



ASTHMA & SKYDIVING

There are many asthmatics who skydive successfully and safely but this does rely on their condition being fairly well controlled.

Skydivers need to be able to exercise and will definitely be exposed to cold air. They will also jump at altitudes where there is a significant reduction in partial pressure of oxygen. Therefore, asthmatics who are poorly controlled, unstable or prone to unpreventable bronchospasm on exposure to cold air or exercise should not jump. It should be assumed that the jumper will not have access to their inhalers during the aircraft ride, the jump itself or the walk back afterwards. Asthmatics who have their condition precipitated by high pollen counts should bear in mind that they may land in cultivated fields of crops with locally very high pollen counts. Asthmatics who require regular *oral* steroids may be osteoporotic and at increased risk of osteoporotic fractures, particularly during the novice period.

Criteria for asthmatics to jump safely:

1. The condition should be stable and well controlled on whatever treatment is considered appropriate by the asthmatic and his/her doctor.
2. The candidate should report that exercise or cold air induced wheeze is being prevented by whatever treatments are used, be this a regular prophylactic treatment or a beta-stimulant such as salbutamol taken up to an hour before the exercise or cold air exposure.
3. Peak flows or spirometry should be within the normal range or *reasonably close* to the normal range. The term *reasonably close* is used to allow physicians the discretion which is necessary when dealing with variables which have such a very broad normal range across the population.
4. Asthmatics who require regular oral steroids and who still fulfil the first three criteria should be assessed for osteoporosis and found to have bone density scores within the normal range.

In cases of doubt, or where further information is required, the Medical Adviser to the British Parachute Association or the Safety & Technical Officer will be pleased to help. Contact details are available via the BPA office (see above).

NB: Competitors are referred to BPA Form 220 Anti-Doping Policy and Rules, and are reminded to check the status of any medication they may be taking. This includes medication for asthma.