Experience and overcome your fear of falling with the Swoop Swing – the coolest and newest ticket to a heady adrenaline rush outside Mumbai

When gravity plays havoc

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Most of us know how swings work and experienced it at least once in our lives. Typically, between two and three metres tall, these were always fun, but never scary. Now, imagine a regular swing pulled up to a height of 30 metres, you go to the top, and then, let yourself free fall, until the ropes swing you around in the air. Sounds scary? Right? Words didn’t scare me until I signed up for a test drive of the Swoop Swing.

About 30 metres tall, it’s called Swoop Swing, and is built by a group of Kiwi adventurers at Della Adventure Park in Lonavla. Three tall pillars stand erect in a triangular formation, two in the front and one at the back. Although, it’s 30 metres shorter than the one in Rotorua, New Zealand (the only other Swoop Swing in the world) and built by the same group; the experience can’t match up to that of skydiving or bungee jumping (we aren’t referring to the 30-40 metre jumps that adventure parks keep promoting). But, it’s tall enough to give you a glimpse of what it feels like when you are free falling.

The real deal
You are placed inside a bag, which is attached to a metal wire through a harness. Once you are comfortably into the bag, you are pulled up, slowly, to a height of 30 metres. Now, the difference here from other falls is that you can control the timing of the fall. Whenever you feel you are ready, you need to pull the small orange-coloured holder to your right. You would imagine that being aware when you are about to fall could be possibly easier, but to realise that the plug is in your hand is a scarier thought.

The free fall lasts just three-four seconds after which you are left swinging by a rope. But those four seconds are scary enough to make your heart pound like a racecar engine. The few seconds when you experience the gravity is the most anxious part of this activity. The rest of the swing is comparatively easy. To find out the speed of fall by the end of four seconds, we did some calculation and it turned out you are falling at a speed of 130-140 km/hr. Little wonder then that my mind literally shut down during the four seconds of the free fall.

Fear factor
Once you ride the swing, you may imagine that you can control your fear the next time around, but sadly that’s not how it works. Once you are taken up to the top, you have to wait till everything is ready and moved out of the way for the swing. In these few seconds, your mind adjusts to the height, but once you pull the rope, all hell breaks loose. You are left feeling as scared as the first time. To test whether the fear factor remains the same, we tried the Swoop Swing three times, and each experience was as scary as the first time.

Price perfect?
At $1,500, though the Swoop Swing can be a bit expensive, especially if you get just one swing. But then there are very few places in India where you can actually try these adventure sports, and the total cost to reach any adventure venue and fees would make them out of budget for most of us. One may want to try adventure rides like The Thunder at Essel World (Goregaon), which is nearly as potent as this, but then there is a huge difference between the two experiences. One scares you with the sheer repetition of the fall while the other is just a gripping free fall. Perhaps, another swing for the same price might even things out nicely in this case.

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