



66 Head-Up In-Face Carving

Pre-requisites

The main pre-requisite to being able to in-face carve, head up is to be able to back carve with your head close to the tunnel wall, feet close to the center. There is however the ability to carve head up from a static sit flying position. Either of these starting points should yield the same results if completed correctly.

An in-face carve, when done correctly, requires the combination of two motions: a forward drive and a turn. If you feel comfortable with these two points of motion while head-up, then you will find an in-face carve a rather simple skill to fly. However, an efficient and fast in-face carve requires a different body position that many aren't used to flying at first, and this is where you might find a bit of a challenge: carving with the leading leg down, and your hips out (eventually, you'll be able to carve with both legs down).

Objectives

To master this skill, your primary objective should be to achieve the carve with your hips completely out and your leading leg down. The forward motion should be achieved by presenting you back and head surface to the wind, while the turn achieved by ruddering your shoulders and chest. Your rudder will determine the size of the circle you'll be tracing, so your chest and shoulders determine if you are carving along the wall of the tunnel, flying a small circle at the center, or running into the wall due to a lack of input. It is important to note that your leading leg is not down in order to achieve a side-slide to the carve; think of your leading leg as "piercing" the wind straight down, having no effect on the side motion of the carve.

Preparation

Your instructor will determine the best way for you to start the carve depending on your skills and your predominant starting position.

- If you are starting from a low wind speed back carving position, you will begin in the same spot inside the tunnel and generating the same rotation around the tunnel as you have previously done while back carving and then adjusting your body position as the wind speed is slightly increased to become more vertical
- If you feel comfortable in a traditional sit position (hips bent), then you might begin the carve in that sit, and slowly start to bring your leading leg down. It is important again to understand you are "piercing" the wind with that leg, rather than creating a side motion (bring the leg straight down, not to the side). As you bring your leg down, you will lose lift unless you present more back and head surface to the wind.
- If you feel comfortable flying a static sit-fly position with one leg down, then you might want to begin the carve from that same static position. All it takes is a forward motion by leaning your back and head on the wind, then a turn using your shoulders and chest.

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Technique and Drills

Helpful tip: Don't get too comfortable in the "traditional" sit! Take a few rotations to just try and fly different, awkward, and strange positions in your static sit, especially with your legs! One leg down, both legs down, legs in a split, kick...Get creative with it. This not only develops leg awareness, but it increases your willingness to just go for it when the instructor asks you to. Many flyers progress too slowly because they are too comfortable in their traditional sit.

The technique you are looking for while in-face carving:

- Hips out, leading leg down. You'll want to achieve both simultaneously. When you bring your leg down, bringing your hips out will present more back surface to the wind, thus keeping you level and your rudder (shoulders and chest) engaged. It is helpful to think while bringing your leading leg down, to bring the leg back slightly towards your back as well. This alone will bring out your hips. Remember you are piercing the wind or "tucking" your leg down.

If you are aiming to accomplish this carve from a back carving motion, you will aim to complete the following steps:

- Use the same techniques to begin a rotation as you have used previously for a low wind speed back carve
- Slightly rotate your head shoulder back making your chest more "proud" in order to gain more lift at your upper body
- As your body pitch begins to change you will need to drive your heels down and begin pushing your hips forward to create the correct flight position
- Similar to beginning in a sit flying position, you may consider placing your leading leg lower and your trailing leg higher to begin with to assist in managing the rotation speed and later as you become more proficient, you may opt to have both legs straight



In-Face Carve, Hip Position



In-Face Carve, Leg Position

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Post-Flight Questions / Suggestions

- Did you find yourself bailing back to back flying, dragged by your leg? You might be presenting it sideways or forward too much.
- Were your hips completely out?
- Were you carving along the wall? Did you eventually run into it? Were your “circles” too small? You might need to adjust your rudder.
- What can you improve on during the next session?

What Skill is Next?

Once you know how to properly in-face carve head-up, you will begin to learn out-face carving head-up, and how to switch from one direction to the other. These are the beginning stages of becoming truly free in the tunnel! A very helpful tip is to begin carving the opposite direction as soon as you start getting the move. Don't get too comfortable in one direction, especially at the beginning of your progression, because you will develop an “awkward” side that will become harder to fix the longer you leave it unattended.

