

Bungee Jumping Equipment

Bungee jumping equipment comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. In fact, each piece of the equipment used in bungee jumping can have quite a few variations. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the equipment used in bungee jumping before you participate in a jump. This way you will know what to look for and what type of setup you would like best. While there are many different types of platforms and retrieval equipment, for the purpose of this article, we will look at two things that will affect your jump the most - the bungee cord, and the harness.

When talking about bungee jumping equipment, the bungee cord is one of the most important items. There are several variations on the type of cord that is used in bungee jumping today. There are braided cords, unbraided cords, pre-stretched and un-stretched, natural rubber, mil spec, and the Euro cord. These are the major variations in the bungee cord used in today's bungee jumping sports events. Let's take a minute to look at the characteristics of each one of these cords, and the impact that it has on the end user: the bungee jumper.

First, there is the military specification cord (or mil spec), which is manufactured to meet the requirements of the U. S. military. Of course, the military uses it to tie down equipment, not jump from bridges and other tall objects! However, because of the rigorous and standardized testing of the mil spec, these cords work well for bungee jumping. When using mil spec cords in bungee jumping, they are usually grouped together to form a set, as one cord can typically hold around 200 pounds of weight. Each cord has a protective sheath on it to prevent dirt and foreign objects from abrading the cords. The downside to this is that it is not possible to inspect the ends of the cords for fraying and / or signs of failure.

Some bungee cords are pre-stretched. This prevents the cord from stretching as much during the actual jump, which provides more of a 'jerking' action and a shock as the jumper reaches the end of the cord length. These are used mostly in the northern hemisphere. In the southern hemisphere the commercial proponents of bungee jumping tend to use a natural rubber, un-stretched and unbraided cord. This provides for a lot more 'bounce' and a more smooth experience at the bottom of the jump. While these natural cords do not last as long as the mil spec cords, they do provide a much more comfortable jump for the average user.

The next piece of bungee jumping equipment that you should inquire about is known as the harness. There are two main types of harnesses - the leg harness and the body harness. The leg harness usually consists of a towel wrapped

around the ankles with webbing tied around this in a special knot. The towel provides padding to help prevent injury to the ankles. The webbing is then attached to the bungee cord. The body harness is very similar to a climber's harness, and in fact, is many times the same thing. The most important aspect of the harness is how it attaches - if it is secure - to the bungee. Some accidental deaths have occurred when the bungee cord was attached using climbing carabineers instead of specialized equipment. It can definitely be said that bungee jumping equipment has come a long way since the vines on Pentecost Island!