

It's a wrap

When she chooses to hang around, Dr Elizabeth Hill of Glenhaven Veterinary Hospital in Glenhaven, NSW, is 10 metres off the ground

"The very first time I saw people perform on aerial silks was when a friend suggested we go and try a class. It was a whole new world and it appealed to me immediately. Two fabrics hang from the ceiling and you wrap yourself up in the silks to perform a series of tumbles, swings, suspensions and falls. I've been doing it for a year now after starting as a complete novice.

"You perform at a height of between five and 10 metres, and the crash mats underneath are the only safety equipment. It can be a bit scary when learning new moves and you have to trust that you've done it right. Eventually you just close your eyes, drop and hope you're still in one piece at the end. I practise twice a week for an hour at a time and in the past 12 months, I've only fallen once.

"The people in my group are a diverse bunch with a range of ages and experiences. Novices and professionals all learn and train together. Even though you are alone on the silks, there's always someone keeping an eye on you. You actually have to do something seriously wrong to fall. It's more common that you tie yourself up in incredible knots and then need help to get free. I grew up doing ballet and many different styles of dance. I wish I still had the flexibility I had when I was a kid! It helps if you work out, concentrating on upper body strength, abs and arms. But practising the actual moves is something you can only do while on the silks. I really love that each week I'm accomplishing something or trying something new. Each new move takes a lot of practice until you get it right. It's amazing what you can achieve, even as a beginner." ➤

