



Comfort in flight

It is vitally important that you are as comfortable as possible for your flying. This will free up your brain power to concentrate 100% on the piloting. Make sure that you have done everything possible to iron out any potential niggles.

Harness - your harness must be properly adjusted, so that you can comfortably sit in it for long periods of time. Set up “dangling points” at home (or use a mate’s) and get it perfect. The harness should support your thighs and all parts of your trunk. After a while, if it is not properly adjusted, you will start to feel discomfort. This will affect your ability to concentrate on thermalling and planning your next move. If you do not fly in a pod harness, consider a stirrup. This will take a lot of strain off your quads.

Hydration - dehydration will lead to poorer decision making. Paragliding itself is not an activity where physical exertion causes fluid loss with sweating. However, you may have sweated walking up on your way to take off and you will lose fluid through breathing. During a long flight this can be significant. Make sure that you have access to fluids in flight either with a bladder and drinking delivery system (Camelback or equivalent), or a bottle that you can reach, not drop and drink from safely. Generally the former is a much better option. If you take your hands off the brakes, you are unable to “actively pilot” your wing.

Bladder - if you are keeping adequately hydrated, you will probably need to pee (Older age = increased frequency!) A full bladder giving you that “bursting to go” feeling is a big drag on your ability to concentrate. For men there are three options that I am aware of. 1) A sheath and tube system like XC Pee. The tube can be attached to your shoe which you can dangle outside your pod when you need to pee or routed through your harness to point backwards) 2) large absorbent pads (Tena for example). 3) Restricting your fluid intake, avoiding coffee and tea (both diuretics) before flying and having a cast iron bladder. For women, either option 2 or 3 will work.

Food - your body and brain need fuel to keep going. On long flights keep snacking on “fast energy release” products. Dried fruit, nuts, tracker bars or whatever takes your fancy. Avoid chocolate or sticky foods as the former melts in the sun and the latter will make a mess. There is also the option of putting energy powders in your drink.

Warmth - Being cold is miserable and will get you grounded rapidly. It is better to be hot on take off and the right temperature in the air than

comfortable on take off and cold at cloud base. Avoid cotton as it retains moisture and does not dry out rapidly - at altitude it will be cold. There is a good reason that the Norwegians have a saying "Cotton Kills". Generally multiple thin layers are better than fewer thick ones. A good base layer consists of a merino wool or a quick drying synthetic material T-shirt or long sleeved shirt. A thin fleece over this followed by a light down jacket works well for me in most weathers. Make sure that your outer layer is wind proof. A buff round your neck keeps it warm, prevents sunburn and can be pulled up to cover your lower face. It is worth investing in a good pair of gloves as cold hands are a misery. Heated ones in the winter are a real treat (Buy the most expensive ones that you can afford - I have rapidly trashed a couple of cheap pairs). A couple of Malvern Pilots swear by heated wrist gaiters, with gloves over the top -

<https://www.outdooraction.co.uk/extremities-power-liner-wrist-gaiter-p3248>

If you have any other tips or suggestions, please share them.