

AFF/AFP Student Wind Tunnel FAQ

An indoor wind tunnel accurately simulates the freefall portion of skydiving. Experienced skydivers use it to train and practice maneuvers as well as just have fun with the freefall sensation.

How can tunnel time benefit me?

You can learn to fly your body in a controlled environment. With the tunnel, you have a better chance to ‘feel’ how to fly your body. Once you become stable, the instructor can release you so that you can practice flight without their assistance. You will be able to learn what movements are most effective and which ones lead to instability.

In the tunnel, you can practice for a couple minutes at a time, several times an hour. Sessions in the tunnel generally last between one and three minutes, allowing you to speed up the learning process. The rapid repetition does not allow your body to forget what it has learned like can happen between breaks in jumping. The tunnel builds muscle memory for flying skills, making your next skydive easier and better.

Feedback is very obvious, and video is comparably cheap. Since you are in a small area compared to the sky, you know if you are moving. In the air, the references are just your instructors (who are probably moving with you). Plus you can get a video tape of your whole session, which allows you to review your progress afterwards and increase your learning.

Finally, the tunnel isolates your flying skills. Once you know you can fly and move, you can be less stressed about it in the sky. Hopefully this will help you concentrate on more important things – like altitude awareness.

I am very very poor. Do I have to get tunnel time to succeed?

The tunnel is not required to become licensed. Many dropzones do not have access to a tunnel. Their students’ progress and graduate without the benefits of the tunnel. However, it is a very useful tool and the benefits should not be ignored.

The tunnel can help save money if it keeps you from failing a level. There is no way to know for sure which students will pass through AFF/AFP perfectly and which ones will have some obstacles to overcome. The decision is therefore yours.

If you are really stuck on the decision, make your first couple of skydives. Ask your instructors their opinion on your body position so far, your confidence level, and awareness. Hopefully this will give you clues to your progress and the best course of action.



I am having difficulty. Will tunnel time fix me?

Very likely! As much as we would love to give you a absolute yes, there are factors we can not reproduce perfectly in the tunnel. For instance, the tunnel can not directly teach you to stay calm, keep altitude awareness, or fly your canopy.

However, it can help you increase your confidence. If you are sure of your flying skills, hopefully you can spend more time concentrating on your altitude and pull time. If you have a successful tunnel session, you should have even more reason to stay relaxed and calm.

Most students reap big rewards from the tunnel, and it helps them tremendously with the trouble spots they may be encountering.

How much time should I get?

That depends on how fast you learn, and what you need to achieve. It is recommended that a student get no less their 15 minutes at a time. The average person leaves feeling comfortable in this increment of time. You can always do another session if you are not satisfied.

Other students will want more time, or will just enjoy the tunnel as an experience in itself. These students can typically book time in 15 minute increments.

Do I need a coach?

Every tunnel session is conducted by a tunnel instructor. The tunnel instructor's primary responsibility is to keep you safe and in control. If you book time, you can always ask the instructor for some advice and help. They can usually provide great in air instruction.

The next level of instruction is called a coach. The coach does not work directly for the tunnel. The tunnel instructor will still be there, but they will mostly focus on your safety. There are definite advantages to a coach including:

- Spend more personalized time with you before and after your session
- Is able to fly with you in order to do more advanced drills
- Better face to face communication
- Can talk to you in between each flight for instant feedback
- Has the time to do a full video debrief after your flight

Hiring a coach is usually just a small fraction more then the actual tunnel time. When it is possible, the extra attention is highly recommended.

How do I book time? How do I book a coach?

If you are interseted in flying at one of our workshop's at Paraclete XP in North Carolina, you can find out more information and register at rhythmskydiving.com. Rhythm also has limited time available at other tunnels across the country, contact all@rhythmskydiving.com more information.