

***Varizoom***  
www.varizoom.com

**FlowPod**  
**Stabilizer / MonoPod / Low Mode**



Thank you for purchasing the versatile FlowPod, our patented stabilizer/support. The FlowPod offers several shooting options that will help to improve and distinguish your productions. The FlowPod (VZ-FP) comes supplied with the following: 3 counterweights, hex key (3/16"), balancing plate (VZ-FPB), and quick-release camera plate.

The FlowPod can be used in at least three distinct operating modes: stabilizer, monopod, and low-flow (for low-level shots). Since the FlowPod was designed with versatility in mind, you may discover other creative ways to use it, but first read these **WARNINGS:**

- We do not suggest running at full speed with the FlowPod, as you could trip or collide with something, possibly resulting in injury or damage to your gear.
- Do not use it in stabilizer mode with the monopod section extended.
- Exercise caution when operating in low-flow mode to ensure that you do not strike the ground, other objects, or trip yourself.
- Do not overload the FlowPod or lean on it like a walking cane.
- Do not over-tighten the grip/gimbal assembly or damage may result

It may take a little while to learn how to use the FlowPod properly, so please read the instructions thoroughly before attempting to use it. As packed, the unit is configured for basic stabilizer mode, and you will have to complete a few steps before you will be ready to shoot.

## **STABILIZER MODE**

### **Attachment and Balancing**

1. The first step is to attach the camera to the quick release plate (the top section of the X-Y assembly). Detach the quick release plate by loosening the locking lever and depressing the red release button on the opposite side.

Find the lengthwise center of gravity of your camera. Do this by balancing the camera on top of a pen or pencil oriented perpendicular to the camera's length. The spot where the camera balances best is the lengthwise center of gravity.

Position the center of gravity at the center of the mounting plate and fix the camera to the plate using the appropriate size screw. Put the mounting plate back onto the X-Y assembly and tighten the locking lever. Now you are ready to start balancing the unit.



X-Y Plate

Gimbal / Grip

Counterweight shaft

Monopod



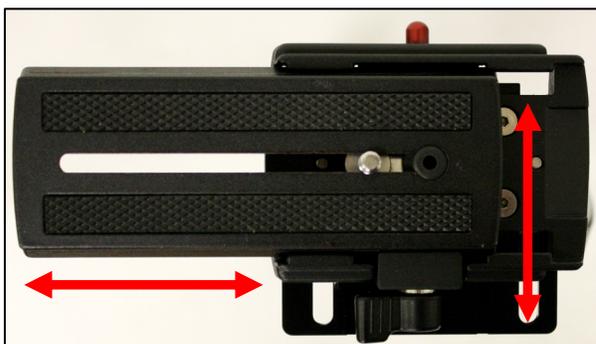
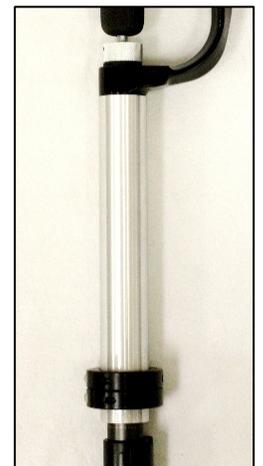
## On stabilizer balancing

The basic idea of stabilization is to enable the operator to keep the camera level and to move it fluidly. This is achieved through careful counterbalancing and a low-friction pivot point (the gimbal). In practice, this means you want the section of the FlowPod below the gimbal to be effectively 'heavier' than the upper section (vertical balance), and you want the camera's mass to be centered on the pan axis of the gimbal to keep the camera level (horizontal balance). Vertical balance is adjusted by attaching counterweights (usually on the lower section of the FlowPod), while horizontal balance is adjusted by positioning the X-Y plate side-to-side and front-to-back.

2. In order to center and balance the camcorder you will have to unlock the gimbal/grip assembly. It locks inline using a threaded knob that extends downward from the grip and butts up against the base. To unlock the assembly, you must thread the knob back into the grip. To do this, start by loosening the black 'brake' knob above the gimbal, and then twist the handle clockwise while turning the knob counter-clockwise.

Thread the knob into the grip until it is flush. Now the grip should move freely at the gimbal mount. Notice the fluid motion of the gimbal and the wide range of available motion. Also note that the knob below the grip may strike the C-handle if the grip is released. Although this will not cause any mechanical damage, the knob could scratch the body, so be advised.

3. Now that the grip is free, you can begin balancing. In order to balance the unit properly, you need to have the camera set up exactly as it will be used. For example, you should remove the lens cap, flip out and position the LCD monitor, and add on any accessories prior to balancing the unit. The smallest change to the weight distribution on the camera can significantly affect the balance of the FlowPod.
4. If you have a very small camera (<1.5lbs), you may not need to use the included counterweights, but if you have a medium to large camera (>2lbs), we recommend that you initially attach some counterweights prior to balancing the FlowPod. Most cameras above 2 lbs will require you to add at least one counterweight to make the lower section of the FlowPod heavier. Start by adding just enough weight to keep the FlowPod vertical. More info on counterweighting in Section 6.
5. **Horizontal Balance** - Adjust the X-Y assembly (*pictured below*) so your camera's mass is centered on the pan axis (the centerline of the FlowPod gimbal). Loosen the locking lever on the side & round thumbscrews underneath, then adjust the X-Y assembly front-to-back and side-to-side until the camera is level, then tighten the lever & thumbscrews.



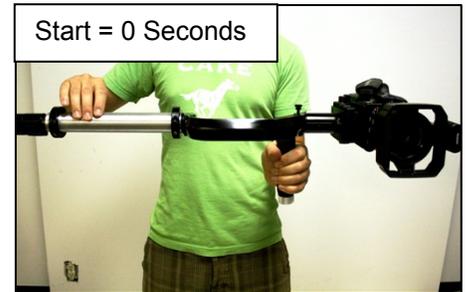
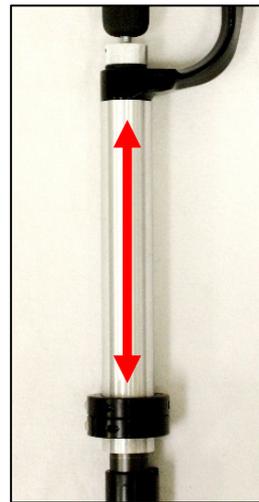
6. **Vertical Balance** - Now you can check the vertical balance of the FlowPod to see if you need to add, remove, or adjust the position of the counterweights. Use as few weights as possible, and start with the weights at the top of the shaft. When vertically balanced, the FlowPod should not lean or sway when moved around.

**“The Drop Test”**

To test the vertical balance, hold the unlocked grip straight up and turn the FlowPod on its side to a horizontal position (picture below), then let it fall back to the vertical position (the “Drop Test”). It should fall gradually, taking 2-3 seconds to go from horizontal to vertical. Note that it will swing past the vertical position – you are only counting the time it takes to go 90 degrees (from horizontal to vertical).

If it does not swing down, slide your weights down one at a time and retry the Drop Test. If that doesn't help, add another weight and retest. If the FlowPod swings down too fast, you should remove weights or slide them upward, as necessary.

**Vertical Balance should be fine-tuned until the FlowPod stays completely vertical when you move it around without any significant swaying, so your drop time may vary slightly depending on how you fine-tune.**



**NOTES:**

-With some very small cameras, you may need to add a weight above the gimbal to achieve a good balance (attach weights to the ‘neck’).

-With some heavier cameras (over 5 lbs or so) you may need more than 3 counterweights on the counterweight shaft. The FP1 extra weight kit is available for a nominal charge.

7. After setting your counterweight, you may want to fine-tune the X-Y adjustments. Once you have achieved a good balance, you are ready to begin practicing with the FlowPod. There are **two important things** to keep in mind at this point: **(1)** The FlowPod is designed to be operated with two hands and **(2)** it requires practice to master (but it only gets easier with time).

8. You can adjust the drag on left-right movement by slightly tightening the round thumbscrew brake just above the handle, or you can leave it completely loose and steer with your free hand. Keep the handle unlocked for operation, and we recommend using your free hand to steer and aid in stabilizing the unit. Using your thumb and forefinger, lightly grasp the 'neck' of the FlowPod body (next to the brake) to control the left-right movement. Practice walking with the unit and try to hold it close to your body. Move deliberately and carefully – the FlowPod cannot compensate for drastic movements.

*Spend some time practicing to determine what works best for you. Operator skill is critical for success with a handheld stabilizer. We recommend shooting at the widest angle possible, and you may find that a wide-angle lens adapter adds to the overall effect. You will also probably want to shoot at a fixed focus point (manual focus) to prevent the 'hunting effect' caused by autofocus constantly adjusting on a mobile camera.*

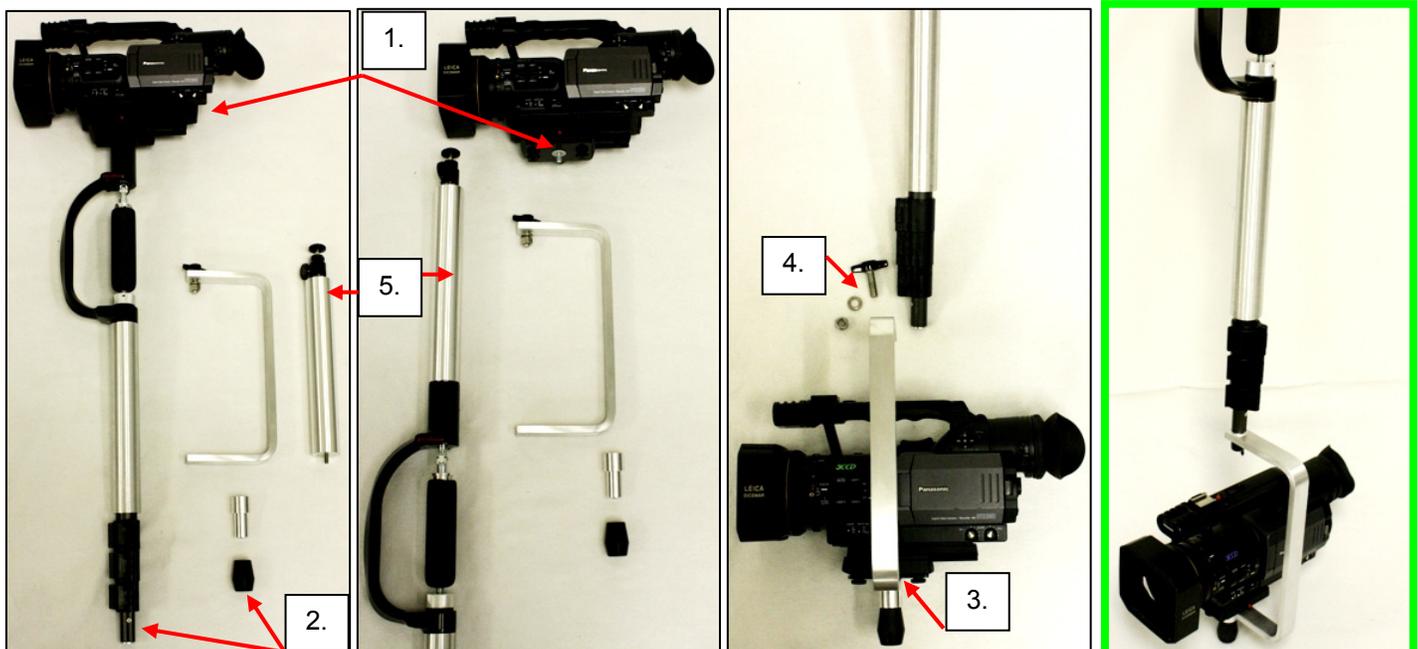


## **MONOPOD MODE**

1. To use the FlowPod in monopod mode, you should lock the handle in place and tighten the brake.
2. To extend the leg sections of the monopod pull out on the hinges and slide each section out, then lock the hinges back in place.

## **LOW-FLOW MODE (optional accessory) - ASSEMBLY**

1. The first step in setting up your FlowPod for Low-Flow mode is to remove your centered and balanced X-Y assembly (with camcorder mounted) from the top by unscrewing it counter-clockwise. Support the weight of the camcorder as you unscrew the plate. *Note: Don't lose the plastic washer (and metal spacers, if present) sandwiched between the X-Y assembly and the C-handle.*



2. Next, remove the rubber shoe from the end of the monopod section of the FlowPod (the rubber shoe may seem difficult to remove, but it will come off with a little twisting and effort). Unscrew the aluminum foot adapter from the top extension cylinder and slide on the rubber shoe.
3. Mount the camcorder and X-Y assembly inside the Low-Flow frame on the bottom half, which is distinguished by its smaller hole. The threaded mounting post on the base of the X-Y plate fits through this hole so that you can screw the threaded aluminum foot adapter all the way on until it secures the X-Y plate to the frame.
4. Secure the Low-Flow frame to your FlowPod using the supplied wing-head thumbscrew (3/8"-16) and lock washer. The attachment screw will fit through the larger hole at the top of the frame and screw into the bottom of the monopod section of the FlowPod. We recommend leaving the monopod collapsed when setting up and operating the Low Flow kit (as pictured at right).
5. You should screw the extension cylinder into the spot previously occupied by the X-Y plate (on top of the C-handle). Add weights and/or a monitor to help balance the unit top to bottom and improve functionality. It isn't absolutely necessary to add the weights, but you may find it beneficial.

## **LOW-FLOW MODE - OPERATION**

1. You can operate the Low-Flow unit with the handle locked in place, but you may determine that the freely rotating handle suits you better. You will achieve smoother shots if you do not extend the monopod. It may also be beneficial to add weight to the top extension cylinder, but it will require some practice to determine what works best for you.
2. Once you have fully assembled and adjusted the Low-Flow unit to your needs, exercise caution while walking along with it to make sure you don't strike the ground, other objects, or your feet. You can achieve smooth, low-level shots in this configuration and you may find creative new ways to implement this feature, but as always, rely on common sense to prevent unforeseen problems.



*Special Note: If at some point you don't need the monopod feature and want to use the FlowPod as a standalone stabilizer, just unscrew the monopod section from the main unit (counter-clockwise from the bottom) and remove it (pictured at left). This may be especially useful if you are using a very small camera that does not need much counterweight.*

Also Available: Upgrade to a vest and arm support system by adding the DV Sportster (pictured at right) or Navigator to your FlowPod

*The VZ-FP has a 2-year factory warranty. Please retain your sales receipt for warranty verification.  
[www.varizoom.com](http://www.varizoom.com) / 512-219-7722.*



# **VZ-FPB Balancing/Docking Plate for the FlowPod**

*The VZ-FPB consists of the mounting plate and c-clamp*

Using the VZ-FPB is simple. The FlowPod grip handle has a machined groove near its top that enables you to slip the handle into the u-shaped slot of the VZ-FPB plate, securing the FlowPod for the balancing procedure.

First you must secure the FPB to a sturdy, flat, level surface (e.g., table or workbench) with the supplied clamp. Note that the top of the plate has a recessed circle to accommodate the fixed contact pad of the c-clamp. See the picture above.

Once you have secured the FPB, slide the FlowPod handle into the u-shaped slot of the plate. The handle should drop into the sunken round section at the back of the slot, locking the FlowPod into position. Make sure your FlowPod handle is unlocked and adjust the X-Y assembly so the camera becomes level (horizontal balance).

For vertical balancing, the FPB is a good place to attach and adjust your weights. You can do the 'drop test' from the FPB, but the range of motion will be limited and you should exercise caution so neither FlowPod nor camera strike the table. For final testing, you'll need to be holding the FlowPod to check the side-to-side stability, so plan on approximating the vertical balance on the FPB and doing the final tweak after the handheld test.

You may find that you'll want to tweak the overall balance after handling the unit for a few minutes. Although the simple guidelines in the instructions explain how to balance the unit, the art of balancing the FlowPod is really in acquiring a feel for correct balance. After balancing your camera properly one time, it's a simple matter to do it again.

The FPB is a major help in balancing, but it will also provide a docking stand to hold the FlowPod while you're not using it. [www.varizoom.com](http://www.varizoom.com)

