

A.J. Hackett bungy jump from Eiffel Tower

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The speed skier and bungy pioneer planned the 110-m leap meticulously. His dozen-strong team hid on the tower overnight and Hackett jumped at dawn. He described it as 'one small step for a man, a bloody great leap for the adventure tourism industry.'

Hackett's friend Chris Sigglekow had made the first bungy jump in New Zealand in January 1980, from Marlborough's Pelorus Bridge. The idea of jumping from a height with a sturdy elasticised band attached to the ankles had come from the vine jumpers of Pentecost Island, Vanuatu, via Oxford University students.

Hackett made his first jump in November 1986, refined his equipment and six months later was ready to go public. On a quiet news day, the Eiffel Tower jump was televised around the world.

In November 1988, A.J. Hackett opened the world's first commercial bungy operation at the Kawarau Gorge Suspension Bridge, near Queenstown. The company later opened sites elsewhere in the country and overseas.

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