

Gravity boots possibly harmful says therapist

by Eric Evan Lee

Battalion Reporter
The use of inversion gravity boots may help decompress the spine, but it could be dangerous.

Inversion gravity boots are wide metal bands lined with soft rubber that attach around the ankle allowing one to hang upside down from a stationary bar. The boots are sold in sporting goods stores and cost between \$65 and \$85.

Paul Bonarrigo, director of physical therapy at St. Joseph Hospital and director of the Sports Injury and Back Clinic in Bryan, warns of two dangers associated with inversion boots: First, hanging by the ankles gives traction to the knees and hips, which he said could harm the knees by causing unnecessary stretching of the joint.

Second, there is no way to measure the amount of traction placed on a person using the boots. A recent article published by Ronald M. Klatz, a professor of osteopathic medicine, lists some of the dangers of hanging upside down by inversion gravity boots.

Klatz, a professor at the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, and his associates reported that both blood pressure and ocular pressure were increased significantly when twenty medical students voluntarily were inverted for three minutes.

Bonarrigo recommended that people with conditions such as a ruptured disc, structural defects and diseases of the spine, compression fractures of the spine, intraspinal tumors, chronic pulmonary or cardiovascular problems including hypertension or an irregular heartbeat, extreme motion sickness, detached retina or glaucoma should not use the boots.

Bonarrigo also suggested that geriatric patients, patients who are on aspirin or anticoagulant therapy, patients with chronic sinus disorders, patients with

artificial hip joints, those with nutritional deficiencies or those with extreme obesity avoid using the boots.

Hanging by the ankles in inversion boots places traction on the lower back, while hanging from a bar by the hands places traction on the upper part of the spine.

Bonarrigo also said that hanging upside down by the ankles is not the most efficient technique for traction of the spine — the reason most people buy the boots. He said traction originating from the hips would be a more efficient technique for decompressing the spine.

There are devices that give traction only to the spine and are much more effective. The devices allow people to hang from their hips by bending forward over a padded bar.



Sailing Somerville

photo by Kerry Leithead

David Purkiss, a junior marketing major from Colorado Springs, Colo., rides the wind at Lake Somerville. Purkiss says the lake offers

the perfect environment for practicing windsurfing, a sport combining the best aspects of surfing and sailing.

Poles come to the Brazos Valley

by Mary Laura McNair

Battalion Reporter
When the Janusz Lepek family boarded an airplane in Austria a year ago to come to Texas, they didn't know what to expect. Boguslaw Lepek, 19, said that when they arrived at the airport in Houston clad in their winter clothes, they missed Poland's climate right away.

"It's too hot down here," Lepek said. "It's rainy all the time and, there's no real winter here."

The Lepek family, one of several Polish families in the area, is sponsored through the Lutheran Church by Mable and Dal Dreher of Roans Prairie. Dal wanted to sponsor the Lepeks to give them a chance to live in the United States.

The family left Poland for political reasons. Dal and Mable Dreher said the only information they had in the Lepeks was a file with their names and pictures.

The family consists of Boguslaw, his father Janusz, who both work for Dreher's tractor company, his mother Krystyna and his sister Katarzyna.

Boguslaw said the biggest problem the family faces is communicating in English. He and his sister have studied English but, he said, they still have some problems.

"I don't speak very well, and slang is very difficult to understand," he said.

The Lepek family also said the food here is different than Polish food. Although they like hamburgers and hot dogs, they can't get used to the different style of cooking.

"Texas food is not good," Boguslaw said. "We are not used to eating corn and vegetables, and the bread here is too soft." Lepek and his father said the people of Texas and the Bryan area are friendly and have been helpful to the family since its arrival.

Mrs. Dreher said the decision to sponsor a family is hard because it is impossible to know

what a family will be like.

"When you agree to sponsor a family they just say, 'Here's your family,'" Mrs. Dreher said. "If they work — they work, if not, well..."

When the Lepek family arrived at the airport they had one large suitcase, three duffel bags and a couple of cardboard boxes — one full of books.

"The father is very studious," Mrs. Dreher said. "The whole family is very intelligent."

Mrs. Dreher said when she took the daughter to enroll her in school, she was too smart for the tests they gave her. If the questions were given to her in Polish she could understand and make excellent grades. The girl was placed in the fifth grade.

"She has had physics, calculus, geometry, plus junior and senior level courses," Mrs. Dreher said. "She's 14-years-old, but you name it and she's had it."

Mable said the people of Roans Prairie have been helpful.

"You wouldn't believe the food, meat, canned foods and vegetables that people around

here have given them," Mrs. Dreher said. "And clothes. You should see all the boxes of clothes that were given to them."

Mrs. Dreher said she and her husband do not expect any praise for sponsoring the family; they did it because they wanted to.

"I'm really glad we did it," she said. "You just can't imagine the wonderful feeling it is to sponsor them."

Another family to come to the area is the Jaroflaw Waszczuk family, who left Poland eight months ago and came to Bryan. With Jaroflaw came with his wife Irene and their two children Joanna and Gregory.

The Waszczuks, sponsored by Ron and Judy Winn, also left Poland for political reasons.

In Poland, Waszczuk ran a small electric power station for the local government and now works at the power plant at Texas A&M. He said everyone he works with has been helpful. His only problem is his English.

Irene Waszczuk ran a private sewing business in Poland and now is a seamstress in Bryan.

Waszczuk said the major difficulty his family has is the living facilities. In Poland they had a house, but here they live in an apartment. Waszczuk said he hopes he can save enough money to buy his own home soon.

"This place is full of cockroaches," he said. "I want to be able to build my own house and make it any way I wish."

Waszczuk said he and his family are grateful to Bryan residents for all their help and support.

He said he likes Texas and is beginning to feel more comfortable in his new homeland.

"I like country and western very much and I also like the television, but there is too much advertising on it," he said. "I wish they had more programs about people in other countries."

Plan, pay far in advance

Consultant gives travel tips

by Rose Marie Delano

Battalion Reporter
A vacation in an exciting place may be the last chance for freedom before the fall semester begins — start planning it now.

Adele Weber, a travel consultant for Executive Travel, says an important part of a trip is planning in advance.

Passage should be booked as soon as possible to get the best rates and avoid late booking fees, said Weber. It is best to book Daniel Snake reservations at least 30 days in advance because some package tours charge extra for late booking.

Also, when making airline reservations there are many cost benefits for booking early.

Weber said although airlines have eliminated many of their discount fares, they do offer discounts if tickets are purchased a week or two in advance.

"It is always best to purchase your ticket as soon as possible. If the price goes down, we will reissue the ticket at the lower price," Weber said.

Package deals including airfare, transfers and hotel have been very popular, Weber said.

For example, she said, a trip to Jamaica — one of the most

popular vacation spots of the season — including airfare and hotel for three nights costs \$269 per person.

Another popular location to visit is the Bahamas, she said.

"Mexico is too hot this time of year, but it is very popular in the spring," Weber said. "Temperatures are a little better in the Caribbean, but buys are better in Mexico."

Although tour prices for the Caribbean are good, food is more expensive there than in Mexico.

"In Mexico you can do a lot for your money," she said. "Mexico fills up quickly. Some dates are hard to get — Labor Day will be tight."

She warns, however, that because of the financial problems in Mexico, many Mexican agents are overbooking hotels.

"We are trying to stress American Express because it is a tour operator that we know is dependable," Weber said. "Other tour operators overbook, and people get to their hotel only to find it full."

Weber also advises paying for

the trip as soon as possible.

"If you are taking a trip within the month, be ready to pay on the spot," she said. "They may not hold your reservations otherwise."

"Try to book your trip as soon as you can so you don't get stuck with something you don't want."

West Texas dry spell hurts crops

United Press International
BIG SPRING — Officials in three west Texas counties have predicted a \$50 million cotton crop loss from this year's drought.

U.S. Agricultural Stabilization Committee officials in Dawson, Martin and Howard counties predict \$25 million, \$15 million and \$10 million losses respectively.

Tim Hall, U.S. stabilization committee director for Howard

County, said Monday the Payment-in-Kind program — originally intended to get rid of surplus government cotton — has now become a safety net of disaster relief.

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