

FOUNDATIONS OF FLIGHT | ADVANCED BELLY TURNS



AXIS
Flight School



Brought to you by AXIS Flight School Instructor Brianne Thompson at Skydive Arizona in Eloy. Photos by Niklas Daniel.

Purpose

- ▶ Increase speed in a turn
- ▶ Greater lower-body awareness
- ▶ Improve super-positioning (moving in more than a single direction)
- ▶ Add precision to turn
- ▶ Stop more precisely

Execution

When executing a center-point turn, begin in a neutral position and focus on keeping your spine straight and maintaining an arch while making eye contact with your reference point. This article discusses a turn to the left. As you initiate the turn, remember to move your upper body to the left as you simultaneously move your lower

body to the right. Think of having your body rotate around your belly button.

Upper body

To turn left, drop your left elbow (push it very slightly forward, as well) while simultaneously lifting your right elbow. It is important to keep your left elbow moving away from the hip and in front of your shoulder during the turn.

Common mistakes: Pointing the chest in the direction of the turn. This causes the leading elbow to be too close to the hip, in turn causing a twisting and torquing of the spine. The result is an off-center turn or wobble.

Lower body

As you initiate elbow movement, drop your right knee. Once that knee is a few inches lower than your left knee, think of pointing it in the direction you want it to go (in this case, right). Pointing your knee will expose the inside of your right calf to the air, which will help accelerate the turn.

Common mistakes: Putting too much emphasis on pointing the knee rather than dropping it. This can cause the spine to twist, which may make the turn wobbly.

Since it can be a bit awkward to move the upper body and lower body in opposing directions on the ground, a common practice

while dirt diving is to touch the elbow to the knee. Done in the air, this can cause the turn to become unstable. Ensure that your limbs do not cross the line of your spine while turning; all movements should be away from the spine.

Once you've initiated the turn, keep looking at your cross reference over your shoulder until you are at the 180-degree picture. Once your lower body passes the 180-degree mark, perform a head-switch (quickly move your head to look over your other shoulder) and immediately make eye contact again.

As soon as you've performed the head-switch, you should be at the 270-degree mark, which is when you want to apply the brakes (a counter-turn). In this case, perform a counter-turn to the right.

Common mistakes: Head-switching too early, which can cause an off-center turn. Applying the brakes too late, which causes the flyer to overshoot the turn.



To view the instructional video, use the QR code to the left or visit the Foundations of Flight page at parachutistonline.com.