



First-time pros?

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"Look, if the two of you do it right twice in a row, I'll let you quit, okay?" we looked at each other and sighed, dutifully climbing onto the picnic table for what seemed the hundredth time. We had been at this for the better part of an hour.

Legs together and knees bent to the right, we took turns falling off the table, rolling on to our sides as we landed on the thin mat below.

We were about halfway through a seven-hour parachuting course at the Brazos Valley Paracenter at Coulter Field in Bryan. We should have jumped immediately following our day of intensive training, but weather forbade it that blustery

Saturday. Finally, on Monday, after weeks of repeated disappointments, the much-awaited moment arrived.

Daylight was rapidly waning as Bill Schauff, the jumpmaster who was to go up in the plane with us and supervise our jump, helped us struggle into the bulky parachute packs. It was nearly impossible to avoid staggering under the weight of the 45-pound packs, tautly secured by straps around our thighs and across our chests. Bill fussed over them, adjusting a strap here, tucking something in there.

After tucking our hair into snugly-fitting white plastic helmets, we looked at each other and burst out laughing. We

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