

Dream Jobs: Flying trapeze artist

By Deborah Todd, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.28.17

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Brian Sobel is a trapeze artist and instructor. In this photo, he works with a teammate on the trapeze. Photo from: Brian Sobel.

Brian Sobel is a flying trapeze artist. He also teaches trapeze. Mr. Sobel teaches at a trapeze school in Australia. He used to perform in the circus, too.

Newsela asked Mr. Sobel a few questions. He told us what it is like to fly on the trapeze!

Where are you from? Where do you live and work now?

I grew up in Stratford, Connecticut. Now I live in Sydney, Australia. I teach at the Sydney Trapeze School.

What word would you use to describe the flying trapeze?

Energizing!

What sparked your interest in the circus and the flying trapeze?

I saw the Cirque du Soleil as a kid. Cirque du Soleil is a Canadian circus. It does not use animals.

I was learning gymnastics at the time. In gymnastics, you get graded on how you perform. Everything has to be perfect.

Cirque du Soleil is different. The acrobats loved what they were doing. They did not have to do everything perfectly. When I was 10 or 11 years old, I decided I wanted to be in the circus, too.



What was it about the flying trapeze that was most exciting to you?

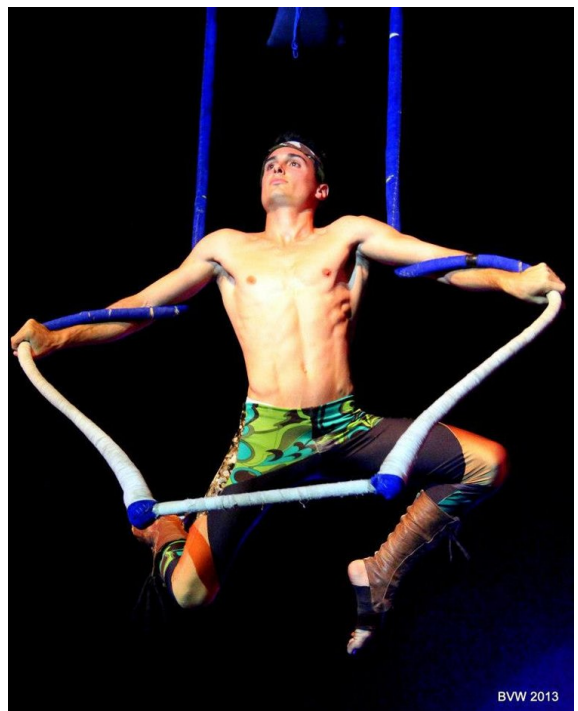
I like to be the center of attention. In the flying trapeze, you do five or six tricks. Each one takes so much care. You really have to concentrate. And the audience watches you very closely. It's fun to perform for them! I love seeing the audience react.

What scared you the most when you first started doing trapeze?

Flying trapeze is a team sport. You have to trust the person catching you. If he makes a mistake, he may drop me. If I make a mistake, I can hurt someone else. It takes a lot of trust. That can be scary. But it is very important in the circus world.

What are your practice sessions like?

There may be four people who practice flying. One person will practice catching. We go through our tricks a couple of times. It is a short practice.



Can you share any funny stories about teaching trapeze to first-timers?

People do funny things when they try it. They act differently than you may expect. Some people are very outgoing. On the ground, they are so confident. Then, when they get up high, something changes. They freeze!

What do you eat for lunch on a trapeze performance day?

It's kind of boring! I may have a chicken salad wrap. I have to eat something to give me energy. I do not want anything too filling, though. My favorite food is spaghetti and meatballs. Sometimes I eat that before a performance. I usually have coffee, too.



What advice would you give to a young person who wanted to join the circus?

You have to be in excellent shape. Start working out. Start stretching. Take some trampoline classes and do gymnastics.

You cannot be afraid of falling or failing. That is what flying trapeze is all about. You may make a mistake. You fall into the net. You talk it over with your team. Then you get up and try it again.

