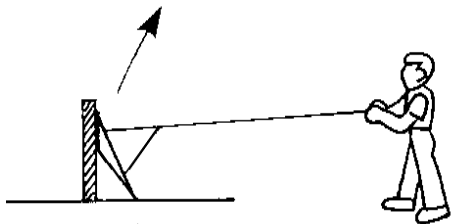


Sometimes in light winds, hand launching can be difficult and you may prefer to begin with a bit more line in the air. At times like this, you may want to "create" a launching assistant.



A fairly cooperative assistant can be made from sand, sticks, or almost any kind of prop for the kite. Simply lean your fighter against the "assistant" and move back into the wind, playing out line as you go. When you are ready to launch, take in the slack line and lift the fighter into the air.

With a little practice, your skill and reaction time will quickly improve. Fighter flying will become almost as easy as getting out of bed in the morning -- which we admit is easier on some days than on others.

**Safety, Courtesy and Fun:** A maneuverable kite is capable of doing injury and property damage. You can injure others. You can do damage to your surroundings. You can hurt yourself.

Never dive a fighter over people's heads. And never fly in electrical storms or around power lines. Always remember the three "C's" of responsible kiting: **Caution, Courtesy, and Common Sense.**

It's been said that a small fighter is deceptively simple in appearance - yet embodied in this modest form made from two sticks and a sail, is the whole essence and spirit of kites.

Be sure to enjoy flying yours.

Single line maneuverable "fighter" kites may well be the original kite.

Kites were invented or discovered in China several thousand years ago. They were then spread by traders and Buddhist monks throughout Asia. Today, the use of fighter kites around the globe is fascinating and diverse.

In India each January, literally millions of fliers go to the city's rooftops during the traditional kite season to fight **Patangs** with glass coated line.

In Thailand, the "male" **Chula** and the "female" **Pakpao** engage in a sophisticated battle of the sexes in the skies next to the royal palace.

In Malaysia, delicate **Waubulan** made from many layers of bright paper, and equipped with noisemaking hummers dance across the sky.

In Korea, rectangular kites with circles cut from the center compete in lightening fast matches.

In Japan, **Hatas** are flown in Nagasaki. The design was brought from India by Dutch traders and are only made in the colors of the Dutch flag. In other parts of Japan, giant hexagonal **Rokkakus**, handled by teams of fliers maneuver to knock their opponent from the sky.

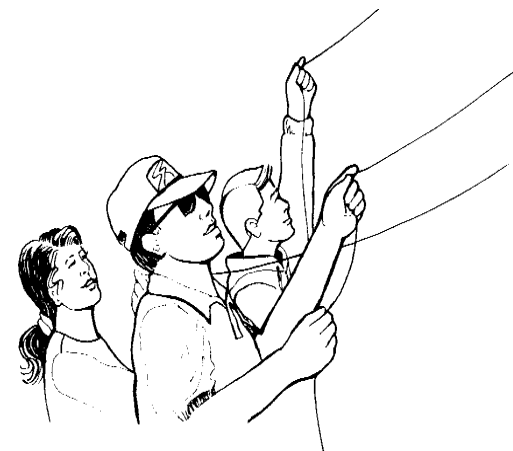
And modern **Fighters** of nylon or mylar skins and graphite spars are now flown and fought across Europe and North America as the fascination with these maneuverable kites grows.

With your fighter kite, you can become a part of history too.

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## Flying Basics For Fighter Kites

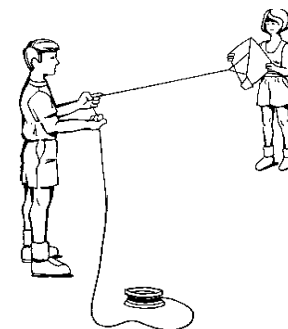
by David Gomberg



Fighter kites can do things no other kite can do. Even in the lightest of winds, a fighter in the hands of a skilled flier can amaze onlookers by not only staying in the air, but doing figure eights, dives, twists, and dancing its way to great heights. All you need is a little information and a bit of practice.

**Assisted Launching:** Launching is a lot easier at first if you have a friend to help.

Stand with your back to the wind with about 10 feet or so of extra line beside you loose on the ground.

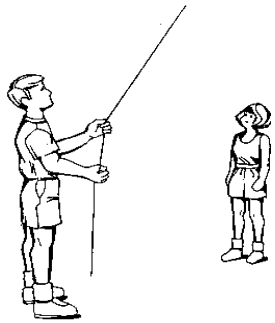


Have your assistant stand about 50 feet away, lightly holding the kite at its outside corners with the nose or top pointing up.

Positioning the kite is very important. When you launch, the kite is going to move in the direction it is pointing. Make sure it's pointing up at the sky!

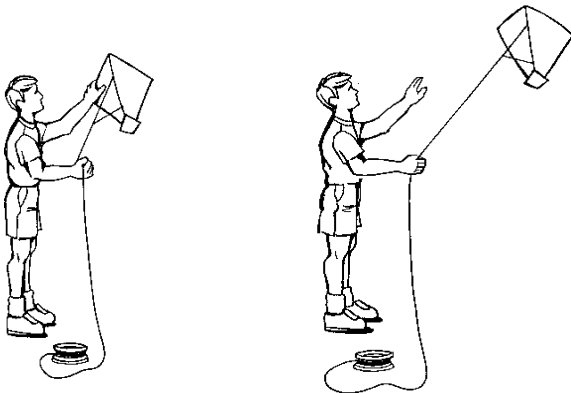
Don't use all of your line when you launch. You need to let line out to control your fighter. If you use all of your line, you won't have any control.

When you are ready, pull the kite out of your helper's hands and into the air.



Continue a steady pull on your line to move the kite up and into the wind. When you feel wind pressure on the kite, slowly let line out. But maintain enough line tension to keep the kite climbing until it has reached an altitude where you can begin maneuvers.

**Solo Launching:** To launch without an assistant, grasp the nose of the kite with one hand and hold the line in the other. Release the kite, let the wind carry it for a short distance, then pull up on the line to gain height.



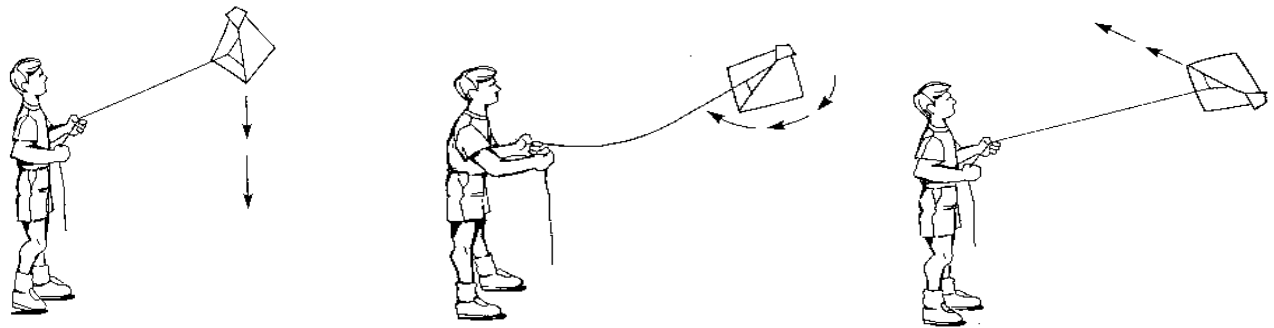
Repeat this several times to get your desired elevation.

## How to Maneuver Your Fighter:

Handling fighters is a matter of pulling in line to make it move, and playing out line to achieve distance and control direction.

Allow the kite to climb to a height of 50 feet or more where you can practice maneuvering and line handling without smashing into the ground. Try giving the line quick, rhythmic jerks or tugs. Tugging creates extra wind pressure on the kite and generates extra speed.

If the kite is moving in the wrong direction, let out line. A quick loosening of line tension will slow or stop forward motion. Depending on the wind, your fighter will relax and float, change direction, or begin to spin.



When the kite is pointed in the direction you want, put tension on the line and the kite will move in that direction. Pull in - either in a steady hand-over-hand motion for long, sustained flights, or in sharp tugs to make the kite quickly dart a few feet.

Line handling is a two handed process. Don't ever let one hand free until you have firm control of the line with the other hand.

Hold the line near the tip or first joint of your index finger. Use your thumb as an anchor. Practice pulling in hand-over-hand and then letting line out quickly.

Practice letting line in and out so your kite is neither too high, or too close to the ground. Maintain an even altitude.



If your kite dives toward the ground, pulling on the line won't make it go up again. It will make the kite zoom toward the ground even faster. Loosen the line. Let the kite begin to rotate. Then pull in when the kite points up and fly it away from the crash. Your friends will be amazed!