

# corners can KILL



**Stay safe**



Hans Berggren

We skydive for fun. Yes, it's a risk, but we take time to reduce this risk to an acceptable level. That's why we spend lots of money on AADs, reserves, quality containers and high performance wings. That's why we pull above 2,000 feet and many considerably higher. That's why we have training and a multitude of safety checks.

### Unacceptable Risk

So why then, wherever I watch canopies land, on almost every load, do I see people compromising this level of acceptable risk? Do these people have a death wish? Or do they just not know? Do they really not know what they are doing?

### Landing Turn

It has become not just fashionable but exciting and fun to make a turn before landing. I love making my slow carving turn, generating that speed and feeling the adrenaline flow as you rip up the surf across the drop zone.

### Allow Altitude for Natural Recovery

The turn generates speed that we further convert into lift on landing. To do this safely we must make the turn at an altitude that

allows the canopy to recover from the dive on its own accord. To require toggle input to pull the canopy out of the dive is not only inefficient, negating the need to make the turn in the first place, but it is also poor piloting and dangerous.

### Ideally, Land Without Toggle Input

The more toggle input you need to induce an early recovery the greater the inefficiency and the smaller the margin for error. Eventually there will come a time when you won't be able to use the toggles to recover because you're too low; instead, if you're lucky, you can use your snapped femur to help slow you as you plough a ditch across the DZ.

### Are You Turning Too Low?

Most people that make a turn understand these basics; they know and appreciate the added risks; too low is a no go. Yet many don't realise that they are consistently making their turn too low. There are too many jumpers out there making a turn, even a slight turn, which then needs input to recover.

### Corners Kill

So let's leave some room for error and keep out of the corner. We're aiming to find the *highest* altitude that we can make our turn, not the lowest. I guarantee that if you can do this then you will have safer, more enjoyable and more efficient landings.

### Coaching Cures

So next time you jump, consciously think, is your canopy recovering on its own? Does it require input? If you don't know then ask someone to watch you – or get some coaching. We pay for coaching in FS and freeflying so why not for canopy flight?

### Watch and Learn

Go and watch a couple of lifts landing, and I guarantee you'll see swoops requiring toggle input to recover. Ideally take a good canopy pilot out with you who can assist in debriefing what you're watching. Videoing landings to watch later is useful too, your own and others.

It's impacting with the ground that kills, so learn how to fly relative to it safely, so you live to do it again.

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[www.bpa.org.uk](http://www.bpa.org.uk)  
Click the 'stay safe' button for canopy info

The ideal swoop turn is in the green zone where the turn for landing is initiated sufficiently high that the canopy will plane out on its own.

Canopies turning lower in the amber zone require toggle input to pull out of the dive. Such high speed landings may appear well-executed to the untrained eye but are inefficient and potentially dangerous.

Sooner or later, people who fly in the amber zone will stray into the red zone, where they have turned too low to recover before hitting the ground, however much toggle input they use.