



What Have You Done to Save a Life Today?

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Extreme sports: not your daddy's games

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Football, baseball, basketball OR sky surfing, hang gliding and BASE jumping?

Your choice probably reveals your age, because your parents may not even recognize the second group. The first group is 'old' sports; the others are extreme sports, described as those activities having inherent danger, which often involves speed, height, a high level of physical exertion, highly specialized gear or a spectacular stunt.

The list of these types of sports continues to grow. For example:

A recent news release on www.prweb.com claimed: 'Extreme-Sport Jumping Stilts Now Go Higher with More Safety,' and claimed: 'Running up to 20 mph? Jumping 3-5 meters in the air? You may think this isn't possible, but we think otherwise. Find out how some have made this a reality!'

Stilts?

Get the picture here? Athletes who want to bounce 12-15 feet into the air on stilts aren't your average person. Don't look for them at a flag football game.

Thanks to the popularity of the X Games and other events, the number of Soldiers and Family members involved with extreme sports has increased, along with safety warnings from medical organizations.

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons advises caution because they say tricks and flips at high speed bring a high chance of injury for participants.

"Children watch extreme sporting events on television and they think flying through the air on a snowboard looks easy," says Dr. George Russell, spokesperson for the AAOS. "They do

not see all the practice it takes to do that-and they don't see how often extreme athletes get injured while learning their stunts.”

The academy offers the following tips to help prevent injuries from extreme sports:

- Do not try to imitate stunts seen in televised events. The people in those events are professional athletes with years of training. If you have children who watch these events, make sure they understand the difference.
- Never participate in extreme sports alone. Many extreme sports enthusiasts have a coach or responsible party overseeing any activity. Have a partner who can assist you or can go for help if you get injured.
- Wear appropriate protective gear, including helmets, gloves and padding, and make sure equipment is in good working order and used properly.
- Take frequent water breaks to prevent dehydration and overheating.
- Avoid participating in any sport when experiencing pain or exhaustion.
- When falling, try to fall on your side or buttocks. Roll over naturally, turning your head in the direction of the roll.
- Pay attention to the weather.

Proper protective equipment includes using an approved helmet. To determine which helmet is best suited for your activity, the Consumer Product Safety Commission publication "Which Helmet for Which Activity" helps Soldiers make a decision and helps to prevent head and brain injuries. (An on-line version of the guide (pdf) can be found at www.cpsc.gov.)

When engaging in extreme sports, throw in a dose of common sense to your formula for having extreme fun.



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