

GUIDE

Organizing Open Paragliding Week

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UP! UNTANGLE PARAGLIDING

UP! Untangle Paragliding

This guide is the culmination of our project, Untangle Paragliding, which received co-funding from the European Union's Erasmus+ sport program. The primary objective of this initiative was to introduce and foster widespread interest in the sport of paragliding. Drawing upon years of cumulative expertise in paragliding instruction, our team recognized the profound impact that the inaugural experience of taking flight holds for novice pilots a moment deemed truly singular and unparalleled.



Given the expansive and intricate nature of paragliding, our project structure centered on organizing single-day activities (paragliding open weeks). These meticulously planned events aimed to acquaint participants with the fundamental aspects of paragliding, encompassing the critical skills of initiating liftoff, in-flight control, and executing a safe landing. This condensed yet comprehensive curriculum provided participants with a condensed yet comprehensive overview of paragliding, all while imparting the exhilarating sensation of soaring into the sky. The meticulous design of these activities reflected our commitment to demystifying the complexities of paragliding within the limited timeframe of a single day.



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By strategically focusing on key elements, participants were afforded a tangible and immersive introduction to paragliding, fostering an understanding of its foundational principles while instilling a sense of awe and excitement associated with the unique experience of ascending from the ground.



Erasmus+

INTRODUCTION

Paragliding is an exhilarating aerial sport characterized by the artful mastery of flying on a parachute glider a lightweight, free-flying aircraft distinguished by its absence of a rigid primary structure. Positioned within a suspended harness beneath the fabric wing, the pilot orchestrates flight through a delicate interplay of suspension lines, controlled air entry through wing openings, and aerodynamic forces harnessed from the airflow over the wing's surface.

Originating in the 1980s as an evolution from parachute sports, paragliding witnessed advancements in gliding characteristics, rendering it distinct within the realm of aviation. Accessible and versatile, paragliding stands apart from other aviation pursuits by obviating the need for a designated take-off or landing runway. The launch may occur from elevated terrains or flat ground, facilitated by tow equipment. While offering an enthralling means of exploring the skies and enjoying the beautiful nature, paragliding demands a commitment to training, the acquisition of skills, and a keen awareness of safety protocols.

Paragliding enthusiasts engage in this dynamic pursuit worldwide, leveraging diverse locations where conducive flight conditions prevail. Beyond the sheer thrill of flight, paragliding is a multidisciplinary endeavor that draws upon expertise in aerodynamics, flight mechanics, construction of paragliding equipment, hands-on flight experience, meteorology, aviation regulations, and more. It stands as a complex sport necessitating extensive theoretical study and prolonged practical engagement. Mastery of paragliding empowers pilots to embark on extended journeys covering tens to hundreds of kilometres, spending considerable durations aloft a testament to the profound depth and challenge inherent in this captivating airborne pursuit.



ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide provides a detailed roadmap for organizing and executing a successful paragliding open week. From the initial stages of targeted promotion and information dissemination to the practical aspects of on-site logistics and hands-on training, every facet of the paragliding experience is meticulously addressed.

The guide emphasizes the importance of thoughtful planning, effective communication, and safety considerations throughout the training process. From theoretical preparations to practical applications, the instructor's role as a mentor and guide is underscored, ensuring participants not only acquire skills but also gain a deep understanding of the sport.

Key highlights include the strategic use of digital platforms for promotion, the careful selection of training terrain, and the incorporation of theoretical and hands-on components in the training curriculum. The guide recognizes the significance of clear communication, both in pre-training preparations and during the execution of the training day, to foster a positive and enriching learning environment.

The commitment to safety is evident in the meticulous consideration of meteorological conditions, equipment checks, and the strict supervision of flight activities.

In summary, this guide serves as a valuable resource for both novice instructors and experienced organizers, offering insights and best practices to ensure the successful and enjoyable execution of paragliding open week. By adhering to the principles outlined in this guide, organizers can create an environment where participants can eagerly continue their journey in the thrilling world of paragliding.



TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION

To facilitate the effective implementation of the Training event, the following critical considerations must be meticulously addressed:

1. Qualified Personnel:

- Instructors with requisite qualifications in accordance with the pertinent legislation of the host country must be engaged. These qualifications should align with the standards mandated for paragliding instruction.

2. Equipment:

- Provision of materials for participants should adhere to legislative requirements and possess the requisite certifications, meeting both national and European standards tailored for beginners undergoing training. Compliance with safety regulations is paramount.

3. Selection of Suitable Terrain:

- Identifying appropriate terrain for basic training is imperative. This entails securing temporary usage rights for the designated training areas, ensuring they align with safety protocols and instructional needs.

4. Meteorological Conditions:

- Given the paramount importance of safety, a meticulous assessment of meteorological conditions is essential for selecting an optimal date. The quality and safety of these conditions significantly influence the overall training experience.

5. Promotion and Marketing:

- Comprehensive promotional strategy is indispensable. The promotional efforts must be targeted towards individuals with an inclination towards aviation sports, an appreciation for nature, and a requisite adventurous spirit. The promotional campaign should be strategically crafted to resonate with the target audience, emphasizing the unique and thrilling aspects of paragliding.



1.

QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

In adherence to the regulatory framework governing paragliding, the training aspect is entrusted to authorized training centers staffed with instructors possessing the requisite licenses and qualifications as mandated by state legislation. These qualified personnel play a pivotal role in upholding a professional standard, steering training endeavors methodically, and leveraging their wealth of experience to facilitate student progress.

Key attributes of qualified instructors include:

1. Professional Expertise:

- Instructors are equipped with a comprehensive understanding of paragliding techniques, safety protocols, and instructional methodologies. Their expertise aligns with the specific standards mandated by the state legislation governing the sport.

2. Methodical Training Approach:

- A structured and methodical approach characterizes the training imparted by qualified instructors. They employ systematic lesson plans tailored to the learning curve of participants, ensuring a progressive and effective acquisition of paragliding skills.

3. Experience with Student Progress:

- Instructors bring to the forefront a nuanced understanding of the diverse learning trajectories exhibited by participants. This proficiency enables them to tailor instruction to individual needs, fostering optimal skill development and comprehension.

4. Remedial Strategies:

- A wealth of experience equips instructors with insights into common mistakes made by trainees during the learning process. This knowledge allows them to proactively address challenges, offering corrective guidance and enhancing the overall learning experience.

5. Optimal Instructor-Trainee Ratio:

- To ensure personalized attention and a conducive learning environment, it is recommended to maintain a favorable instructor-to-trainee ratio. Ideally, having at least one instructor for every two to three trainees facilitates a more individualized and hands-on approach to instruction.



In essence, the involvement of qualified personnel in paragliding instruction serves as a cornerstone, not only in adhering to regulatory standards but also in delivering a high-quality and safe learning experience for participants. Their expertise and dedication contribute significantly to the cultivation of skilled and proficient paragliders within a structured and regulated training framework.



2. EQUIPMENT

Ensuring the provision of quality and appropriate equipment is paramount for the success of paragliding training. Instructors from the training center meticulously select and provide specialized gear, tailoring the equipment to meet the specific needs of each student.

The key components of the equipment ensemble include:

1. Paraglider (Category EN-A):

- A paraglider of Category EN-A is supplied, meticulously chosen based on the weight of the student. The selected paraglider must possess a valid technical certificate, ensuring compliance with safety standards and regulations.

2. Harness:

- A school harness is furnished, tailored to the individual height and weight of the student. This ensures a comfortable and secure fit, facilitating optimal control during training exercises.

3. Helmet:

- Safety is paramount, and each trainee is equipped with a helmet to provide essential head protection during training sessions.

4. Radio (Not Required for Training):

- While not mandatory for this training program, the inclusion of a radio in the equipment repertoire allows for effective communication between instructors and students, enhancing the overall learning experience.

5. Reserve Parachute (Not Required):

- A reserve parachute, while not a prerequisite for this training phase, represents an additional safety measure for more advanced stages of paragliding.

6. Wind Sleeves and Flags:

- Positioned strategically on the training area, wind sleeves and flags contribute to a comprehensive understanding of wind patterns, allowing trainees to develop essential skills in reading and adapting to varying wind conditions.

7. Footwear and Clothing:

- Trainees are advised to use their own footwear and clothing, contributing to their comfort and ensuring a personalized fit. The instructor offers guidance on suitable choices, recommending sturdy trekking shoes with ankle support, solid sports attire with long sleeves and pants akin to hiking wear, and gloves for protection against potential abrasions from straps and cords.

In essence, the meticulous selection and provision of this comprehensive set of equipment not only adhere to safety standards but also create an environment conducive to effective learning. The emphasis on personalized fit and suitability ensures that each trainee can engage in the training process with confidence, ultimately contributing to a successful and enriching paragliding experience.



3.

SELECTION OF TRAINING TERRAIN

The practical training in paragliding is meticulously centered on two fundamental tasks: elevating the paraglider's wing for a forward launch and executing a downhill take-off with a slight elevation. The choice of terrain is intricately tailored to these tasks, necessitating the availability of a flat meadow or a meadow with a subtle slope and an incline ranging between 15 to 30 meters.

Given the scheduling of training sessions on weekends and the inherent weather variability, particularly concerning wind direction and strength, the imperative for multiple training areas oriented in different directions becomes evident. The selection of a specific training area is contingent on the prevailing meteorological situation.

The process of choosing such terrain aligns with established norms in paragliding training, drawing from collective experiences in paragliding clubs and the nuanced expertise and training methodologies of instructors.

Beyond orographic parameters, considerations extend to the practicalities of land use, especially when the selected areas typically serve agricultural purposes. Securing an agreement with the landowner or farmer emerges as a pivotal initial step.

The negotiation process involves determining who manages the land and establishing crucial details tied to the specific day of use. The landowner's consent, contingent on immediate conditions, plays a decisive role. For instance, if the grass is too high for mowing, the landowner may withhold consent, recognizing that tall grass poses an obstacle to effective training by potentially entangling paraglider lines.

Negotiations extend beyond mere land use; they encompass various conditions set by the landowner or caretaker. Access to the area, delineation of permissible zones for vehicle parking, and demarcation of areas restricted to pedestrians are among the considerations subject to negotiation. The nuanced negotiations acknowledge the multifaceted relationship between the intended use of the terrain and the landowner's expectations, ensuring a symbiotic arrangement that fosters a conducive environment for paragliding training while respecting the land's existing functions and conditions.



4.

METEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

The meticulous selection of meteorological conditions stands as a critical determinant for ensuring both the quality and safety of paragliding training. In this context, the instructor's expertise becomes paramount, with a profound reliance on knowledge and experience. The instructor adeptly navigates information derived from predictive meteorological models, among which the ALADIN model from the SHMU website and other models such as ECMWF, GFS, METEOBLUE, and ICON-EU from windy.com feature prominently.

A comprehensive approach involves comparing predictions from various models, allowing the instructor to discern the most favorable date and terrain for training activities. This discerning process is particularly crucial given the dynamic nature of weather patterns and their direct impact on paragliding conditions.

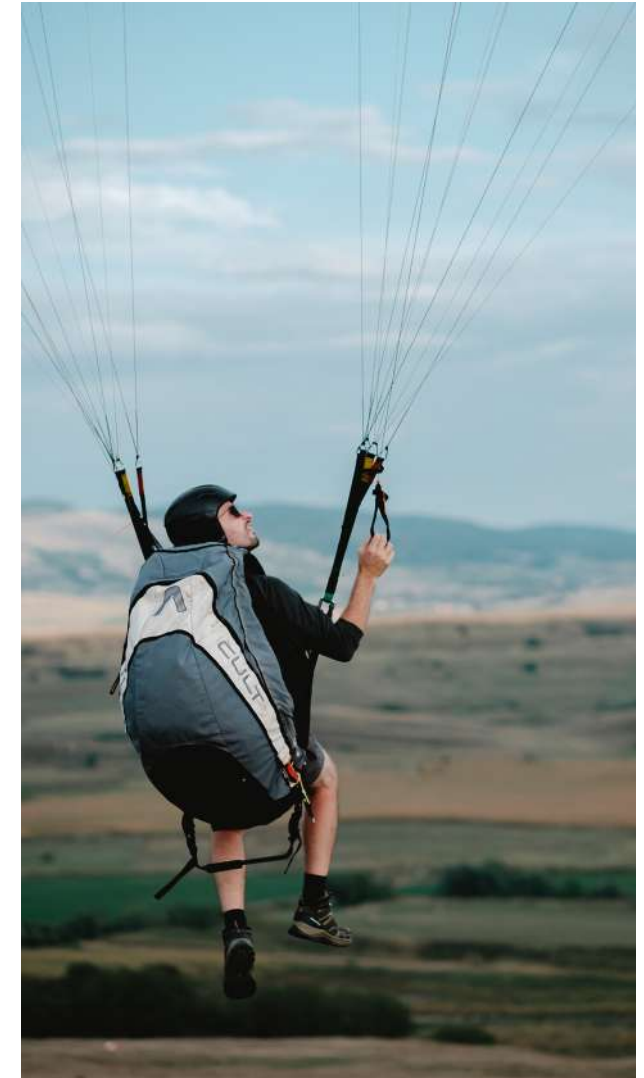
Regrettably, long-term forecasts are not readily available for our specific needs. Realistic planning, therefore, typically commences approximately four days in advance.

The instructor diligently monitors unfolding developments based on predictive models, gauging atmospheric nuances and potential changes.

This continuous monitoring allows for informed decision-making, enabling the instructor to either confirm the initially chosen location, make adjustments as needed, or, in extreme cases, exercise the prudent decision to cancel training for the planned day.

The instructor's ability to interpret and synthesize information from multiple meteorological models represents a sophisticated skill set, one that ensures a nuanced understanding of the atmospheric dynamics influencing paragliding conditions.

This methodical and data-driven approach underscores the commitment to safety and the delivery of high-quality training experiences, reflecting the intricate interplay between meteorological insights, instructor expertise, and the ultimate success of paragliding instruction.



5.

PROMOTION AND PARTICIPANT CONTACT

In our concerted effort to promote and disseminate information about our paragliding events, we strategically employed a multifaceted approach tailored to the nature of our initiative. The initial thrust of our promotional strategy unfolded during a compelling lecture delivered by an esteemed adventurer, traveler, and paraglider.

This presentation served as a pivotal platform for captivating our target audience, providing insights into the exhilarating world of paragliding. Simultaneously, our digital outreach encompassed prominent social networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and Discord E29, among others. Leveraging the dynamic nature of these platforms, we disseminated engaging content, captivating visuals, and pertinent event details. This digital strategy proved particularly effective in reaching our intended audience, fostering anticipation and excitement around the upcoming paragliding experiences.

In contrast, the distribution of physical flyers at tourist and sports hubs in and around Lučenec, as well as the event venue, yielded suboptimal results. Among the myriad flyers strategically placed, only five individuals expressed interest by signing up. This observation prompted a reassessment of our offline promotional strategies for future events.

For comprehensive and accessible information, our club's website served as a central hub. This online platform not only detailed the event but also provided in-depth insights into the project's background, organizers, objectives, and participant expectations. A crucial and user-friendly feature on the website was the registration form. This facilitated interested individuals in expressing their intent to participate, furnishing organizers with essential contact details and other pertinent information necessary for seamless event execution.

The registration form played a pivotal role in constructing a robust database of interested individuals. Leveraging this database, a targeted communication strategy unfolded via mass emails. These communications were consistently dispatched in advance of weekends when the event was potentially scheduled. The term "possible execution" pertained to the contingent factors of favorable weather forecasts and the availability of the designated training area. Typically, this critical information was ascertainable by Tuesday or Wednesday preceding the weekend. Interested individuals were then promptly notified, ensuring timely and informed preparations for those eager to partake in the upcoming paragliding adventure.

This systematic and integrated approach, blending both digital and offline channels, aimed not only to generate interest but also to streamline the registration process and foster effective communication with our audience, thereby enhancing the overall experience for participants in our paragliding events.

Email Example:

Hello friends,
Do you have plans for the upcoming weekend? Want to do something better? I have another offer of dates for you. [date].
Location - preferably [link to the map].
Let me know who is interested and on which day. I will organize it to use the dates reasonably.
The weather seems good. Whether it will be true is up in the stars, but we must be prepared and flexible.
Let's remind ourselves of what you will need: [list]
I will send precise instructions to those registered later.
If any of your unregistered friends want to join, it's always possible here: [link to application form]
New dates are stated in the text, and I will update them according to the developments.
Fingers crossed.
Take care,
--
[Name]
[Email]
[link to the website]

6.

SEAMLESS EVENT COMMUNICATION AND EXECUTION

Following the confirmation of participation for a specific day, every participant received a prompt response acknowledging their attendance and instructing them to anticipate further details in their email inbox. This streamlined communication approach aimed to provide clarity and ensure that participants were well-informed throughout the process. Additional inquiries from interested individuals were also addressed promptly, emphasizing a commitment to fostering a supportive and responsive environment.

To uphold the principle of operational efficiency, participation confirmation was contingent upon adhering to the maximum capacity for a given day. This careful calibration was designed to optimize the participant experience and ensure that the event could be conducted with precision and attention to detail. As events unfolded, two distinct scenarios shaped the course of action. In instances where meteorological forecasts indicated unfavorable conditions, the day was regrettably canceled. This decision, although disappointing, prioritized participant safety and the quality of the training experience.

Conversely, when the weather forecast aligned favorably, a confirming and inviting email was dispatched to selected and confirmed participants. This communication contained precise details about the time and location of the event, providing participants with the information needed for seamless attendance. Each email also incorporated a comprehensive overview of the event, minimizing the need for participants to reference the organizer's website continually.

A deliberate consideration in these communications was the avoidance of early morning dew, a factor that could complicate training. The chosen start time reflected a thoughtful approach to circumvent this challenge, ensuring optimal conditions for participants as they engaged in the training activities.

In essence, the communication strategy adopted for event execution underscored not only a commitment to operational efficiency but also a dedication to participant satisfaction and safety. The balance between proactive communication, contingency planning based on weather forecasts, and detailed event information contributed to an organized and enriching experience for all participants involved in our paragliding events.

Invitation email wording:

Hello friends,
Let's fly!
You, who are reading this email, are registered for [Date and time].
WHERE?
We will meet in [location]. We will leave cars here, or we may move a bit further and walk to the meadow.
Cars here: [link to map]
WHAT WILL YOU NEED?
• Boots (for hiking), higher with reinforced ankle.
• Sturdy sportswear with long sleeves and long pants (for hiking). Take a spare shirt to change; we will sweat. Clothing can get dirty from rolling in the grass. Again, I remind you, you will sweat - it's part of the beginning of paragliding.
• Gloves (long sleeves and gloves are recommended even in warm weather; they reduce potential abrasions from straps and lines).
• Sunglasses.
• Plenty of water or other non-alcoholic drinks to stay hydrated. Also, bring some snacks.
• Participants under 18 years old need a parental consent form.
• Desire to fly.
• Smile and good mood.
In the morning before the trip, please check emails, just in case there are changes on my part.
Looking forward to meet you all
PS: [Additional information].
--
[Name]
[Email]
[link to the website]

**PRACTICAL COURSE
OF TRAINING**



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PARAGLIDING**

FIRST PART

Before the participants arrive, the meticulous organizer ensures the preparatory setup of the training area. This includes prominently marking the site with advertising banners and flags, installing wind sleeves, and strategically positioning flares. At the designated meeting point, the organizer warmly welcomes participants and efficiently manages the administrative aspect by guiding them through the process of signing a prepared attendance list. A pre-prepared list of participants with telephone contacts proves invaluable for contacting latecomers or individuals who did not provide advance notice of their absence.

The journey from the meeting point to the practical training location is led by the organizer, who strategically chooses a meeting point outside the training area. This facilitates easier orientation for participants, many of whom travel from distant locations.

It also ensures compliance with the access regime to the training area, a step that requires explicit permission from the landowner.

Upon reaching the training site, the instructor takes the lead in officially welcoming the participants. In this ceremonial introduction, the project organizer is acknowledged, the paragliding club is introduced, gratitude is expressed to Erasmus for support and project financing, and appreciation is extended to the landowners for their cooperation.

The distribution of equipment, based on pre-prepared lists considering the physical parameters of participants, follows. Participants are organized into two to three-member groups, each receiving a complete set of equipment. The instructor then delves into the theoretical aspects of paragliding, explaining the intricacies of the sport and emphasizing its overall complexity.

The one-day paragliding experience is distilled to two fundamental tasks: a forward start with lifting the wing overhead, followed by a short slope soaring experience.

The theoretical component progresses to the presentation of equipment, with a focus on the basic principles of flying physics. Using a prepared paragliding wing, the instructor elucidates its components, construction, and design.

The pilot's harness is also introduced, with participants becoming familiarized with its individual parts and attachment methodology. Educational aids such as model paragliders or visual materials augment the explanation, with a primary emphasis on the tangible equipment itself.



FIRST PART

The instructor proceeds to demonstrate a forward start of the paraglider, meticulously breaking down each step and emphasizing correctness in execution. Students are encouraged to actively participate, aiding in the manipulation of the wing and ensuring the correct execution of the exercise. Special attention is devoted to the correct gripping of straps, a detail crucial for mastering the exercise. Practical experience has shown that one instructor can effectively manage 2 to 3 groups, allowing for individualized attention and effective teaching.

Students then engage in practicing forward starts in small groups under strict instructor supervision. The instructor focuses on those who may need additional guidance, ensuring that each participant can grasp the seemingly simple yet nuanced exercise.

Importantly, the instructor encourages students to focus on simple tasks related to exercise execution, recognizing that a deluge of information can potentially overwhelm newcomers to the sport.

The initial prescribed task of the forward start is typically mastered in the first half of the training day. A well-deserved lunch break provides refreshment and rest, during which the instructor engages with students, addressing queries and discussing aspects related not only to the training but also to paragliding in general. This interlude prepares participants for the second part of the training day—an exciting and anticipated short glide experience.



SECOND PART

As the theoretical preparation for the second part of the training day unfolds, the instructor instills a comprehensive understanding of the natural progression from the morning training - a short glide. A new element, the landing process, takes center stage in the instructor's explanations, with repeated emphasis on the critical aspects of a successful landing.

In anticipation of the practical application, students are thoroughly briefed on the potential pitfalls to be avoided during takeoff. Crucially, the instructor provides preemptive guidance on appropriate behavior on the hill to maintain an organized and safe training environment. This includes instructions to avoid unnecessary spread of personal belongings that might interfere with training and guidelines to ensure that movements during the ascent do not disrupt colleagues engaged in training.

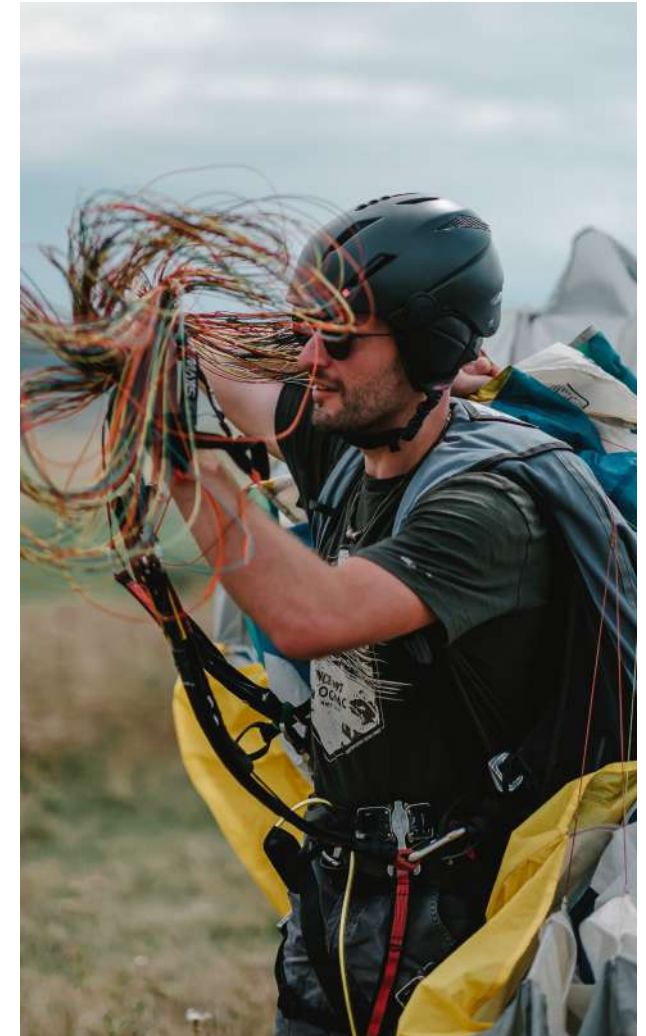
The instructor underscores the importance of strict supervision during flights.

All flights take place exclusively under the watchful eye of the instructor, who emphasizes the necessity of a pre-flight check for each participant. Takeoff is permitted only upon the instructor's explicit command. During the flight, participants diligently follow the instructor's instructions. This approach recognizes that takeoff from the ground is an uncommon activity for most individuals, requiring the instructor to serve as a psychological support to alleviate unnecessary stress.

The instructor actively manages the logistics of the training site, ensuring sufficient gaps between individual flights. This strategic spacing is vital for safety and effective supervision. In scenarios involving multiple instructors, clear communication and coordination are paramount. The controlling instructor takes on the responsibility of facilitating mutual communication among instructors and ensuring adequate intervals between the flights of students under their respective guidance.

The theoretical preparation not only equips students with the necessary knowledge for the impending practical component but also emphasizes the importance of discipline, clear communication, and the instructor's role as a mentor and guide throughout the entire paragliding experience.

This comprehensive approach aims to enhance both the safety and overall enjoyment of the second part of the training day—the eagerly anticipated short glide experience.



CONCLUSION OF THE TRAINING DAY



As the training day draws to a close, the instructor transitions into the crucial phase of wrapping up the session and ensuring that participants leave not only enriched with new-found knowledge but also with a sense of accomplishment.

The following steps characterize the conclusion of the training day:

1. Equipment Packing Demonstration:

- The instructor demonstrates the proper technique for packing the paragliding equipment. This step is essential for ensuring that participants become familiar with the correct procedure, promoting self-sufficiency in managing their gear in subsequent paragliding endeavors.

2. Hands-On Equipment Check and Packing:

- With the active involvement of participants, the instructor oversees a collective check, completion, and packing of the equipment. This hands-on approach reinforces the practical aspects learned throughout the day, allowing participants to apply their knowledge under the instructor's guidance.

3. Question and Answer Session:

-The instructor allocates time for a comprehensive question and answer session. This provides an opportunity for participants to seek clarification on any aspects they may not have had the chance to address during the training day.

The instructor's responses ensure that participants leave with a thorough understanding of the concepts covered.

4. Farewell and Reflection:

- With smiles on their faces, participants bid farewell to the instructor, expressing gratitude for the enriching experiences gained throughout the day. The positive atmosphere reflects the sense of accomplishment and the bonds formed during the training.

The conclusion of the training day is designed not only to impart knowledge but also to instill a lasting enthusiasm for paragliding. By actively involving participants in equipment management, addressing lingering questions, and creating a positive and supportive environment, the instructor ensures that the training day becomes a memorable and empowering experience. Participants depart not only with a new skill set but also with the confidence and motivation to pursue further adventures in the exhilarating world of paragliding.



DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this guide is intended for general informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the content, it should not be considered as professional advice. Paragliding is an inherently risky and dangerous activity, and individuals interested in participating should seek guidance and training from certified and qualified professionals.

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