

Stunt Performer

Stunt performers work in the film and television industry, standing in for actors in dangerous, specialised or physically difficult scenes. They need excellent stunt skills to make it look easy.

The Work

You could be:

- discussing with the director and other members of the production team how to create a stunt that is both safe and realistic
- planning how you will do the stunt, getting the equipment and carrying out a risk assessment signed by the stunt co-ordinator
- adapting your movements and posture to match the age, fitness and demeanour of the actor you replace
- performing the stunt at least once before the cameras under the supervision of a stunt action co-ordinator — you may have to do retakes
- following strict choreography, for example in fight scenes
- specialising in one or more particular skill including martial arts, boxing, fencing, trampolining, gymnastics, swimming, high diving, horse riding and driving
- keeping up your skills and fitness with regular practice between jobs.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Stunt performers are usually freelance, working on a production on a contract basis. Fees depend on the type of production and are usually higher for feature films than for television, therefore pay is variable.

The Equity website lists the latest recommended minimum rates of pay, for which you now need to be a member to access.

As a rough guideline, in 2021 the Pact Equity TV Agreement recommended a minimum daily fee of £464.00 and a minimum weekly fee of £1,855.50.

Conditions

- The work is highly dangerous, with stunt performers routinely facing the risk of serious injury or death.
- You work long and irregular hours, including late nights and early mornings — sometimes up to 18 hours a day.
- Like actors, you have to go to make-up, hairdressing and costume fittings before filming starts.
- You work in studios indoors or outdoors.

- Most of the work is on location on film or TV sets and you will spend time away from home, sometimes working abroad.
- You repeatedly face extreme physical challenges (for example, you may have to jump out of high buildings, be set on fire, stay in water or be underground for long periods).
- You have to wait around a lot while shots are set up.
- Stunt performers often have to wear protective gear, such as fire suits or harnesses.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications, though it is usual to have some experience of working on a TV or film set as an extra or walk-on actor.
- To get work you should work towards full membership of the British Stunt Register (formerly formerly known as the Joint Industry Stunt Committee (JISC) stunt register). This is the only approved list of UK based artists qualified to do dangerous stunt work in film and TV.
- The British Stunt Register (BSR) now has a grading scheme with 5 categories of membership: Probationary Stunt Performer, Stunt Performer, Senior Stunt Performer, Key Stunt Performer, and Full Member (Co-ordinator). To gain full accreditation you must have gained experience in all of the other grades of the Register and study for a BSR Level 4 Health and Safety course and take periodic refresher courses.
- To be accepted as a Probationary Member, you must have experience of working in front of camera and be working only under the supervision of a BSR Stunt/Action Co-ordinator.
- You should also demonstrate high skill in 6 sports across the following groups: Fighting, Falling, Driving vehicles, Riding/working with animals, Water, and Fire. One of the skill categories must be from the Fighting group. The full requirements are on the The British Stunt Register website.
- You need good acting skills to work as a stunt double as you have to copy an actor's mannerisms and movements.
- You must be at least 18 years old.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- well above average athletic skill in a number of different sporting activities
- a responsible attitude to safety
- a good knowledge of health and safety legislation
- a high level of physical courage
- technical skill to plan stunt sequences in detail
- a good head for heights
- good co-ordination and quick reactions
- acting ability
- good team skills.

You should also be:

- physically fit and committed to staying very fit
- determined and resourceful
- self-motivated and confident.

Training

- Entrants normally have high level qualifications from the recognised body for the specific sports or skills they offer to become probationary members of the British Stunt Register.
- You have to pay for your own training, which can be very expensive.
- To progress through the grading scheme of the British Stunt Register you must maintain and add to your skills as well as providing detailed evidence of the stunts you have performed.

Getting On

- Employment is usually short term, with periods between contracts – most stunt performers have a second job.
- Stunt performers retire early, normally taking up a second career in mid-life.
- Working through all 5 grades to full BSR membership can be achieved in 8 years.
- Some stunt performers move into directing, as second unit directors specialising in action scenes in films or TV programmes.

Contacts

Equity

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Website: www.equity.org.uk

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Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT)

Tel: 020 7380 8230

Website: www.pact.co.uk

ScreenSkills

Tel: 020 7713 9800

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKScreenSkills

The British Stunt Register

Tel: 01753 652821

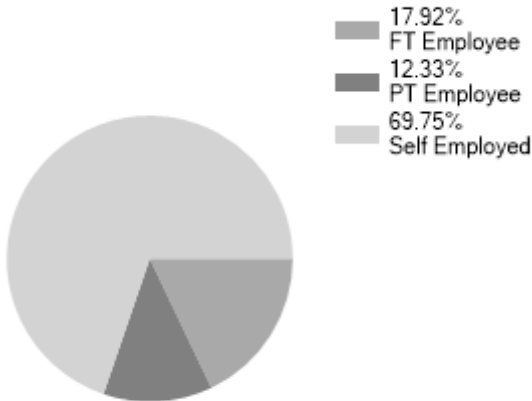
Website: www.thebritishstuntregister.com

Twitter: @BritishStuntReg

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BritishStuntRegister

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

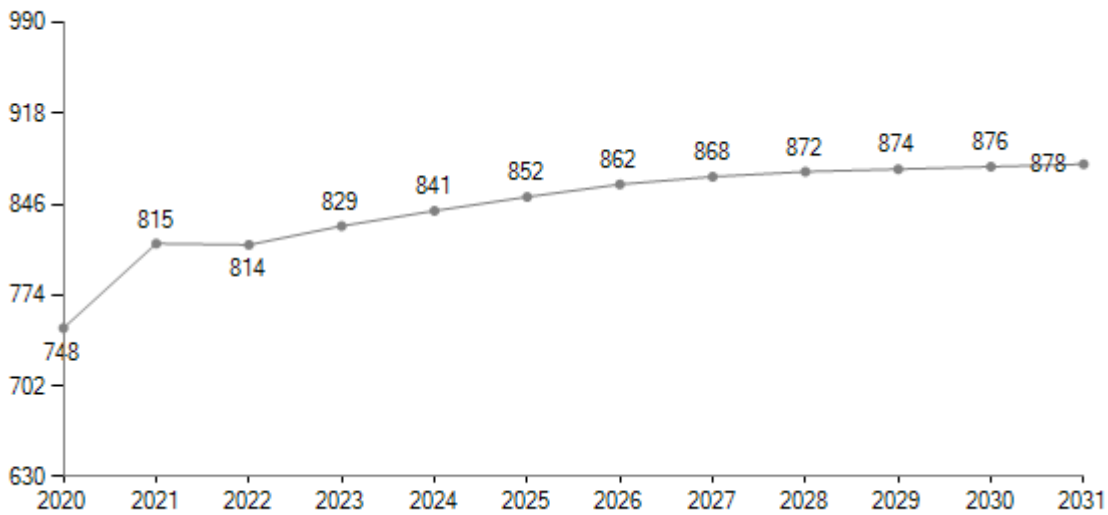


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)