

**Suspension**

by [**Chris Twist**](https://qlifemagazine.com/qvegas/the-summer-issue-2016/suspension)

I have done about sixty or seventy suspensions. Hooks are placed inside my back, legs, stomachs, chest, or even sometimes my ass as I’m raised up so my feet no longer touch the street and it looks like I’m flying.

The feeling is one of the best feelings that most people who do this feel. It is the feeling of all of one’s energy used in the whole body, and that feels unbelievable. Most people really don’t get it at all, and they don’t know why we do such a thing that, yes, hurts. As kids, we are told that hurting is always a problem and something that we want to have the least feeling if we can; but this is very different from most kinds of hurting, because the energy that happens makes the hurting feel like it is not a hurt at all but instead it helps us to get more energy around our whole body. The energy that is with this kind of feeling is something that no other thing can really be like.

I did this mostly for work, as I was in a show in Las Vegas called Freaks! At the end of each show, one of us did the suspension, and there were different feelings that the people who were watching the show felt as we had two or sometimes just one hook in our backs. I know that my family, my Mom and my Dad, were very worried the whole time, and I could see why. If you haven’t seen this kind of thing yourself then it looks like it is a crazy idea and that it will definitely hurt, and maybe even have the hooks stretch from the back so much so that they will leave the back and blood will leave the body of the man or women who was doing the suspension. The truth is that, in the right people to make suspensions happen, this would never happen. The skin is much stronger than most people think it is. There are several walls of skin, so it isn’t just the skin that we see all of the time. That is the first part of many several walls of skin. It isn’t easy for a hook in a suspension to leave the body at all, and that is true for legs, back, stomach, arms, chest, and even in the ass of a man or woman who is doing this.

I remember that especially gay people who were watching my show were very worried and disgusted by the idea of doing something that was first, not especially pretty, at least not in the way that they were used to see “pretty” things, and then the second part was that they didn’t get why anybody would ever want to do such a thing. They didn’t see how much fun each of us were having while we were in suspension, and why we loved the feeling, from the hooks put in the back to the feeling of flying with little bits of blood leaving our bodies. The truth is that it was the best thing that I ever felt, including sex, and that means a lot from me, because I was kind of a slut all the time; but that is another letter that I will write about. This time, we’re just talking about suspensions, and how good they are for the people who do it.

When you are in a suspension, you feel like everything in your life is going to be fine. That your work, your husband, and your family will all be fine in the end. It makes you feel like you have power, and that your power will help you when you need it. For some people, the suspension is about their lives with their God or for their soul. That happens a lot, actually. I don’t believe in God, but I do believe in myself; so every time I ever did a suspension, I remembered that I had the power to do whatever I want as long as I work to do it.

It is something that nothing else can really give us, but especially gay people never really got it or even tried to think about what we were doing. There are four other gay men who I talked with about their lives as both being gay and as doing suspensions. Glittah, a young man who lives in Las Vegas, told me that he thinks that “because I am already into like BDSM people just assume it’s sexual for me. I constantly am asked if it is a sex thing. The minute I tell them otherwise it is as if they are disgusted. It makes no sense why everyone wants everything to be about sex.” Why would it be all right if it was about sex, but if it isn’t about sex, then it would be what? Crazy? Why can’t we have feelings that are different, not about sex and still feeling incredible? Glittah also told me that he feels like the gay scene is kind of isolating, and these “regular” guys loved the idea of “bad boys” but when they finally see a real “bad boy,” they are not as strong as they thought they were. Of course, I don’t think that doing suspensions makes me a “bad boy,” and I have other reasons to be a bad boy. Doing suspensions doesn’t make any of us “bad boys,” but it does mean that we have a different way of living for ourselves. There is no reason to hate or be worried about something that you don’t know anything about. Instead of thinking that we are all “crazy”, “insane”, or “psycho,” think harder about why we might need something different from most of our gay and straight friends. Is it really different from any other ways to feel better and stronger? It makes us feel like we are here for reasons that are bigger than just our work, family, or a husband. Glittah also said, “It’s as if it is okay to an extent as long as I don’t go ‘too far’ oh you want your eyes modified? Or any talk about solar branding and I am immediately places from hot and kinky to creepy. There isn’t much room for a queer on hooks but I choose my suspension family over the Gay scene any day.” I feel the same way. If I had to choose my life as a gay man or as a suspension user, then I would every time choose suspension, but I don’t see why there is a reason to not have both?

There is another man who does suspensions, is gay, and lives in Las Vegas. He had different problems from Glittah, and here is his thoughts about being gay and loving suspensions. “As I grew up, I realized the things that made me different from the gay community also made me different in the straight community. Eventually, I started to love myself, I gained confidence, I lost over 200 lbs, and finally I suspended from my back.” Colie was, before this happened, 400 lbs, which is hard enough when we, the gays, believe that every person should look as amazing as he could really look. I must say that I am one of those people. I want all of us to look as good as we really can, all the time. I think it was because when I was a kid, I was the smartest kid in each school, I even was done with High School when I was sixteen, and people like me loved their minds more than they loved their bodies. I just didn’t get that at all, so I wanted to look the way that my mind was. Still, this isn’t about me, at least not right now. This is really about Colie. “It was the greatest most euphoric feeling in the world. People always ask ‘how bad did it hurt?’ My only reply is ‘I don’t remember, I just remember having a moment of clarity and happiness’.” How could anything that does that for this man ever be a problem or bad in anyway.

“Dating is kind of hard as well. When people see my body modifications they’re either inquisitive, or grossed out. Even the guys who are inquisitive are just that. But, who would take someone like me home to meet their parents?” I do see how it could be hard to tell your boyfriends family that you love suspensions and will do it for as long as you can. Families usually just want a man who is “nice” and works in a “nice” place. If you tell the family that you are very different from most other people in the gay world, it makes them feel worried about their son and if it will make him “different” as well. So, families and gay men both want the same thing, which is that they want people who like the same music, movies, and ideas that most people feel; that being different is a problem that they need to change for everything to be the way that they want it to be.

Colie also said, “you’ve changed the way I look at people. I would have never thought you’d be so level headed, intelligent, and such a hard worker.” People are usually assume they’re going to be trashy, lazy, and unemployable if they are different in ways that most people have never thought of. Colie doesn’t do suspensions for attention, which is how many people think such a thing must be about.

The last two gay men that I know who have done suspensions are in Atlanta, where I used to live. They saw me doing suspensions and, in some time, thought that they should try it themselves. They are boyfriends, Zac and Jim. It actually helped them as seeing each other in a new, and very different way. Both of them loved the time that they had in the suspensions. For Jim, it was the first time he had ever had any kind of piercing in his body. So, he did the hardest kind of piercing as his first time. Most of the people that I know have many piercings that they had before they tried to do a suspension, but not for Jim. Jim and Zac actually felt more about each other after they did the suspension. It made them both feel like they are stronger than even they thought they were, and it made them happy that both of them could do this very hard thing. Jim works as a drag waiter and thought that it would be very cool to do a suspension as a drag. Most of the time when he think about drags, we think about the gayest of all the gays; like they couldn’t ever do such a hard idea because they are between a gay man and a little girl. Jim doesn’t think that this is true and wants to change the idea of drags; and I love the idea of changing the way people think of drags. I hope that he will do this sometime, hopefully when I am in Atlanta, so that I can see this amazing idea.

The last person I’m going to write about is my brother, Michael. Because I was always so ecstatic every time I did a suspension, he eventually wanted to know if he could do it, and if it would feel good for him like it felt fascinating for me. I didn’t go with him, because I was just got back to Las Vegas after my brain injury; but he told me that it was one of the best things he has ever done. Now, in less than a year, he has done five suspensions. Three of them where from his back, one from his chest—which hurt the most, and he did a suspension from his ass—which he said was so funny that he didn’t even feel any hurting. I’m very delighted that I could give him something that now is both of our lives.

For those of you who are gay or lesbian or transgender and think that just being LGBT is weird enough and that anymore “weird” is atrocious, well, you aren’t really living. The “weird” people are the ones who make the most of their lives, and you can learn so much from them. Suspensions aren’t crazy, insane, or lunatic at all. It is just a different way to feel like your body and your mind are capable of anything that you really want. Maybe before you think that these people who love their time in suspensions are wrong in some way, you should see a group of people who do suspensions. Just look and see how great this feeling is for the people who do it. You don’t have to do it yourself, but see other people who do it and know that they are having the best time as they are doing it. We should love that there are different people and that we aren’t all the same. If you see a suspension sometime after reading this, know that you shouldn’t cry or vomit if you see a suspension. You should be happy that they are happy.

Swing Shift Sideshow were the first people who I did my first suspension with. They know a lot about suspensions, more than anybody else that I know. http://swingshiftsideshow.com/ is their website, and you can see who they are and what they do.