

Frequently asked questions about Jumping Stilts

www.freestylers.fr

*Par Maxime LUDWICZAK
Remerciements à Adrian pour son aide précieuse
Basé sur la FAQ du site www.dcpowerstilts.com
Mars 2015*

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Introduction

À se balader en échasses urbaines, que vous soyez en mode solo ou en groupe, on viendra forcément vous aborder pour vous poser une multitude de questions sur ce que c'est, ce que l'on peut faire avec, savoir si c'est difficile. C'est une petite routine en tant qu'échassier pour laquelle on se prend facilement au jeu de répondre.

À vadrouiller un peu partout en France et ailleurs, j'ai eu l'occasion de pouvoir en discuter aussi avec des personnes qui ne parlent pas notre langue. Même si pour ma part je ne suis pas mal à l'aise pour parler anglais, il manque toujours par ci par là du vocabulaire pour compléter notre pensée et qui freine la discussion.

Aussi je vous propose une petite FAQ en anglais dont vous pouvez vous inspirer si d'aventure vous avez à discuter des échasses urbaines dans la langue de Shakespeare.

Un remerciement tout particulier à la personne qui a pris le temps de corriger l'ensemble des phrases de cette FAQ, Adrian, un ami qui m'est cher et dont l'humour British se retrouvera dans les réponses.

Hoping that can help you.

www.freestyleurban.com

What are they?

Jumping stilts, also known as Jump stilts, Bocks, Power stilts, or Powerisers, are a metal framed stilt with fibreglass spring incorporated which allow you to run faster, and jump higher than you ever imagined possible. We are talking about a mobile trampoline!

How high can you jump?

The current world record is 2.80 meters (9ft 1in). Personally, I have jumped the bar when placed at 2.70 meters (8ft 9in) above the ground. (*à remplacer par votre record personnel*).

Experienced jumpers see every obstacle as a potential challenge and that includes vehicles!

Is it difficult to balance (remain in place)?

Can you stand without moving?

How long can stand without moving?

You cannot remain in place without moving. To maintain balance you have to keep moving because your point of contact with the ground is only 2cm long.

Is it dangerous?

No more than any other sport requiring basic balance skills (e.g. roller skating, skateboarding, cycling, trail running, skiing). The stilts are just an extension of your legs so it's not really any different to walking or running normally. Of course, if you try somersaults and other acrobatics without significant training, you had better have a penchant for hospital food ☺?. But seriously, accidents are rare and provided you wear adequate protective equipment, the only thing that could get hurt when you do fall is your ego.

How fast can you run?

If you are in very good physical shape and train regularly, you can achieve up to 25 mph (40 km/h) however, the average cruising speed when running is around 14 mph (23 km/h).

How much does a pair of stilts cost?

Jumping stilts cost around 350/400 € for a mass-produced model, usually of Chinese origin. Then there are professional models from Germany and the USA which start at around 1100 € and can reach 3000+ €.

Are there different brands of Jumping stilts?

Available brands include: SkyRunner, MoonJumper, Powerskip, Speedjumper, Velocity Stilts.

What can I do with them?

Stand and walk 15 to 17 inches taller, jump 8 feet high or more, and run up to 25mph. Best of all, you will have plenty of fun while getting a really good workout.

Many professional performers use jumping stilts to perform amazing acrobatic routines and/or wear costumes so they can perform in street theatre. The average user is happy to just have fun with them and maybe learn a few tricks so they can show-off occasionally.

Where I can try them?

Our club, (*Indiquez le nom de votre club si vous faites parti d'un association sportive*), provides beginner's training to introduce people to the sport of Jumping stilts. But our club is not the only one. There are several associations/clubs in France when you can try it.

How hard is it?

Most people can balance and walk unaided within their first 10 minutes. At the end of a one-hour lesson, you should be perfectly balanced and just as confident as you are when walking without stilts.

Can children use them?

Absolutely! There are junior models specially designed for children weighing from 70lbs/30kg (about 8years of age). Adult models start from 50 kg although many children will begin using an adult model when they reach 45 kg.

Will it hurt if I fall?

It could...users should always wear adequate protective gear to minimize the potential of harm. As with all active sports, most injuries are limited to cuts and bruises however, the user has to take responsibility for any risks he takes and if he isn't wearing protective gear he is asking for trouble.

Is safety gear really necessary?

It's always better to be safe than sorry. When on Jumping stilts, your feet are about 45cm above ground level, so it's a long way down if you fall. When running, your strides will be at least twice as long as normal running. This means the impact can be as much as 3 times greater than normal which can result in injury. Instinctively, most people will place their hand out in front of them when falling. The multiplied force of impact can easily break a wrist or both if you are not wearing a good pair of wrist pads. As with any sport, injuries can happen but, as already pointed out, they are few and far between. By wearing wrist pads, knee pads, elbow pads and a helmet, most injuries can be avoided.

What is the distance from the ground to the top of the foot platform?

Approximately 17 inches (43 cm).

How long does it take to get started?

The learning curve is relatively short. On average, users find that within 20 mins they are already walking unaided. If they have a friend or an experienced user assisting them, they are usually able to progress to trotting, small jumps, running, and even a few basic tricks within a couple of hours.

Are there many stilt users (in France)?

More than 6,000 pairs have been sold in France but we don't know how many people regularly use them. If you are alone you may get bored quickly because this is a sport that is most fun when 2 or more people practice together. It is for this reason that several clubs / associations were created to bring 'Risers' together (Riser is the French name for practitioners of this sport). The advantage of a club is that usually they will have use of a fully equipped gymnasium and you get constant help from other more experienced members.

Is it a genuine sport?

What else is it? You run, jump, maintain balance, and can even do acrobatics. It's exhausting and gives the body a total workout while burning calories and developing muscle tissue. Officially, it's not recognized as a sport in the French legislation so you won't see it in the Olympics, but we're working on that. We already have an official federation and competitions are organized at least 3 times each year.

Who invented it?

The first jumping stilts were invented in Germany back in the year 2000 by Alexander Böeck. He is the owner of the brand 'Powerskip' and he owns the patent for all jumping stilts sold in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, UK, and USA.

When did jumping stilts first appear (in France)?

The patent was filed in 2003. In France, the first products were marketed in 2006 (FlyJumper and Poweriser).

It looks like leg prosthetics.

Often, people remark on the similarity to the running paddles used by Oscar Pistorius however, the springs used by Oscar come out of the front of his feet whereas the springs of jump stilts are behind the legs. Nonetheless, it was indeed Oscar's running paddles that gave Alexander Böeck his inspiration.