

Stretching for Peak Performance

Remember to start off slowly. These stretches can be helpful for releasing tension and tightness. Once you learn how to stretch you will be able to develop a routine to fit your own needs. Become familiar with each individual stretch before doing the whole routine. Performing a stretch wrong or over stretching can cause injury.

Most people think they don't have time to stretch, but will sit and watch hours of TV every night. Stretching during this type of inactivity will help you accomplish a type of physical fitness. Sitting for long periods causes stiff backs, necks and blood to pool in the legs and feet, Stretching increases the circulation, aids in relaxing, increases range of motion and develops body awareness, Stretching in the evening can also help your sleep by relieving the days tension and stress. Be creative and think of stretches to do during normally wasted time.

Here are a few helpful hints for stretching:

- 1) Stretch before and after exercise.
- 2) Stretch away from distractions and concentrate on the muscle being stretched.
- 3) Think about breathing; contract during inhale and stretch during exhale, 6-8 sec.
- 4) If you stop breathing or talk you have quit stretching.
- 5) Keep your head up, look forward not at the ground.
- 6) Keep your back straight to prevent lower back strain.
- 7) Stretching is entirely individual, realize your flexibility and work on your own limitations.
- 8) Do not compete in stretching. This will only cause injuries.

Look at stretching as a means of improving fitness, injury prevention and total body awareness.

Written by Dr. Mike Ripely

GOAL SETTING

By Jack Jefferies

Setting goals could be the single most important ingredient to success. There are three basic types of goals, long, medium, and short range. The long-range goal is where you need to start everything falls in behind this. You need to understand what you want, look at what you are willing to sacrifice, and decide on a long-range goal. It is best for individuals to have done this process by themselves before doing it as a team. Individual long-range goals are usually a little more far reaching than the team's and therefore must be decided upon first. Like any important team decision, agreeing on team goals should be done by consensus.

Now that you know where the team is going it is necessary to make a map on how to get there. Here you need to make a series of medium range goals that will roughly outline your path to success. In this stage of planning it is very helpful to have a professional with you to give expert guidance on what is necessary to reach your end goal.

Short-range goals are better made as you go along. Your strengths and weakness' are hard to predict and therefore must be addressed as you go. However, do be clear about what subjects you would like to make goals around and how often you will be making and debriefing them.

Do not fear making goals because you may not reach them. This is quite normal and very OK. If a goal proves to be too ambitious rethink it and adjust the goal.

Examples of subjects for goal setting:

block times
meet averages
team conduct
personal effort
planning

exit break times
personal conduct
second point times
team effort
communication

Optimum Performance

By Dan Chenfeld

Your True Best

The first step to Optimum Performance, performing at your personal best, is knowing what your best, your true best, really is. All of us have a certain level of "safe performance". A level of speed, aggressiveness and confidence where we feel secure that we will not make any big mistakes. It is at this level that as recreational jumpers we often most target our performance. Although we fly competently here it is not our best and aiming to perform here will restrict us from doing our best.

Then there are other times when you fly better than ever. You make great moves and can't even believe it was you. You're not even sure how you did it. It's almost like magic. These unexpected magical second's, that occur about 15% of the time, are usually brushed off as simply good luck. But the reality is, this your true best. There is no magic and there is certainly no luck. You did those moves. If you did them once you can do them every time. You just need to understand what makes those moments happen. With that knowledge in mind we can create our own magic and luck anytime we want.

How do we make those magical moments happen whenever we choose?
How do we consistently perform close to our best?

Performing at your best is a skill in itself. It is the same skill when your best is a 5 point average or a 25 point average. Learn to perform at your best when it is a 5 and you will know how to make it happen when it is a 25.

Flying on the line

You have probably heard many different names for the ideal Performance State. Some call it "The Zone" we call it "The Line". That fine line where you are confident enough to fly as aggressively as possible, while still able to maintain total control.

When you are "On the Line", you are as physically aggressive as you know you can control. With time and good training, the level of confidence and aggressiveness goes up. When your team first starts training, your skydiving will be less predictable, less control. You may fly at only 20% of the speed and power you have. That may be all your team can control.

With time and training, you begin to create some consistency. This gives you more control, and with it the confidence to fly stronger. Where you may have started out at 20% as aggressively as possible, you are now confident to go to 40% with the same control. You are still on the line.

Being "Over the Line" refers to times where you are going more aggressively than you can control. Being "Under the Line" refers to times when you're flying with too much caution, holding yourself back.

The Four Cs Calm... Communication... Control... Confidence

Calm

Being on the line begins with a very calm mind. This sense of calm allows you to broaden your view and expand your air awareness. You see everything that is going on with your team, both perfect moves and problems. Not only do you see it. You are aware that your teammates see it as well.

Communication

This awareness establishes a much higher degree of communication than most team's pursue. This communication, the awareness of glitches that need to be fixed or precision that can be accelerated, gives a team total control.

Control = Confidence

It is this control that justifies complete confidence in both yourself and your team. With control established, you then must choose to fly fast and hard. This is a very conscious decision that is made in a fraction of a second. Recognize the team has control and then choose to move with as much power as you can continue to control. Choosing to do any less is accepting less than your best. And be sure, the choice is yours.

Training Applications

The first stage of training for optimum performance is turning your best into your average. Your best, those magical moments that occur about 15% of the time, need to be recognized not as luck, but as your true best. Understand how you make them happen. Target your efforts towards repeating this performance.

Not improving it, just repeating it.

Soon this 15% will become 25%, then 45% and then 60%. Your best has become your average. Out of nowhere, while you were not even looking, a new best has appeared. A new magical 15%. Re-establish your goals aiming to perform at this new 15% and the whole process again.

The second stage of training for optimum performance is consciously aiming to make your better best. Once you or a team has developed a high rate of consistency you are ready to push your best to the next level.

It is important that you are very specific on how you plan to accomplish this. Target specific areas one at a time. Risk losing some of the control as you add speed and aggression. As you reach over the line and begin the push you will also be sacrificing some of the consistency. Push on. When this stage of training is finished calm it back down. Return to the line. Remove all effort towards additional speed. Soon the consistency will settle at a higher level than ever.

Remember, the mental state for performing "on the Line" stays the same, even as the percentage of aggressiveness of the line increases.

Arousal Level

We call it the correct mental state that puts you consistently on the line the Optimal Arousal Level. We use a scale of 1 to 10 to measure this. 1 would be not pushing yourself at all, "Under the Line". 10 would be out of control, "Over the Line".

After each jump you should note where your arousal level was in your preparation, visualization, ride to altitude and during the jump. If you keep track of this you will find, after a great jump, at what Optimum Arousal Level you perform your best. The line is very consistent among different people, but how to get to the line varies greatly. Some people prefer to be at a calm 3 on the scale. Another person works better at an aggressive 7. Play with this. Do your personal research. Try a 4, an 8, 10, and 2. When you work this system you will find you can manage your arousal level and put it where it need to be in order to be at *your* best. The line will be the same effort most, but the arousal level we use to get there is often different.

Distractions That Take You "Off the Line" and How to Control Them

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|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aiming for more or less than your best. | Know <i>your</i> true best. Stay focused and aim right for it, not any better or any worse. It is always within you reach. |
| Fear of failure and of making mistakes. | Don't allow concern for results or making mistakes take you off target. Fearing mistakes is the greatest mistake there is. You don't owe perfection to yourself or anyone else. |
| Over analyzing | You do not have time during a skydive for deep contemplation and analysis. Save that for after the jump. During the jump stay focused on one point at a time reserving any debriefing for later. |

Concerning yourself with what other people think

This is a very common problem in our skydiving community, but really, who cares what other people think? I hate to break it to you but it is only a silly skydive. The opinion of anyone that judges you based on your skydiving ability is not one you should be concerned with. This is all about your personal challenge and the fun in facing it. It has no significant worth other than that.

Jump-to-Jump Preparation

The best jumps are the ones where the team as a whole feels very machine like, where each member is doing its part accurately and precisely. Good preparation allows us to get that feeling of a good jump even before we get into the air. As they say "If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail". By being very systematic in our preparation we are training ourselves to be systematic in the skydive, hence we are moving like a machine.

Airspeed's jump-to-jump preparation has evolved very little over the past few years. It has always been about maximum learning on the creepers for minimum time. Too little time on creepers gives us less preparation than we need, where as too much makes us tire sooner and lessens the learning curve of the group. Our preparation system helps us to achieve the following:

- Clear, accurate pictures that we will see during the jump
- Learning all details efficiently and in order
- Learning good habits so that they become instinctive
- Get the feeling of our Optimum Arousal Level

The system we have in place stays the same. Having a system in place reduces time spent on creepers and thus decreases fatigue. It is a great feeling when you get on the creepers and everyone knows their job. Having a system in place and sticking to that system starts the entire jump process off in a calm relaxing feel. It is like driving to a place you have been many times before as apposed to driving in heavy traffic in a new city looking for a coffee shop who sells muffins for \$2.45 on Tuesday morning.

Airspeed's Jump Preparation System

Walk Through –The walk through is our chance to see the puzzle for the first time. Figure out where each person needs to go and look for the most efficient move to get there. This is the time to start moving as a team, always try to walk the skydive with smoothness and make it machine like. Always start by looking across the formation as you are trying to remember the skydive, the sequence is not drawn on the floor. The first few pages there will be some brain locking, try to not let this be a source of frustration. If you do brain lock treat it the same as you would in the air. The first thing you should do is look through the center at you opposite, take a deep breath. By looking through the center of the formation you will no doubt see a picture that you recognize, only one slot out. Fill in the picture. Using this method to resolve brain lock issues on the ground will carry over to the air, keeping you calm and making the right decision when it does happen.

Angles – Now we move to the creepers. When we lay down we want to look at each move between formations. We take the engineering we decided on during the walk through and perform it on the creepers. We perform each transition 3 times accurately. This helps us get the kinesthetic feel for each move. This is

also the best time to figure out your grip plan. Most of the time you should have a standardized system of picking up grips. This allows us to think more about what is going on in the skydive than thinking about pick up grips or wasting time playing patty cake.

During angles is the best time to start training yourself for good cross-referencing. Make your move, Stop. When you are stopped you can see the whole formation just sitting there in front of you. Only when you see the picture should you then look at the grip and pick it up, immediately returning your eyes to the center of the formation. Looking to the key person for the key. Practicing this on the ground will develop these good habits in the air. Repetition and consistency is the aim of Angle's.

Pauses – We continue the creeping process by moving into pauses. We roll though the jump continuously with a slight pause at the build of each formation. When you are in the paused formation you should overlay the next formation on top of the current formation. This increases your anticipation for the next move, so you are thinking about the move before it is to happen, rather than waiting for the key and then thinking about where you should go. Pauses also train us to look at the key person and wait for their key to move. Each move you make should be made "On the Line" and make your stop just as hard. High anticipation is the key.

Eyes Closed – In eyes closed we want to keep a high anticipation of the next move. Just like pauses you should overlay the next formation on top of the current formation. A systematic approach to eyes closed will help it run efficiently and still keep it effective.

Everyone should start with their eyes closed, the key person initiates the break verbally. Make you move. Stop. Open your eyes, look at the grip and pick it up the close you eyes again.

The idea of eyes closed is to allow us to make the move based on pure kinesthetic movement. Thus building confidence in our own move and the move's of those around us. Doing the move pure and without trying to make adjustments on the fly gives us the most efficient move possible.

At speed – Take 30 seconds before going into this final creeping session. Put yourself on the line and get your anticipation high. This is how we want to feel in the skydive. Make this as realistic as possible make your creep feel machine like and consistent. There should not be any talking during the final creep, if something is off, just fix it! We wouldn't stop the skydive to talk about a particular angle so we don't stop during at speed. This is you chance to practice your ad-lib skills.

Random Work

Random work basically is the movement we need to do between each formation including going to and coming from a Block. As a result random work is one of the most important factors in formation skydiving. Most world-class teams all have block times that are fairly similar. During a competition teams can make the biggest gains in score during a jump that has many random sequences.

Moving fast is no problem for most of us. It is efficiency and minimization of movement that scores points. A good way to think of this is the following:
Movement = Time = Points

Conservation of movement begins at the engineering stage. Always try to engineer so that everyone has the smallest move possible, i.e. the least amount of movement (sitting still), requires the least amount of time. Any movement that must exist, should be broken down into Center Point turns and Straight line movement.

Any move performed should be only what is necessary and should be completely stopped before picking up any grip. Any momentum carried into the formation will affect the move required to move to the next formation.

Cross-referencing is essential to Formation Skydiving, in that the only references we have in the air are each other. Seeing through the center of the formation to our opposite flyer will allow us to see the bigger picture of what is happening during the skydive. It allows us to recognize if we are in the correct slot, any changes in levels and helps with anticipation of the next point in the sequence.

The conservation of movement not only includes lateral movement but vertical movement. Having all jumpers on the same level eliminates any up or down movement (Movement = Time = Points). Good levels don't just happen, they are created. By looking through the center of a formation you increase your awareness of your surroundings. From better awareness comes the ability to recognize issues while they are still small. It is easier (and faster) to adjust 6 in. of levels than 6 ft. With this in mind, good levels are a result of constant corrections.

When a team is moving fast it becomes clear how important synchronicity is to the group. With everyone moving together there is a confidence generated in the group. To the judges, the skydive is easier to score. With the speed that teams are moving it is becoming increasingly more difficult to judge each and every grip. As a result judges look more at the synchronicity of the group when scoring.

Each formation can be broken down into two general positions, Center and Outside. The Center flyers are responsible for making sure the formation is built so that each outside flyer has approximately the same distance to move. As a

Center you need to move with purity and confidence to the correct place. Usually if you try to help out one of the Outside flyers you will affect the other. A lot of times the Centers have the keys for the formations. So they can greatly affect the feel of the skydive so a confident and calm Center can radiate that energy to the Outside flyers. The Center flyer is like the drummer of a band, controlling the flow and pace of the skydive.

Outside flyers usually have a bigger, more dynamic move to the next point than the Centers. As a result they need to have good anticipation of the move they are about to perform. On the outside you will need to react to mistakes that the Centers may make, being able to ad-lib is a great benefit. Your move should be accurate and pure like on the creepers but small adjustments on the way will get you exactly where you need to be. Also, making sure that your movement is stopped before you pick up grips will help the Centers job of making sure they are in the right place.

For all flyers seeing the 'Big Picture' of what everyone is doing during the jump, is absolutely critical. Having all the information in front of you allows you to react to mistakes by other or yourself more quickly. The only way we can allow ourselves to see the 'Big Picture' is by keeping our focal point through the center point of the formation across to our opposite. This is known as "cross referencing", add this to opening up our peripheral vision allows us to see everything.

All this efficient movement, Cross Referencing and Levels can be made completely redundant unless we add Key anticipation and discipline. In order for us to score points we must build points. A key should only come from the person who is delegated the responsibility. The 'Key Person' is given this responsibility because they are able to see and feel when the formation is built and ready to go. If you are the Key Person then you must know when it is your key, know all the grips that must be in place before you key. Have high anticipation of the previous and make sure everyone is ready to go. Knowing what the last grip to be taken can help with this anticipation.

If you are not the key person, then you have responsibilities too. First and foremost you need to know who the key person is and look at them for the key. This will eliminate any 'jumped keys'. It also helps if you know what they are looking for and anticipate the key. Part of synchronicity is having everyone come off the grips at the same time. Simultaneous breaks will build this and comes from high anticipation of all team members.

Movement between points is the culmination of three basic references. The first is done with anticipation, Visualizing the next formation superimposed on the current. Kinesthetic movement is the muscle memory we create by creeping the jump before hand, visualizing and anticipating the kinesthetic feel will help us make it more correct and fast. The third reference is Ad-Lib, being able to recognize changes and adjust to them immediately. Seeing the Big Picture will

help you with a fast and accurate Ad-Lib. In theory we should never have to Ad-Lib but we live in a world where people make mistakes. Jack Jefferies puts it best, [To Ad-Lib] "you must be able to see mistakes, cross-reference, and know what the team is supposed to be doing. After seeing the mistake you must make a judgment on the correct response (the ability to do this well comes mostly with experience). Then simply take action to correct. When teams are good with this it never appears that there was a mistake."

Good random work can mean the difference between Gold and Silver at a World Meet; it can also be the difference between a fun jump feeling good or bad. Take pride in your random work and others will see it. Learning all of the above takes time and effort. It all counts towards making better skydives, and everyone knows the feeling of a great skydive.

Visualization

By Jack Jefferies

Visualization is a very important element of skydiving training. The time we have in free fall to practice our sport is so short we are left with visualization as the only practical option for repetitive training. Repetitive training is necessary to make your skills and knowledge of a sequence automatic. To perform at the high end of your ability you must be able to let go of conscious thought and allow your performance to come automatically. The amount of readiness to perform at this level can come only from strong visualization skills and the trust-in-self they bring.

Have a system, a process of what, how, and when you visualize. Each of the members of Airspeed has their own system. Your system should be unique and specific to you. Spend time thinking about what you do and how well it works. Talk with your friends and coach about what they do. Gather as much information as possible and then begin to experiment. From this information create a visualization plan of your own. Write it down. After working your plan for a while you may choose to adjust it but you will have a process of visualization you can apply to all of your skydiving.

To help you begin to put together a plan of your own we will look at some of the key elements you might find in an Airspeed member's process.

Repetition: many repetitions over the same sequence. It requires an immense quantity of repetitions to make a skydive automatic. Visualizing should begin directly after the dirt dive and continue at regular intervals until the actual skydive. Working the next days skydives at home puts you ahead of the game. Working the next weeks skydives throughout the week, even further. The diligence of this work distinguishes the accomplished skydiver.

Relaxation: frequent periods of relaxation between sessions. Relaxing between bouts of visualization will help lessen anxiety. When a sequence is difficult to remember allowing your mind to relax is often all that's necessary. A relaxed mind thinks much faster and clearer than a tight, anxious mind. Also, visualizations done in a relaxed state are more vivid and powerful making them more productive to your training.

Calm: engender a calm mind and the proper arousal level. Calmness is key to skydiving well. The proper arousal level is critical to peak performance. Use your visualization time to practice these optimum states of mind.

Multiple points of view: viewing the skydive from your own perspective, the camera man's and even a teammate's. The more we can know about what is supposed to be happening in a sequence the better we will perform. Being able to see the entire jump, understand everyone's job, and perceive the overall flow

of the dive is critical. This ability, which requires a lot of training and a large amount of familiarity, will enable you to react to changes as they happen and remember difficult non-repeating sequences with ease.

Slow motion: seeing the entire skydive in slow motion while analyzing all the details. This gives you the time to look closely at the specifics of the jump without feeling rushed. Beware; a slow motion session should not be done close to the actual jump due to its lack of realism. Remember, to perform well it is necessary to let go of details and trust that they will come from you automatically. Look at the details during your slow motion session and then let them go. There is far too much happening far too quickly to hold in the front of your mind this kind of detail while skydiving.

Fast forward: viewing the skydive at twice the speed it will actually occur in order to stretch your anticipation abilities and increase confidence. Anticipation, like a muscle's flexibility will grow if stretched. Pushing your abilities by pushing the pace in your visualization will help you develop greater anticipation. Viewing the skydive in fast forward can also build confidence. "If I can remember the sequence at this pace the skydive is going to be easy." Like slow motion visualization, fast forward is not realistic and should not be practiced too close to the jump.

Real time: repetitions at actual speed done to make the sequence, timing, and details completely automatic. Your mind should be working just as you would like it to in freefall. It is here that you practice the correct arousal level, anticipation, distraction control, and all the mental disciplines of a great performance. This should be the bulk of your visualization where the real work gets done.

Positive: always see the jump working the way you planned it to. Our mind has the uncanny ability to create precisely what it sees. We must be careful not to visualize our fears. Visualize only what you want to happen. It's your mind, choose what you think!

Process: a set process executed the same each jump regardless of that jumps type or importance. Having this process be the same each jump is very powerful. It ensures you have prepared thoroughly every time. It also gives you a well-developed routine, which will give you confidence when the jump is very important. Airspeed develops routine and relies heavily on it for consistent performance under pressure.

Be intentional with your preparation. Develop a system that works for you and work it every time you jump. Constantly improve your visualization skills. These skills will play a major part in your improvement as a skydiver.

Debriefing

Maintaining a positive focus while debriefing is essential to promoting the optimum state of mind for learning. We naturally have a tendency as humans to focus more on the things we did wrong, breaking it down to levels that sometime border ridiculous. Although we do want to recognize and make corrections to mistakes, we have found that a more positive analysis of our jumps create a better learning platform.

By focusing on the positive parts of the jump, we train ourselves to recognize the right way to do things. It also allows us to show our teammates that we notice the great moves they do. When someone tells you that they really liked your move from the Crank to the Meeker then every time that combination or similar move comes up you are going to take pride in that move and want to show everyone how good and consistent you can do it.

On the flip side when you allow your teammates to recognize their own mistakes you allow them the chance to figure out the best way to correct it for themselves. You learn more by discovering and correcting your own mistakes than by having someone tell you that you did it wrong.

Airspeed's Debrief System

We have a system in place that allows all that I refer to above to happen in a timely manner. When you debrief 12 jumps in a day that can translate to a lot of wasted time unless it is kept in check. This system increases the learning curve by listening to each others mistakes and fixes and figuring out how this can be applied to yourself. Why make the same mistake that your teammate has made when you can learn from them.

In our debrief system we watch the video twice without talking, on the first viewing you will (more than likely) watch yourself. On the second viewing try to watch the big picture, see your teammates. Watch their good moves and the mistakes. Get ready to learn.

After we watch the video twice we then speak one at a time. While each person talks in turn *listen* to what they have to say.

When it is your turn to talk:

- State the positives (about anyone)
- State things that need improvement (about yourself)
- State what you can do to improve
- Be brief, get to the point
- Straight talk
- No defensive responses

Always start with positive, things you liked. This can be about anyone; in fact it is strongly encouraged. Complimenting each other performance builds self-esteem giving confidence to push further. Reinforcing correct performance helps commit it to memory increasing the chances of repeating.

Stating your own errors avoids the pitfalls in finger pointing. Having said it yourself leaves no room for abusive accusations from your teammates. It also creates a deeper sense of ownership for the mistake, increasing your responsibility to correct it. Setting goals for improvement from jump to jump will keep you clear and focused on what you are working on. The system will help you come to realize that it is OK to make mistakes, a much easier headspace to learn in.

There are times when one person will not recognize their own mistakes. By doing this they are not allowing any room for improvement and will likely make the same mistake again. This is often the role of a coach to ensure that this gets addressed. It seems that it is easier to accept criticism from an outside coach than from a member of your team. There will be times when your team has no coach and the issue needs to be addressed. If you see the need to critique a teammate, we suggest you follow these rules:

- Don't give any input unless you are sure of what you are saying. Look for patterns rather than isolated instances. Think first, then talk.
- The person who is being criticized needs to resist the temptation to get defensive. This is your teammate talking to you, with the betterment of the team in mind. Listen to what they have to say, they wouldn't be saying it if it wasn't important.
- Open yourself up to the possibility that they could be right. Do not defend yourself. Give serious consideration to what they are saying. If you decide that they are wrong, they may not be seeing the whole picture, don't debate it. Just go up on the next jump and do the best you know you can. If the mistake keeps reoccurring then consider their input again.

It is only with this straight talk and the absence of defensiveness that debriefing can be fully productive. Remember that none of this is personal, it is all for the better of the team and to make you a better skydiver.

Free Fall Communication

By Dan Chenfeld

Four great skydiver's, each capable of regularly performing at their personal best, do not on their own make a great team. Until they develop sharp, clear and understandable freefall communication they will still only be four great individual skydivers. The best teams develop their communication and timing so accurately that they appear to be glitch free in their movement. Functioning like clockwork. Like four parts of a machine.

The teams ability to perform at their best is a direct result of this communication. Many teams train under the assumption that communication will result naturally by simply having enough airtime together. They do not develop this communication into their training plan. Not only must you dedicate time and training to this, you must do it from the very first jump.

Simply enough the main tool we use for this is EYE CONTACT. We know everyone uses eye contact, it is the first and most basic thing you are taught when you become a skydiver. But the difference on Airspeed is.... We mean it.

Eye contact is not just looking in the general direction of the person across from you. It is looking straight into their eyes. Seeing their thoughts, reading their mind. Calming each other down. Firing each other up. Making well thought out decisions together in a fraction of a second.

Look straight into each other's eyes whenever you can. Obviously when you are facing out this will be a problem. But if you can see the eyes of the person across from you, then do so. Do not just sit with a blank stare waiting for a translation. Make an effort to read each other. The language is not complex. There are only a few thoughts that come up during any jump. You will be communicating the same thing over and over again. Thoughts like "calm it down", "control", "lets turn it up", and "better stops". These things can easily be seen in each other expressions. Deep philosophical or political conversations will have to wait. But everything you need to communicate about in order to get the most out of every move on every jump can be done in a flash.

We cannot see everyone's eyes all the time. For this reason we also communicate through our grips. Taking solid, clean grips, without fumbling around will signal to the person that you are gripping what your condition is. Your readiness, or lack there of, to start the next transition. This is essential for the key people. It will enable them to make the correct decisions on keys and pace. Allowing the team to continue moving in synch with each other under any conditions.

The ability for a team to really communicate this way is one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of Formation Skydiving. Your team best is a direct result of this.

Exits

There are three parts to a good exit. TIMING, PRESENTATION AND PLACEMENT

A good skydive always starts with a good exit. Getting the whole group off the plane together lets you get the jump off to a quick start. Launching the first point requires us to take up grips in the door. This often puts us in compromising positions. The key to getting a good launch is having balance and physically putting the formation on the air. First knowing where on the hill you want the formation to be, and then putting it there, no matter what.

In order to make all your exits work every time all members must achieve the following:

- Know exactly where the formation is to be in relation to line of flight.
- Be comfortable, balanced and stationary in the door.
- Know where you need to be as an individual, be presented to the relative wind as you launch. Don't wait until you are out to present.
- When lined up in the door, *look* at your opposite, establish you cross-referencing. Even if you cannot get direct eye contact, look in the direction of your opposite. Then as the formation hits the relative wind you will have them in your sight.
- Use what you see to make the formation sit exactly where you want it.

Timing

Timing involves getting everyone in the group out of the plane at the same time. Good timing is achieved by having one person initiate an exit count. The person giving the count should utilize three aspect of human communication:

Audible - Give a verbal count, this not only helps to communicate to others around you, but helps with your cadence. Not everyone is going to be able to hear your count and that is OK. Others will and everything we can do to help adds up. Once again a verbal helps *you* with *your* count.

Tactile – A shake that can be felt. Physical movement is a great form of communication. If you are not the person giving the count, you should have a heightened awareness of the person who is. Feel every nuance from that person and from the group. If you are the person giving the count make your shake strong and clear so that there is no mistaking your intentions.

Visual – Along with *feeling* the count the members not giving the count should look for the movement from the key person. Once again heighten you awareness so that you see everything. Person giving the count also should communicate visually loud. Be powerful in you communication, not so much though that you put someone off balance. Obvious subtlety is the key.

Presentation

Presentation refers to both Individual Presentation and Group Presentation to the relative wind.

Individual Presentation refers to your body's position and presentation to the relative wind. Be sure you are aware of where the wind is coming from as you are lined up in the door and have a plan about presenting your body to it. Know at what angle the rest of the piece will be presented and what heading you will need to have.

Group Presentation refers to the presentation of the entire piece to the relative wind. When a group exits the plane, each individual needs to have their own space so they can get clean air for their individual presentation. If we don't get this clean air then we are immediately put in another burble and this will create a funnel. Basically it work like this...the Point needs to jump up and away from center and the tail needs to drop down and away from center. Imagine a piece of clear plastic set up on a 45° angle horizontal to the wing dropping down from the front edge of the door. If the front person goes up and the tail goes down then everyone get clean air.

Piece Flying

By Dan Chenfeld

There are many different types of pieces and various block moves. But the basic mechanics of all of them are much the same.

During a 360° turn of any 2 person piece, there is one person who starts from the center or flies through the center first. The other person begins on the outside and flies through the center second.

The person who is driving through the center makes the more aggressive move. This creates a ONE - TWO motion. ONE, the first person drives through the center, out the other side and stops. TWO, after the first person stops their move, the next one drives through. Without this ONE – TWO staging, piece partners often begin towing each other around the sky. Both feel as if the other is taking them for a ride. The staging allows for complete control and it is that control which allows you to fly correctly and aggressively.

Center Flyer – Drive through the center aggressively with your eyes on the other piece. As you pass the center point make a strong stop. **Your main priority on the second half of the turn is to allow the outside flyer to do their move.** Understand where they are trying to go so that you can assist without restricting them in any way.

Outside Flyer – Your main priority at the start of the turn is to understand what your piece partner's initial move is and what they need from you in order to execute it properly. Normally they will need very little. Doing too much will usually be more of a restriction than it is assistance. See the other piece. Wait until your piece partner has stopped before you begin stage TWO. Look right at the other piece. Determine exactly where the finished formation will be. Recognize any adjustments from the plan that need to be made to finish the block correctly. Agree with the other piece that you can see the finish, and make your move.

The stages and communication that is described here will allow you to completely control the pieces during the entire turn. You never just spin your individual pieces and then fly them back together. You are constantly working with the other piece. Taking the time to recognize any imperfections so that you can control them and not let them control you.

TEAM DYNAMICS

By Jack Jefferies

Team Leader

We believe that it is important for all teams to have some sort of leadership. Strong leadership provides direction which keeps the team on track and working efficiently. It must be remembered that there are a lot of different ways to do any one thing but nothing will be done properly unless the entire team focuses on one method at one time. Having a leader will give the team a beacon to follow which will keep them working together on the same thing.

It is best to have a person whom all have agreed to have as their leader. Someone who is well liked and respected by everyone on the team. This respect must be earned, the leader must constantly prove his worth with his deeds. He must be very tactful and able to see what each individual needs from the group. He needs to have a holistic vision of how the team will look when it reaches its goal and know what basic adjustments must be made along the way to create that vision.

The team leader has a variety of responsibilities above and beyond his personal mental and flying skill work. He must lay out the plan that will bring the team to fulfill its goals. He must monitor progress and make decisions about when and if the plan needs to be altered. He is responsible for the setting of SMART goals. He needs to mediate team meetings to ensure that they are productive. At the end of a debate on technique he must make the final decision on the method to be pursued.

It can be very helpful to the efficiency of the team and the moral of the players if the team leader can delegate responsibilities to other team members. This will keep the work load at a manageable level for the team leader allowing him to perform all his tasks well. It also gives the rest of the team a sense of equality with the leader and ownership of the team's responsibilities.

Team Meetings

Communication seems to be the key to making interpersonal relationships work. A team is very much an interpersonal relationship with a lot of potential pitfalls. It is common for people on a team to try to bury problems due to a lack of desire to create a scene. This can be very destructive because the issues do not get resolved. They lay buried and slowly build into something, which is blown way out of proportion and very destructive to the team. It is important to safe guard yourself from this by setting up a system of routine meetings where people have a chance to table potential problems.

These meetings should be very routine and held regardless of whether or not there is a problem. You do not want to create an environment where people shudder with apprehension every time a meeting is called. They should be pre-scheduled and if there are no problems then only good things are talked about and everyone leaves happy.

I believe there should be two separate kinds of meetings . One should be a meeting where any personal problems are brought out in the open. Here each individual should have an uninterrupted chance to speak freely. It might help this process if you actually have some sort of object that is held by whomever is speaking and it is understood that you do not speak unless you hold this object. It is best if you start out with things that you like about your teammates before you start into the problems. This will let them know that you don't think all bad about them and help keep the problem being discussed in perspective.

The other kinds of meetings that must be regularly held are business meetings. It will help keep the team focused on skydiving if every one is clear on how and when the different business aspects of the team will be dealt with. This should deal with every thing from money to scheduling and decide who is responsible for what tasks and when they will be accomplished.

A closure meeting held at the end of each day is also important. Here you can recognize the days accomplishments, discuss future plans and events, and bring up potential problems that need to be avoided. It is a good time to review the days goals and discuss what was and was not achieved and why. It is a good thing to officially close the day. This will prevent any confusion about when the day is actually over and you can relax. The meeting should be brief and concise to avoid dragging out the day. You should also be sure to end with a positive note regardless of how the day went.

Coaching

Skydiving coaching has proven itself an invaluable element to any teams training time and time again. There are dozens of instances where a team has come out of know where to make incredible gains with very few training jumps with the use of a well qualified coach. The teams I have been on have always made use of as much coaching as we could manage.

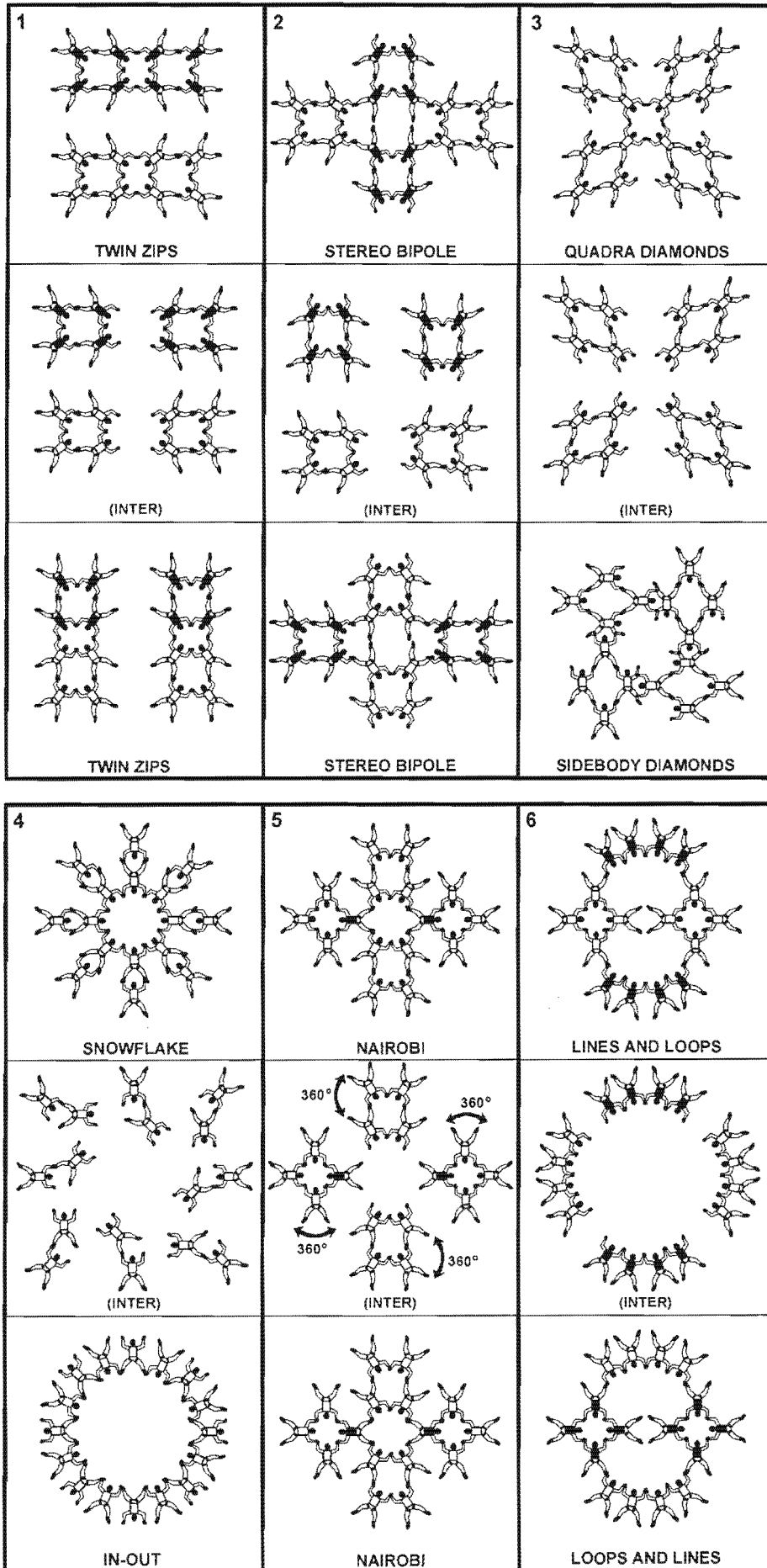
A well-qualified coach will show you how to perform all the skills properly without you having to spend all the thousands of jumps he did to learn it. He should be experienced enough to be able to trouble shoot your problems bringing you to the fix immediately. He will tell you what you will be doing and why making you understand how everything fits together.

The coach does much more than provide technical information. The coach basically takes the place of the team leader. He is in a much better position to do

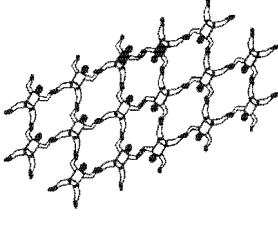
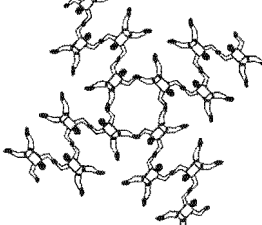
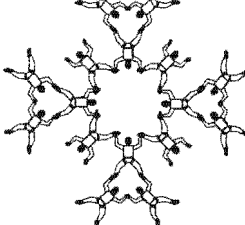
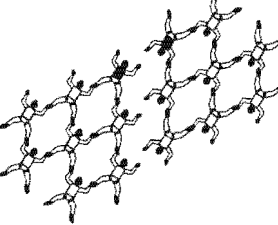
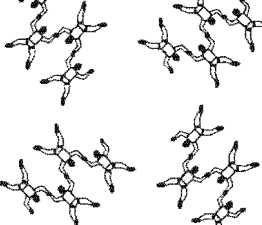
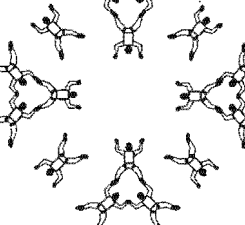
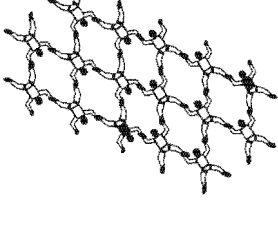
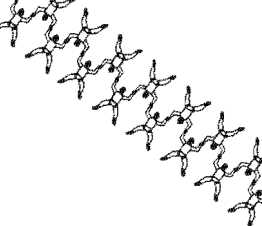
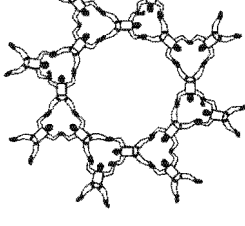
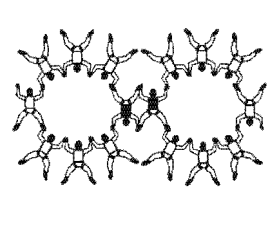
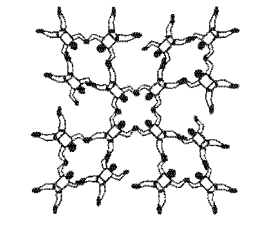
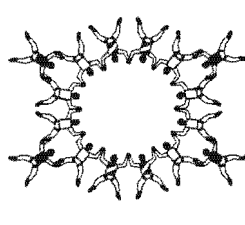
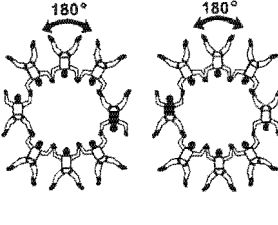
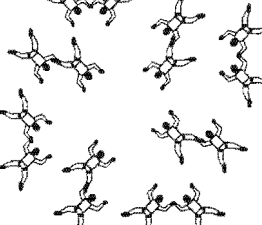
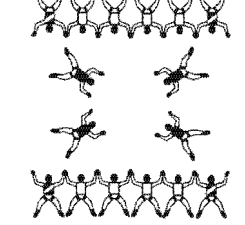
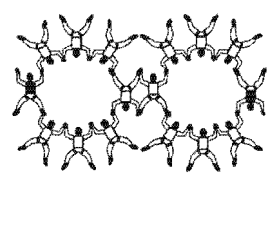
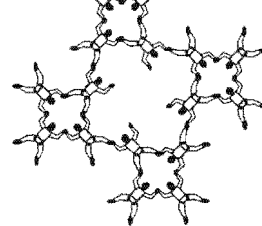
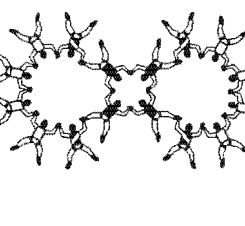
this job. He is unaffected by the emotional involvement a team member has and he is not dealing with the adrenaline coursing through his veins after he has landed from a training jump. This allows him to think much clearer during the debriefing and briefing allowing him to make better judgments about what the team needs. He is much more able to positively affect the teams moral.

Having a coach also allows the team leader to be just a team mate. This is a better place for him to work on his own skills. It is also a lot easier on the team for there is no feeling of there being some one on the team who is superior to another, easing a whole field of emotions. Life on a team with a coach is a lot easier than without.

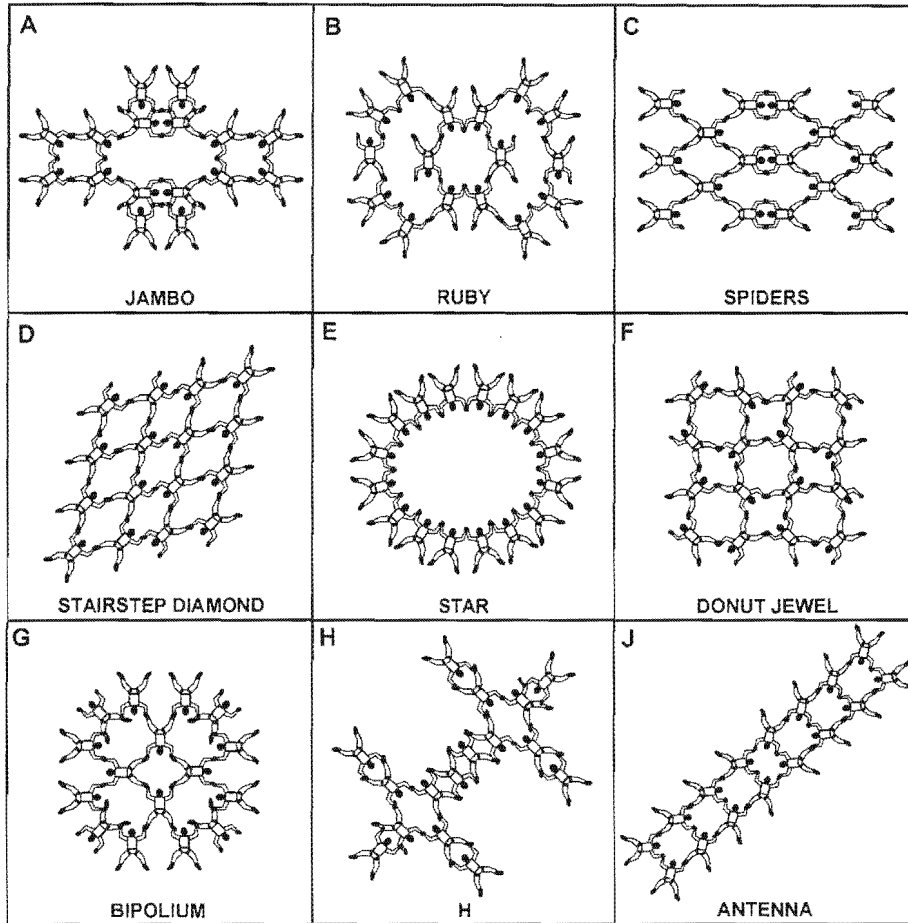
IPC Dive Pool – 16-Way Blocks 1 – 6



IPC Dive Pool – 16-Way Blocks 7 – 12

<p>7</p>  <p>STAIRSTEP ARROWHEAD</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>WHACKER</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>ROSE</p>
 <p>(INTER)</p>	 <p>(INTER)</p>	 <p>(INTER)</p>
 <p>STAIRSTEP ARROWHEAD</p>	 <p>ACCORDIAN</p>	 <p>DONUT FLAKE</p>
<p>10</p>  <p>TUMBLEWEEDS</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>HAKUNA</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>HIP</p>
 <p>(INTER)</p>	 <p>(INTER)</p>	 <p>(INTER)</p>
 <p>TUMBLEWEEDS</p>	 <p>MATATA</p>	 <p>HOP</p>

IPC Dive Pool – 16-Way Randoms



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