a copy of the video!

Knees should be shoulder distance apart to aid stability; the narrower, the easier it will be to turn, but that will come later.

With the torso the spine must be straight and the head backward with the chin low (think 'double chin'). This will help expand the upper body and prevent it from being 'hunched up' as we would most normally sit in a chair. Trusting the position at this point is key, and you generally need to lean back into it more than you think. A common problem is leaning too far forwards. Any time the torso isn't vertical it will cause the person to drive one way or the other. In the case of leaning forwards, which is the most common, it will cause you to move backwards rapidly.

The arms can be initially kept straight

(to aid stability) and level with the ground. They should go directly out to the sides when learning the position but once stability becomes second nature they can be brought in by bending the elbows. Like an uneven flare when landing a canopy, if your arms are not level this can cause your body to roll over. Arms should not be pressed behind the body in normal flight. If you can't remain stable with the arms directly to the sides that means your upper body is leant too far forwards. Learning a good arm position makes it easier to perform independent hand movement, which is the ability to move one or both arms without it affecting the stability of the flier. This leads to easier grip taking and alti-checking.

A good drill dive for this is to try and

**1** *Babylon in training by Kuri*

**2** *Ally Milne practises a good basic sitfly position against a wall, by Chris Cook*

fly with either one or both hands on your head, then once this is achieved you can try with hands on the hips.

In this article we have looked at building a solid core sitfly position, which once learned makes many of the other key skills easier to learn and increases progression. Further skills required for the FF are fall rate techniques, turns and forward/backward movement. You can learn or develop these skills by talking to your BPA FF coach. Once you have achieved FF, that's really when the learning begins, not ends! Further skills such as grip taking, transitions and carving will all be made easier with this solid foundation and it's better to be briefed correctly than to guess how to do them! ●