

Modern Bungee Jumping

Modern bungee jumping started with a jump from a suspension bridge in Bristol, England, on April 1, 1979. Obviously, it was no April fool's joke. From a height of 250 ft., four friends from the 'Dangerous Sports Club' leapt into the history books by taking the historic plunge. They were promptly arrested by the authorities shortly after completion of their activities. However, this failed to dampen their spirits much. They moved their jumping activities to the United States, where they jumped from the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco, California. They also managed to secure sponsorship from the American television show 'That's Incredible' for their jump from the Royal Gorge bridge in Colorado. Their perseverance helped bring modern bungee jumping to the spotlight of the media, and the masses.

Bungee jumping takes place around the world today, from Australia to the United States, to many countries in Europe. It is well respected as a dangerous and extreme sport. Despite its obvious dangerous aspect, millions of people have successfully completed jumps since the onset of modern bungee jumping. Indeed, tens of thousands of bungee jumpers take the plunge each year, in an ever-increasing variety of ways and places.

Many commercial endeavors have sprung up because of the rise in popularity of bungee jumping in the modern sports world. One of the most notable and respected outfits is the A. J. Hackett Bungee Company in New Zealand. A. J. Hackett founded the company in the late 1980s, after popularizing the sport with his own jumps. Indeed, he contributed to the modern bungee jumping by developing a new type of bungee cord. He personally demonstrated his new super elastic bungee cord when he jumped from the Eiffel Tower in 1987. His company has done a great service to the sport by helping to develop modern means and methods that provide a safer form of bungee jumping.

Modern bungee jumping has even crept into some aspects of mainstream western culture. For example, there have been a few major movies that have featured a bungee jump in their plot. One of the most well-known of these movies would be the James Bond spy-thriller, 'GoldenEye', from 1995. In this particular film, Bond is shown performing a bungee jump from what is supposed to be a dam in Russia. While the jump was actually performed, and was not computer or artist generated animation, the actual location of the jump was incorrect. The filming actually took place at the Versazca Dam in Switzerland.

Modern bungee jumping has even become a sport that in which the participants are striving to outdo one another. The Guinness Book of World Records has become involved, and has recorded what they have officially deemed as the 'highest

commercial bungee jump'. This jump takes place from the Bloukrans River bridge in South Africa. At over 700 feet above the floor of the valley, it is an astounding feat indeed. While other jumps have taken place from higher locations, this particular locale is considered the highest because it is purely a bungee jump. There are no additional cords or secondary safety cables ... just the good ol' bungee cord. Like it or not, it looks like modern bungee jumping is here to stay.