

PARAGLIDING PITFALLS

These are common phases of the pilot's flying career that require extra vigilance. *Every pilot should be aware of their pitfalls.*

A
D
V
A
N
C
E
D

I
N
T
E
R
M
E
D
I
A
T
E

B
E
G
I
N
N
E
R

1 TIMID AND/OR SMALL

Pilot: Is not active enough on toggles, is a small pilot, and/or is light on their wing.
Risk: Deflation.

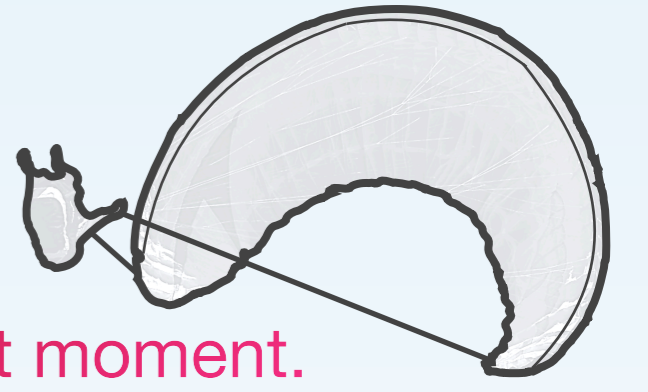
What to do: Study active piloting - brakes prevent deflations. SIV, when ready. Consider ballast, if light on wing.



2 HEAVY-HANDED

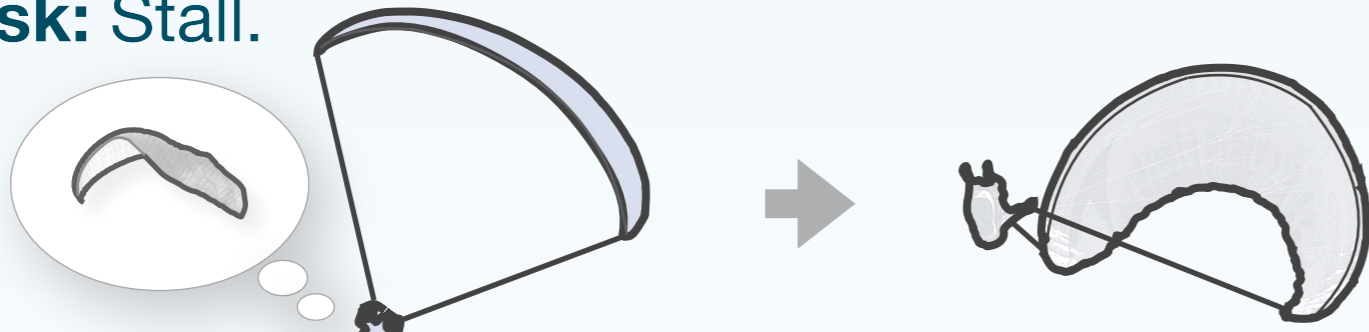
Pilot: Is strong-armed on the brake toggles, is a larger pilot, and/or is a former skydiver.
Risk: Stall.

What to do: Study active piloting - wings need brake pressure in one moment & less or no brakes in the next moment. Do not fly until sorted. SIV, when ready.



3 COLLAPSE TO STALL

Pilot: Has previously experienced a deflation. Now, they overcompensate with bad brake input.
Risk: Stall.



What to do: Be active on the brakes. Use soft arms & give the wing what it wants. Manage/regain airspeed. Kite. Kite. Kite, especially in wake. Keep in mind that deflations are often more benign than stalls. And instead of anticipating the surge, check the surge.

4 INTERMEDIATE

Pilot: 6mo - 5yrs. They are progressing to new sites, skills/maneuvers, equipment, & conditions; and are overcoming fears and other limitations they had as newbs.

Risk: They get in over their head and get hurt.

What to do: Check in with mentors. Establish personal rules like: when to throw your reserve and your own "Swiss cheese" model of risk. **Be kind to newer pilots.** Have altitude for any maneuvers. Respect Spring, Summer, and midday conditions.



5 SUDDEN COLLAPSE

Pilot: Anyone and everyone.
Risk: Unexpected collapse of half or more of the canopy.

What to do: Deliberately weight-shift away & apply opposite brake to steer the glider straight and counter the deflation. Near terrain, do not stare at the glider. SIV yearly.

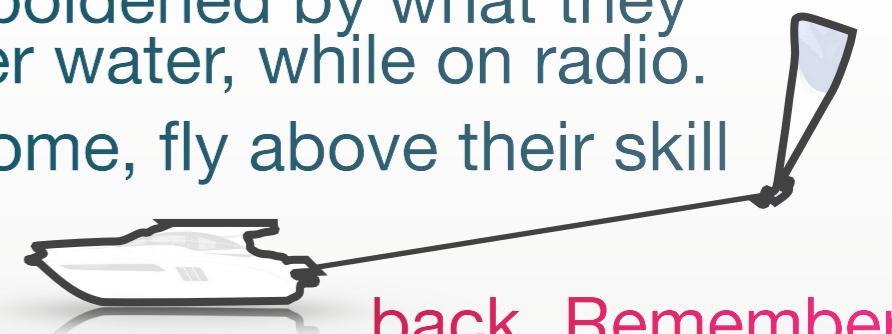


6 POST SIV

Pilot: *May* be emboldened by what they were able to do over water, while on radio.

Risk: They come home, fly above their skill level, and get hurt.

What to do: Dial it back. Remember, you are the same pilot that you were pre-SIV.

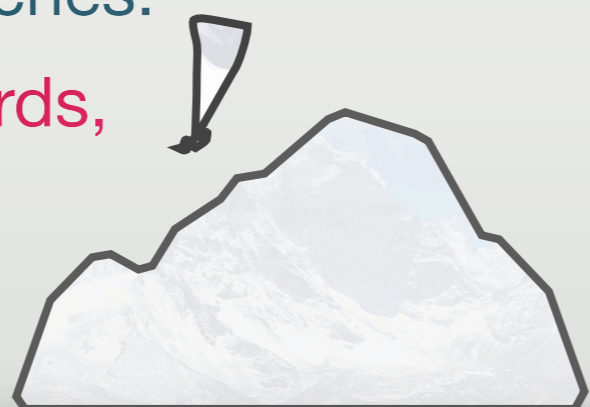


7 TRAVELING POINT

Pilot: Has high-wind ground-handling skills.

Risk: 1) They botch **light wind** launches, 2) they launch into high winds in the mountains & get **blown back**, 3) they don't realize that high winds + strong thermals = **turbulence**, 4) they botch **sloped** and/or cliff launches.

What to do: 1) Practice forwards, 2) Follow the "12x12 Rule," if it's >12mph anywhere below 12,000' → reconsider. 3) Practice hill/cliff launches.



8 OVERCONFIDENT

Pilot: Experienced and/or ultra-current pilot - nothing has gone wrong in a while.

Risk: They may become complacent or even a little reckless.

What to do: Check in with mentors. Re-establish your personal rules; See Item #4 Intermediate.



9 CRUSTY RUSTY

Pilot: Has skills but hasn't flown in a while.

Risk: They try to fly at the skill level they were before their hiatus and get hurt.

What to do: Ease back into it slowly. Take lessons if it's been years since you last flew.



WHAT IS YOUR PITFALL?