Basic PG : 1
Question:

What is paragliding?

Answer:

Paragliding is sport flying in a special type of wing similar looking to a parachute which can be launched by running down a hill.

Basic PG : 2
Question:

How is paragliding different from:

Answer:

Hang Gliding: Paragliding is very similar to hang gliding; in fact they are essentially the same activity done with slightly different equipment. The hang glider has some form of semi-rigid framework which supports the shape of the wing. The paraglider is a completely flexible wing; its shape in flight is supported by ram air pressure which enters the cells of the canopy at the front, and causes the canopy to inflate into its desired shape.

Skydiving: Modern skydiving canopies look very similar to paragliders, and in fact the design of paraglider evolved from ram air skydiving parachute canopies. The sports themselves are quite different; however. In skydiving, the main idea is free-fall; that part of the jump before the parachute is opened during which the skydiver experiences a form of flying which is largely unencumbered by any additional equipment. During free fall, skydivers can control their horizontal movement, and do various maneuvers and relative work. The main function of the canopy is to arrest their rapid rate of descent and allow a safe landing at a chosen spot. In paragliding, the main idea is gliding and soaring using the canopy as your aircraft.

Parasailing: Parasailing, unlike hang gliding, paragliding, or skydiving, is an activity more akin to an amusement park ride, requiring no particular skill or participation on the part of the person doing it. In parasailing, one is towed behind a boat while suspended from a circular parachute. The parachute follows the boat, and always remains attached to the towline, and there is no need, nor any opportunity for the person attached to it to control the parasail. Paragliding, by contrast, is piloted flight.

Basic PG : 3
Question:

How do you control a paraglider?

Answer:

Paragliders are controlled by a pair of steering lines or "brake" lines. Pulling on the left brake makes you turn left. Pulling on both brakes makes you slow down. In addition by shifting your body within the harness additional turn control is established.

Basic PG : 4
Question:

How do you take off?

Answer:

There are two phases to launching. First the canopy is inflated in the wind and flown up over the pilot’s head. Then, the pilot runs down the slope of a hill until the paraglider has enough speed to fly at which point it lifts the pilot away from the ground. In the absence of a hill, paragliders can also be towed aloft, either by a truck or car, by a boat, or by a winch.

Basic PG : 5
Question:

What happens if the wind stops?

Answer:

Flight in a glider does not depend on the wind, and paragliders can be flown when there is no wind at all. Flight in any winged aircraft does depend on what we call "relative wind" which is the movement of the air over the wings, or, from another perspective, the movement of the wings through the air. It is this "relative wind" or air movement over the wings which create the "lift" that supports an aircraft against the pull of gravity. In a paraglider, the ram air pressure from this relative wind entering the openings in the front of the canopy is responsible for creating and maintaining the shape of the wing. If there is no wind, launching a paraglider on a slope requires the pilot to run to create a relative wind (like running to launch a string kite when the wind is weak near the ground). While running, the pilot is pulling on the paraglider attachment lines in order to lift the front of the canopy into the relative wind and thereby inflate the paraglider. After inflating, the paraglider flies up over the pilot's head and is then in position for launch. In this case, the launch process proceeds directly from inflation into the launch run. If there is some wind, the canopy can be inflated at a standstill, and the launch run can be performed afterwards

Basic PG : 6

Question:

How long can you stay up?

Answer:

It depends on your skill and on the weather conditions on that day. On a good day, a reasonably skilled pilot can stay up for as long as he or she wants to. On some days, even the best pilots will only manage a flight of a few minutes duration.

Basic PG : 7

Question:

Do you need a license?

Answer:

In the United States, the answers are no and maybe. Paragliders come within the Federal Aviation Administration definition of "unpowered ultralight vehicles." The federal aviation regulation which governs operation of these vehicles specifically states that you do not need a license to operate one. However, the United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association does administer a pilot rating program, under which pilots achieve ratings for skill and experience which are similar to pilot licenses given by the FAA to airplane and sailplane pilots. At many paragliding sites, it is required by the administrators of the flying site that you hold an appropriate USHPA pilot rating to fly there. In other countries, other regulations apply.

Basic PG : 8

Question:

How do you learn to fly?

Answer:

Under the guidance of a competent instructor, just like you would learn to fly an airplane. Before flying solo, you will learn the skills for inflating and controlling the canopy on the ground. Your first solo flights are normally made from a small, shallow slope, where you will get just a few feet off the ground for just a few seconds on each flight. As you learn and practice proper techniques for take-off, landing, and speed control and steering control you will move up to higher and higher launch points for longer and longer flights.

Basic PG : 9
Question:

How hard is it to learn paragliding?

Answer:

The learning of the basic physical skills is relatively easy; substantially easier than learning the basic skills of hang gliding. Paragliding is almost certainly the easiest form of flying to get started in. There are advanced skills required to fly safely at anything beyond the basic beginner level, and these skills are somewhat more challenging to learn. In addition, a pilot needs to learn at least some basics about weather, and the aerodynamic principles of flight.

Basic PG : 10
Question:

Is it very physically demanding to fly paragliders?

Answer:

No. Some degree of coordination and a fair amount of practice is required, but the physical requirements are very minimal

Basic PG : 11
Question:

How much does a paraglider cost?

Answer:

Brand new paragliders range in price from $2000 to about $4000. Other required equipment would include a harness, which costs $250 to $800, and a helmet, which costs $50 to $300. Equipment designed for beginning pilots will usually fall at the lower end of these price ranges. When new pilots start making flights at altitudes of more than about 200 feet above the ground, they will normally also purchase a backup emergency parachute, which will cost between $400 and $700. Intermediate level pilots who are beginning to learn extended duration flight - called soaring - will usually add some simple instruments for measuring altitude and rate of climb, which will cost between $100 and $1000.

Basic PG : 12
Question:

How safe is paragliding?

Answer:

Statistically, in the United States, paragliding has a fatality rate of about one fatality per thousand participants per year. This rate is computed for regularly participating pilots beyond the student level, and is based on all fatal accidents reported divided by the number of pilots who participate on a regular basis. This is about five times greater a statistical rate than traveling in an automobile, and it is comparable to other sports which are considered to be high risk. If all paragliding participants are included in the denominator, the statistical rate is much lower, as fatalities are fairly rare among student pilots, and there are a significant number of student pilots who do not continue as regular participants beyond the student phase. Paragliding shares with all other forms of aviation the inherent danger of being high above the ground. Anytime a pilot loses control of an aircraft, there is the potential to hit the ground at a high rate of speed, which is dangerous. There is no inherent reason for paragliding to be any more dangerous than other forms of aviation, and there is one inherent reason why it can be safer. That reason is that in Paragliding, the pilot need depend only on his or her own decision making to control his or her level of safety. In other forms of aviation, you must always depend, to

some degree, on other people. From a statistical standpoint, paragliding is more dangerous than, for example, traveling by commercial airline. The reason for this is that the operation of commercial airlines is very tightly regulated by the government in order to ensure the safety of the public. Paragliding is largely unregulated, so safety is up to each individual.