



PARACHUTING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

The following are frequently asked questions by people with varying types of disability, who wish to experience the exhilaration of a parachute descent.

- **Who is the controlling body for parachuting in the UK?**

The British Parachute Association (BPA) has the official Approval of the Civil Aviation Authority to conduct and control the sport of parachuting in the UK. Further information on the BPA may be obtained by visiting the BPA website at www.bpa.org.uk or contacting the BPA Office - details are at the top of this page.

- **What possibilities are there for disabled people to parachute?**

Skydiving is one of the most exciting and challenging action sports of modern times, and the growing popularity of Tandem parachuting has enabled people with a wide range of disabilities to experience the sport. Inevitably, though, the nature and severity of *some* disabilities does preclude participation.

Tandem parachuting offers a quick and easy introduction to freefall using a dual harness system, with the person concerned being securely strapped to a highly qualified instructor, who controls the descent, the parachute deployment and the landing. Once the main parachute is deployed, it is normal for the instructor to allow the student, where possible, to steer the parachute under the instructor's guidance during some stage of the descent.

- **Who can parachute, and what are the medical requirements?**

Anyone wishing to parachute must be at least 16 years of age. For people between 16 and 18 years of age, the written consent of a parent or guardian is required.

A Certificate of Fitness to Parachute/Tandem Medical Certificate, must be obtained before *anyone*, with or without a disability, is permitted to carry out a parachute jump.

Full details of the medical requirements for such a Certificate are set out on the appropriate forms, which may be downloaded from the BPA website or obtained from the BPA Office or any BPA Affiliated Parachute Club or Centre. Where further specific information is required, the BPA's Medical Adviser will be pleased to help, and may be contacted through the BPA Office.

- **How can I find out if I can do a parachute jump with my particular disability?**

Before entering into any commitment, it would be wise to talk to the Chief Instructor at your chosen Parachute Club or Centre, and let them know the nature of your disability. The Chief Instructor may be able to form an opinion, based on the information provided, on whether or not a parachute jump is a practical proposition, or may suggest that a decision would be made depending upon the outcome of the application to your doctor for the issue of a Certificate of Fitness to Parachute/Tandem Medical Certificate.

Even though a disabled person may be declared medically fit to parachute, a Chief Instructor can, owing to the nature of the disability, *and in the overriding interests of safety*, decline to allow that person to undertake a parachute jump.

- **Where can I do a Tandem parachute jump?**

There are around 25 Clubs and Centres Affiliated to the British Parachute Association, and the majority offer Tandem parachuting facilities. A full list of locations and contacts is available on the BPA website or on request from the BPA Office.

- **What special equipment is needed and who provides it?**

All the necessary equipment required for a Tandem parachute jump is provided by the Clubs and Centres.

- **What sort of clothing should I wear?**

Your selected Club or Centre will be pleased to advise you about the most suitable clothing and footwear.

- **Will my Instructor be qualified, and how can I check on his/her qualifications and experience?**

All Instructors are highly trained, and will be in possession of a Tandem Instructor rating approved by the British Parachute Association. The Chief Instructor at an Affiliated Club or Centre will be able to verify the qualifications and experience of any particular Tandem Instructor if necessary.

- **How much training will I be required to do?**

Unlike solo parachuting, which requires a minimum of 6 hours of ground training, Tandem parachuting needs much less in the way of preparation on the ground beforehand. The instructor will give the student a thorough briefing on all aspects of the jump, including procedures to be adopted when in the aircraft, during the climb to altitude, and during the descent and landing. This briefing will also include details of any procedures to be adopted in the unlikely event of an emergency.

- **What about insurance?**

Students are insured against the risk of injury to a third party or damage to property.

Students are *not* insured for Personal Accident risks, so persons intending to carry out a Tandem parachute jump may wish to make their own arrangements in this respect. Most BPA Affiliated Clubs and Centres can advise on companies that specialise in personal accident insurance.

- **Will there be facilities at the parachute Club to cater for my particular needs?**

The nature of facilities on the ground varies considerably from place to place throughout the country, so if there is a specific requirement, this should be discussed during the initial contact with the Club or Centre chosen to conduct the parachute jump. They will do everything that they can to provide whatever help is needed.