

# Thinking About Getting into Stunts? Here's What You Need to Know

By **Gregg Sargeant** | 2020

ACTING ADVICE CAREER ADVICE GREGG SARGEANT  
L.A. EXPERTS RESUME STUNTS



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As another year comes to a close, many actors may be reevaluating their careers, wondering where they can grow their resumes and how to create more opportunities for themselves.

When it comes to adding skills to an actor's bag of tricks, one of the first places they turn is stunts. After all, it's hard to find anything to watch that doesn't involve stunt work of some kind. From blockbuster movies to television series—even commercials—the stunt profession has evolved in many ways, with stunts becoming bigger and more spectacular than ever.

But while stunt acting may seem like an exciting and appealing career, it takes total commitment and far more than a desire to add something to a resume. If you're prepared to jump over these hurdles and properly approach a career in stunts, here's what you need to know.

## **1. Stunt work is a physical art and craft, just like acting.**

We also belong to the same union as actors, the Screen Actors Guild. That being said, this is a closed society and if you're not already on the inside, it's hard to get there.

The reason? As stunt actors, we're the only members of the movie-making process who can die doing what we do. It's a big commitment in a very specialized field, a lifelong pursuit of physical and mental action and intelligence that needs to be mastered. We may be "actors," but we are also athletes of a special kind.

## **2. Don't assume you can just "get into" stunt work.**

Like I said before, a highly specialized set of skills is required for stunt work, so for actors who are just looking to add a new trick to their bag, this probably isn't the right trick.

While stunt training isn't necessarily what comes to mind when you think of an actor's education, it is an essential ingredient to stunt success. Train with stunt professionals, enroll in classes at a stunt school, take a weeklong course where you can learn a lot quickly but won't go bankrupt paying for it. When it comes to stunt work, it's almost impossible to have *too* much training.

### **"How to Start Your Career in Stunts"**

#### **3. Do your research.**

Not all stunt classes and training schools are created equal. I'm always surprised when people pay to train with someone they know nothing about. You wouldn't pay an acting coach you've never heard of who has never worked as an actor, so why would you do the same for a stunt instructor?

I highly recommend doing your research when it comes to stunt action training. If you can, seek out an instructor who's a working Hollywood stunt professional as they're respected as the best in the world.

#### **4. Stunt work requires you to be honest with yourself.**

Not every actor is comfortable doing action—it's why stunt doubles exist. But it can be the deciding factor between getting the part or not, especially since it's easier for a stunt coordinator to know if an actor can handle him or herself in the middle of a "fight."

That said, be really honest with yourself about whether you're truly on board with doing stunt work. Imagine getting cast and then deciding mid-shoot that you're actually not comfortable with the physicality of the role.

It's true that producers are seeking actors who can handle the physical aspects of a role now more than ever, but those kinds of roles often come with intense training, both physical and mental. Don't rush things; proper training and thought is crucial.

***Gregg Sargeant has over 29 years in the stunt industry. His career has spanned some of the most acclaimed feature films and TV series. He was nominated for the Screen Actors Guild Award for his work on the Jerry Bruckheimer "Pirates of The Caribbean" franchise, and is an inductee into the Hollywood Stuntmen's Hall of Fame, as well as an academy member of The Taurus World Stunt Awards.***