

Skydive The Rockies Skydiving Center

Level VIII Program

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Congratulations on your successful completion of Skydive The Rockies! Accelerated FreeFall Program. You are probably wondering ``Where do I go from here?``. The answer is that whether you have 10 jumps or 10,000 jumps, there is always more to learn. As an AFF Level VII graduate, that journey begins with (surprise) level VIII. The Level VIII program is a series of solo dives designed to accomplish the following goals:

1. Perfect the skills learned in the AFF program.
2. Build confidence in your ability to exit an aircraft at a lower altitude (should that need arise).
3. Attain your USPA A license.

These goals will be accomplished over the 4--8 solo dives of the Level VIII program. Once these goals have been reached, you'll be ready to start making coached dives with experienced skydivers to work on your air skills. Relax, have fun, be safe, and see you in the coaching program....

VIIIp1 --- AFF Skills

The first phase of the SDTR Level VIII program is a series of two to four solo dives to practice the things you learned in the AFF program. The emphasis here is on having fun and building some confidence your ability to skydive ``on your own``. You will also be practicing for the next phase, which is a low altitude ``clear and pull`` dive.

TLOs

- Perfect ability to perform poised and diving exits.
- Perfect ability to start and stop controlled turns.
- Practice backloop and frontloop maneuvers.
- Practice tracking to gain horizontal separation for opening.
- Practice for ``Clear and Pull`` by maintaining stability while performing a PPT within 5 seconds of exit on at least two dives.
- Maintain good altitude awareness.
- Perform dives in a safe manner.

- Wave off, then pull at or above 3000 feet.
- Land within 20 meters of target (record distances in logbook).

Dive Suggestions

The exact format of these solo dives is up to you, but it will probably resemble the AFF Level VII dive flow somewhat. It is important to use a good ground reference when practicing turns to enable you to judge your ability to start and stop them on heading. When practicing tracking, do so in a direction perpendicular to the aircraft's line-of-flight to stay clear of groups exiting before or after you. It is suggested that solo jumpers leave the plane after the smallest RW group, but before tandems and AFF groups (which open higher). Remember that the priority on all skydives is Pull, Pull at the assigned altitude (before 3000'), Pull stable.

VIIIp2 --- Low Altitude Exit

Throughout the AFF program, dives were performed from high altitudes to give a maximum amount of freefall learning time on each dive. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, skydivers must often exit the aircraft at lower altitudes due to mechanical or atmospheric problems. This dive is to get you acclimated to the lower altitude exit.

TLOs

- Ability to perform a stable exit.
- Initiation of deployment within 5 seconds of exit.
- Land within 20 meters of target (record distance in logbook).

Dive Suggestions

The first low altitude exit should be performed between 4000 and 5000 feet. The exit is not dramatically different than the exit you used for Levels I--VI (poised exit). In this case though, you will be initiating the main ripcord pull before reaching terminal velocity (which would take about 10 seconds). To insure stability at subterminal speeds, a *hard arch* position is used. This is accomplished by putting the hips and chest into a ``maximum arch" position. Additionally, the arms and legs are extended straight. When performed correctly, it should look like the letter ``X" when viewed from the front or back.

When performing the actual dive, exit the aircraft from the poised position and perform a *hard arch*. Give a two to three second count and then initiate a main ripcord pull in the usual manner, recovering immediately to the *hard arch* position. This dive is also good

for practicing your spotting skills since you will probably be the only one exiting on this pass. Remember that you are not at terminal velocity, so a 3 second delay translates to only about 150 feet of altitude loss (versus a 500 foot altitude loss at terminal velocity).

Where do I go from here?

Now that you have completed the solo dives of the level VIII program, you are ready to begin skydiving with others. Your immediate goal should be to qualify for a United States Parachute Association "A" License. The minimum requirements for that license beyond what is accomplished in the AFF program are:

- Twenty (20) freefall jumps including 5 minutes of total freefall time.
- Landed within 20 meters of target on 5 jumps.
- Unintentional water landing training.
- Participation in at least three 2--way relative work jumps.
- Pass a written exam.

Note that application for any license requires *documentation* of the requirements (usually a logbook entry). When you are ready, you may contact any of the AFF Instructors for information on taking the exam and applying for the license.

You should also have begun accumulating your own skydiving gear. At a minimum, you should already have ordered or received:

- A hard, Pro-tec style, helmet (which NSC requires until 50 jumps).
- A jumpsuit appropriate for your size and weight.
- A visually accessible altimeter (either chest mounted or wrist mounted).
- Goggles.

You should also be in the market for a complete rig (main parachute, reserve parachute, and harness/container system). There are many manufacturers of parachutes and containers, each of which produces several product lines and sizes. Ask the staff for suggestions on the type of gear they recommend (but remember they are only *suggestions*). A new rig will cost between \$2500 and \$4000 depending on the choice of components. A used rig will cost less, but should be carefully inspected by an FAA rigger prior to purchase.

There are many other items that are useful for skydiving, many of which can be obtained through regular sporting goods sources. Gloves are necessary for skydiving whenever the temperature on the ground or at altitude drops below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Equipment should be stored and transported in a protective container like a duffel, gear bag, or hard case. A USPA Skydiver Information Manual has information necessary for passing the license exams and performing special dives like night or demonstration jumps.

Finally, keep in mind that you are entering a new sport quite unlike any you previously have experience with. Jumping with others will be helpful, but you must carefully determine the experience level and ability of those wanting to ``coach" you. Just like ``Two drowning men cannot save one another", two recent AFF graduates cannot effectively teach one another to skydive, and may actually represent a hazard to each other.

Staff members can introduce you to available coaches who we feel do a good job. If you have questions about the ability of someone wanting to coach you, ask. Freefall time is expensive and we want you to make the most of yours.

Good luck, have fun, be safe.