

# SKYDIVING!

So, you're thinking about doing a skydiving and you have no idea where to start. Well, it's incredibly accessible for everyone.

A good place to start is the internet and here are some links:

<http://www.bpa.org.uk/>

This is the British Parachute Association. This is the body that regulates Parachuting and Skydiving activities in the UK. There is a whole host of information on the website about current activities and also information on how to get into skydiving.

<http://www.bpa.org.uk/dropzone/dzone.htm>

This is a map of the BPA Affiliated Drop Zones in the UK and you can access most Drop Zones' websites from links on here.

<http://www.ukskydiver.co.uk/cms/>

This is a public forum for skydivers and has mostly UK Skydivers registered. There is also a lot of Drop Zone information on here, but more from a Sport Skydiving (rather than a one off) perspective. Here you can chat to other skydivers and share experiences and knowledge.

<http://www.skydivingmovies.com/ver2/pafiledb.php>

This is a site run by skydivers for skydivers and contains videos of all sorts of jumping. Be careful, you may spend hours on here!

Having given you all of those links and information and if you are still interested, I would like to add my own personal note here.

There are three options for making your first skydive:

## **TANDEM**

Mostly favoured by people who want to do a one-off jump. Very little training involved and you are strapped to a very experienced instructor who does all the life-saving stuff for you. You are pretty much a passenger along for the ride. You will exit the plane at somewhere between 10,000ft and 15,000ft, depending on the conditions and on the Drop Zone and the plane that is flying. I would recommend having video on this if you are only planning on doing one, as there is a huge sensory overload and it may be difficult to take it all in and remember it all in one. Prices range from approx £180 - £250 for the skydive and from £80 - £150 for the video (depending on if it includes stills or not). If you can raise enough money for a charity, you may not have to pay anything.

## **AFF**

(Accelerated Free Fall)

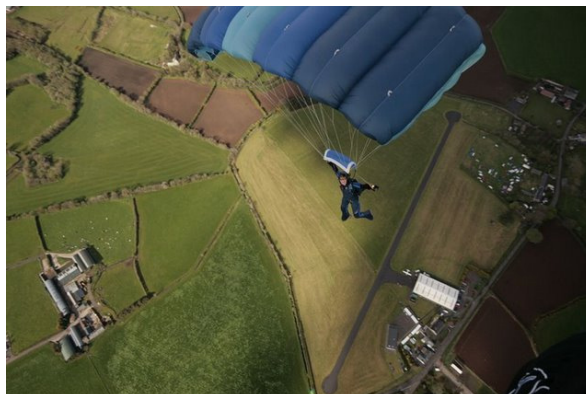
Mostly favoured by people who want to take up skydiving as a sport. You will do 6 hour ground school, either on a one to one basis or in a small group with an instructor, who will most likely be your primary instructor on the actual jump. You will jump from the plane at somewhere between 10,000ft and 15,000ft, depending on the Drop Zone and the plane that is flying. You will have to save your own life on this jump. You will have two instructors, holding onto you and they will be with you throughout the freefall experience and will stay with you until you deploy your own parachute. You will then be talked down with a radio in your helmet from the ground and have to land your own parachute. This is an ideal introduction to skydiving for someone who wants to take it up as a regular activity.

## **STATIC LINE**

This is a slightly older method of getting into the sport, but to experience just jumping out of a plane, it is the cheapest. It is the one I took, because I'm a tight northern lass! You will go through 6 hours of ground school and normally in a class of about 10 – 15 people. You will jump from the plane at 3,500 feet and the parachute will open automatically, it will be attached to the plane and will therefore be opened by you exiting. You will be talked down on the radio in your helmet. There is a progression system (sometimes called RAPS) which can be converted to AFF or through which you can become a licenced skydiver.

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Skydiving is dangerous! So is crossing the road. So is driving. We are not a bunch of "Daredevils" we are risk takers and we manage the risk very well. In the last 6 years I have done almost 500 jumps in four different countries from about 15 different types of planes and on 10 different Drop Zones. They all operate slightly differently and I have learnt how to manage my risk very well from being a 50 jump wonder to being an almost 500 jump wonder (not actually that many jumps in the whole scale of things). It is a personal decision to try this sport and to stay in it. This decision can only be made by you, don't do it if you don't feel comfortable with it, but at the same time, if you want to experience one of the most amazing sports available to mankind, come on in and have a taste....



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