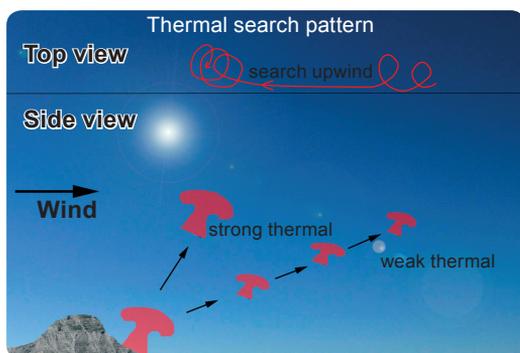


Thermalling hints

Finding the core is very important. The core of a thermal is the place where the thermal is lifting the strongest. If there is wind then most often the core is to be found upwind. This is because weaker thermals are more offset by the wind than stronger ones. So if you are already in a weak thermal then as part of your 360 you should straighten out as you turn into wind and start to search upwind to try to check if there is stronger lift upwind. Try to continue to check upwind until you find that the lift strength decreases, then just go back to the strongest lift you found and use that.



Top view and side view of strong and weak thermals.

You can see from this example that you may have to fly through weaker lift or even descent before you find the stronger core, though this is often not the case. The lift often just gets stronger and stronger as you search upwind and fly into the stronger core.

You can also see that the stronger thermals cut better through the wind. To start with, a thermal is a mass of air attached to the ground. This mass of air can weigh hundreds of tons. It is attached to the ground like a bubble and is not drifting with the wind. As it breaks away from the ground the thermal then starts to get accelerated by the wind.

Smaller thermals will get accelerated faster by the wind than bigger ones. This is both because of their size as well as the fact that the stronger thermal is moving faster vertically.

This explains why stronger thermals are to be found upwind, but it also gives another very important characteristic that the paraglider can use to his advantage. If you want to fly upwind then it is even more important to find the strong cores.

Bob Drury on Magic 4 in Mai 2007 in Cusco, Peru.

Picture: Bruce Goldsmith

