

## My Top Three Frequently Asked Questions

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Last year, I spent over 80 days on the road and attended 13 different Fly-Ins. While at the fly-Ins, I gave lectures that always ended with a question and answer session. These fly-ins ranged in size from about a dozen machines to the Grand Daddy of them all, the Powrachute Extravaganza. I will address the top three of the most commonly asked questions.

The number one question was, “How should I lay out my wing for best inflation?” The issue: is it better to stack or lay out your wing inverted? I think the best answer to this question is not what is the *best* layout technique, but with which technique do you feel the most confidence and get the most consistent results? Both techniques have their pros and cons, however, the most important thing is your comfort level. If you do the layout the same every time you are less likely to miss something that could cause a problem. If you start experimenting or get distracted, that is when we will normally get to see your wing at the repair shop. When you lay out your wing, do it systematically. If you become distracted, don’t be afraid to start over or at least check what you’ve already done. When you are distracted is the time when you will normally overlook or miss something. If your buddy is helping you with the layout, check his or her work. This is not the time to worry about their feelings; they will understand. I have seen pilots with a lot of experience and hours make this mistake. They assumed that the other person did something in the layout that they would normally do themselves, but didn’t. It is better to hurt their feelings by checking behind them than to crash your machine because of something missed. The pilot is ultimately responsible for the wing layout and flight!

The second most frequently asked question was, “Should I fold or stuff my wing to place it in the chute bag?” I myself am a stuffer. This comes from my skydiving background of placing parachutes in bags for storage. The only difference between a parachute and a wing are the leading edge stiffeners. If the proper materials are used for the stiffeners, it should not be an issue either way. Where it becomes an issue, is if poor quality materials are used in the construction of the stiffeners. The stiffeners in most PPC Wings are made from what most people call Mylar. In reality, most of the stiffeners used today are some sort of Polyester or Dacron laminates. Again, the answer I give on this topic has more to do with consistency and comfort. If you stuff and are always getting your lines tangled, you should think about folding. If you fold and you are comfortable with it, why change? It is more important for you to be able to take the wing from the chute bag and lay it out without any tangles, then whether you should stuff or fold your wing in the chute bag. The faster you can layout and the less time you spend untangling, the more time you will spend flying.

Finally, the third most frequently asked question was “How often should I send my wing in for inspection?” You should check with the manufacturer of your wing or owners manual. We at Performance Designs recommend every 100 hours or annually. When I get this question, a few other questions come to mind. Did this person purchase the wing

and not receive their manual, or did they just not read the manual? All of the wing manufacturers manuals I've seen contain this information, so it leads me to believe that either they weren't provided the manual or just didn't read it. Every new wing that leaves our building contains a manual. I have talked with several pilots who bought new machines and did not receive the manual for their wings for whatever reason. If you don't get the proper manuals for your wing or any other component of you machine, either contact the person who sold you the machine or the manufacturer of that component. Some pilots are shocked at the information that is contained in their machine and wing manuals.

The main point to this article: it is more important to be consistent and comfortable with the techniques used, than to be overly concerned with which one is better. And remember, "When all else fails, read the instructions!"