

# Wingsuit flying in Walenstadt

## A few thoughts from the local contact of the Swiss Base Association.

Some will feel offended reading this or have their ego bruised. Some will feel hurt because they have lost someone. This article is not meant to please.

It's an inconvenient truth in the hope that the community doesn't forget what has already been learned paying the ultimate price.

### 01.

#### The location

Walenstadt offers a wide variety of lines and styles of flying. With barely any physical effort you get access to all the amazing lines you have seen on YouTube.

But Walenstadt also lies at the foot of the second deadliest mountain for WS-BASE in the world. Only the Mürrenfluh in the valley of Lauterbrunnen has witnessed more WS-fatalities over the years (Via Ferrata, High and Low Ultimate). Including 2022 we have reached 13 WS-fatalities in Walenstadt, nine of which have occurred since 2018 (one from a helicopter).

Hopefully you will never see such an accident, but we have, and it's us who are going to help the farmers close the impact holes and deal with the aftermath.

Walenstadt is not like Brento (ITW) or the Valley. It looks mellow and nice, but you are in a complex alpine terrain. This requires a different approach to fly your wingsuit.

Prepare yourself for the location.

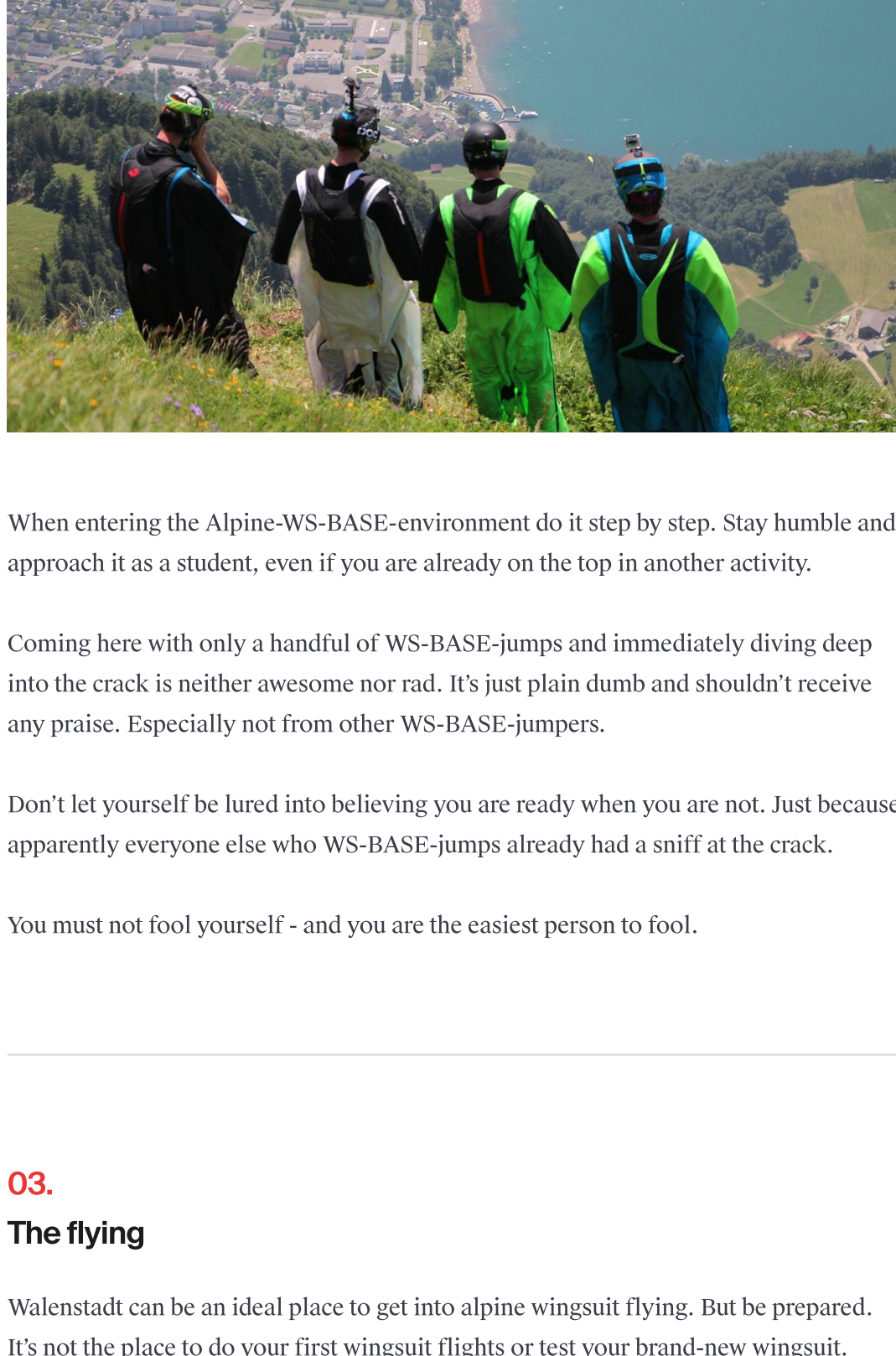
### 02.

#### The BASE-jumpers

BASE-jumpers from all over the world have been flying here and not all were equally prepared.

The mountain doesn't care if you have hundreds of WS-skydives. What counts is the experience in the WS-BASE-environment. Go first to Brento (ITW) or a similar place with a more forgiving terrain.

The accidents have shown that your abilities in any related activity (even skydiving) do not translate directly into the Alpine-WS-BASE-environment. It helps but it doesn't translate one to one.



When entering the Alpine-WS-BASE-environment do it step by step. Stay humble and approach it as a student, even if you are already on the top in another activity.

Coming here with only a handful of WS-BASE-jumps and immediately diving deep into the crack is neither awesome nor rad. It's just plain dumb and shouldn't receive any praise. Especially not from other WS-BASE-jumpers.

Don't let yourself be lured into believing you are ready when you are not. Just because apparently everyone else who WS-BASE-jumps already had a sniff at the crack.

You must not fool yourself - and you are the easiest person to fool.

### 03.

#### The flying

Walenstadt can be an ideal place to get into alpine wingsuit flying. But be prepared. It's not the place to do your first wingsuit flights or test your brand-new wingsuit.

The experiences show that some approaches are more forgiving than others.

If you feel that you are ready, a possible way could be to first learn to fly fast and with depth perception. This while staying well high and away from the terrain. Pick a forgiving line that leaves you with enough margin for errors.



Then you might choose to slowly work your way closer into the terrain in consecutive jumps. Doing this might also help you to answer questions like:

- Do I slide in a turn?
- How much speed and altitude will I lose in a turn?
- How fast can I react if the flight doesn't go according to plan?
- Do my estimations and perceptions match the reality of what's happening during the flight?

**Walenstadt is not a place to show off or do crazy stunts. Almost everything has already been done here and you will not impress anyone that has been in the sport for a while.**

Walenstadt is a place to enjoy and progress.

### 04.

#### Before the jump

Make sure that you register yourself on the SBA website and get your landing card: this keeps the jumps open and is helpful in case of an accident. Please leave a family member (or a friend who's in touch with your family) as an emergency contact. This helps the police a lot to inform your family as soon as possible. Or should your mum rather get the bad news from Facebook?

The same with the REGA-membership. Get it. It's not expensive and your relatives and friends won't be left with a huge invoice in case of an accident. Get a third-party liability service as well to not possibly further increase the burden on the ones you love.

And finally, ALWAYS inform someone before you jump. There were too many times someone went missing without leaving any information. The last thing you want is your relatives having to identify your body that has been lying around with crows picking out your eyes. Believe me, I have seen it.

### 05.

#### The weather forecast

Check the weather. The Swiss Meteo services are amazing and for free. If in doubt, ask the locals. Remember that the wind and the thermals can have a big impact in such a diverse terrain. Be prepared to encounter turbulences or katabatic winds (if you don't know what this is, Walenstadt is not for you).

If in doubt, walk back. It's an amazing place, even if it's just for a hike.

### 06.

#### In case of an accident

Call REGA if you saw something, or if you are missing a friend. Also call if you are uncertain or if it isn't one of your friends. Give them all the information you have and then leave them do their job. They have done this plenty of times and they know the terrain by heart and what to look for.

Don't harass them for information or to get hold of the GoPro. Be sure that the Swiss police is not giving the footage to anybody else. This has never happened and won't ever happen. Be patient. They will talk to you when they are ready and hand you the footage when the investigation is over.

Don't make it hard for them. Be nice and grateful.

### 07.

#### Last but not least

All this information and knowledge is already out there. Sadly, it seems that each generation forgets, and not all the learnings are passed on. Memories fade and new ones are created that are frustratingly similar.

Be prepared, take your time, and Walenstadt can be an amazing playground. Leave with good memories... looking forward to visiting again in the future.

Thanks for reading! ❤️