

# Photo Interview: Jennifer Sensenbaugh

In this third installment of the photo interview series, I hope to introduce you to another amazing character in our sport via a photo shoot, a few drinks and an interview. As might be expected, skydiving will be a common theme, but the real goal is to get to know the interviewee as they are off the DZ as well. You may recognize her from one of the wind tunnels that has been fortunate enough to have her as an employee, or maybe you remember her from the one of the early (and best!) cover photos of the most awesome skydiving magazines around. Either way, she isn't one who is easily forgotten. Readers of Blue Skies, I hope you enjoy getting to know Jennifer Sensenbaugh.



**Zach:** You have moved around a little bit as your career has progressed. Can you tell us a little bit about where you are from and how you got from there to here?

**Jennifer:** I was born in Uppsala, Sweden. My dad met my mom in Stockholm when he was getting his Ph.D. and on the prowl for a hot European wife. When I was two, my family moved from Sweden to Jupiter, Florida, a small beach town near West Palm Beach. I went to college at the University of Central Florida in Orlando and got a degree in hospitality management. I fell in love with skydiving, and then started working for iFLY Orlando in Customer Service. In November 2012 I transferred within the SkyVenture company to work for iFLY Austin. One year later I transferred again to open and operate iFLY Dallas! So now here I am in Texas. The word "y'all" has very comfortably worked its way into my vocabulary. I would have never thought that was possible.

**Z:** I had a question on this list that was going to ask you where you got your cheekbones; I had several exotic guesses ... but never would have guessed Swedish!

**J:** I suppose they could be Swedish! My dad's side of the family comes from Germany and Portugal, so I'm a big mix.

**Z:** Did you find anything unusual when you moved to Texas?

**J:** I was pleasantly surprised with how friendly people are in Texas. Also, people here are more inclined to stop and smell the roses. I love it. I'm definitely trying to take a page out of their book.

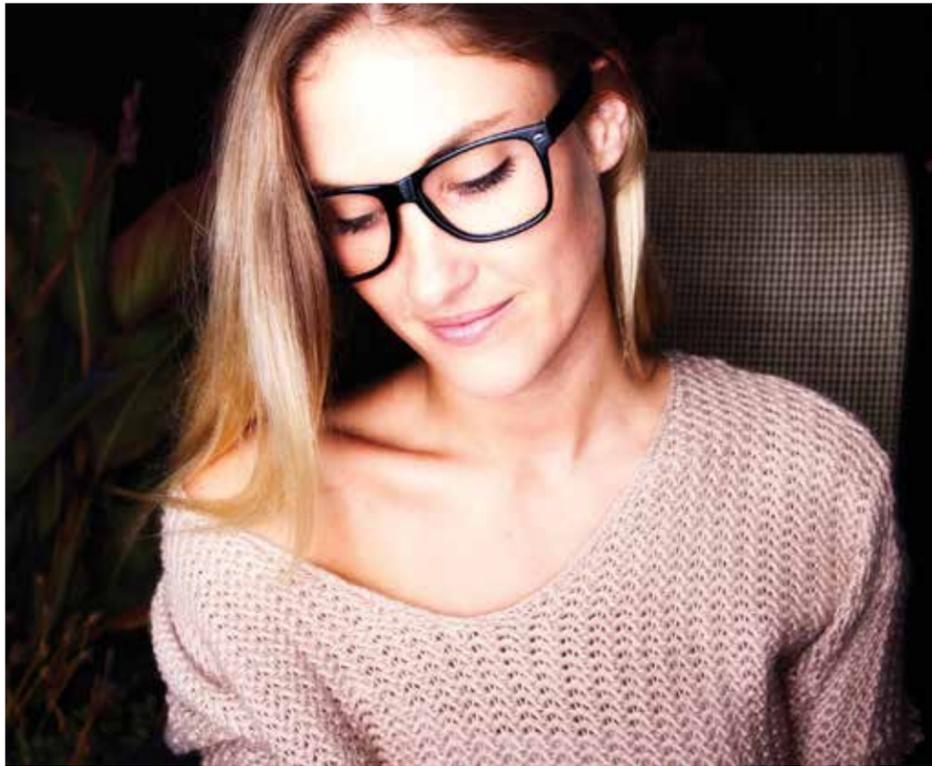
**Z:** Dance?

**J:** Sure, why not! <laughs> I like to dance for fun when I'm out with friends but I'm no ballerina! That's for sure.

**Z:** Where did you get your first paycheck?

**J:** I worked at a little burrito shop called Pyros Grill. I did everything from prepping the sauces, cutting the chicken, and washing dishes to taking people's orders and making burritos. Now I always want to show the people at Chipotle how it's done. Their portions and ingredients to tortilla ratio is always all off.





**Z: I am always interested to find out how people in the skydiving/tunnel industry navigated from their first jump or flight, to finding themselves in a place where this industry is their livelihood. How did you find your way?**

J: My first few jumps were a disaster and I nearly quit. I broke my foot on level 1 of AFF after landing off in a junkyard in high winds. Then I failed level 3 after flailing out of the plane and showing my AFF instructors my technique on how to fall as slow as possible, and what a non-existent arch looks like.

While I was a crappy student, I did know that I loved being on the drop zone and the overall great vibe that came with being surrounded by such unique, exciting people. My instructors recommended that I spend some time in the tunnel, so from there I was able to become more stable and comfortable with the freefall portion of skydiving. Fast forward a couple of hundred skydives, and after some begging, groveling, and numerous job applications, I was finally able to put my degree in hospitality management to use and start work as a customer service representative at iFLY Orlando.

While in college, I was unsure of what I wanted to do with my life in terms of a career. People always told me to start doing what I love and the rest would follow. I had no idea how true that would become. Skydiving completely changed the path of my life, and I am forever grateful of everyone who encouraged and helped me along the way.

**Z: When it comes to music, what do you enjoy listening to? Is there anything that might surprise people?**

J: I like classic rock from the '60s and '70s. All the good stuff that I used to listen to as a kid with my dad while cruising around town in his car. The Doobie Brothers, The Eagles, Bob Dylan, The Beatles. Top 40/pop/hip-hop isn't really my thing (unless of course I am dancing) I also listen to a lot of indie music. It really depends on my mood. No big surprises in my music taste.

**Z: Is there a skydiving event that you would recommend to the readers?**

J: I love the Invasion! I'm from Florida, and Skydive Sebastian is such an awesome drop zone. The view! The people! The awesome New Year's party!

**Z: When it is time for a nip, what is your cocktail of choice?**

J: I wish I could confidently say that I have a drink of choice. This again depends on my mood. I enjoy good red wine and Champagne. I will come up with any reason to celebrate for Champagne!

**Z: Would you consider yourself an introvert?**

J: I think most people have both sides in me, but I always considered myself an introvert. I am a pretty quiet person and sometimes keep to myself. However, when I started skydiving, I opened up and became much more extroverted. I really love the big personalities that come with skydivers. I also love being around and interacting with skydiving/indoor skydiving students, because their nervous excitement is so apparent and it reminds me of how I felt when I first got into this sport. My job also requires a certain level of social interaction, so as I got older, I slowly broke out of my shy bubble. Sometimes I crawl back in though. It's comfortable in there.

**Z: I hope you don't mind my saying so, but you are in amazing shape. Is there any specific strategy in your diet and exercise routine to help you accomplish your goals?**

J: <laughs> I don't really work out very much. I am just a small person with a fast metabolism. I eat a lot, and it will catch up to me one of these days. Flying in the tunnel is a great workout! A lot of the food I eat is home-cooked and organic, and I don't eat fast food. Unfortunately I really dislike going to the gym. I wish I liked it, because I would like to have more muscle and bigger legs. According to advertisements/social media, "Real women have curves," and I'm lacking in the curve department.

**Z: You once told me that you like to cook; what is your best dish?**

J: I do like to cook, but I'm definitely not the best cook. I enjoy making healthy meals, lots of seafood and vegetables. Sometimes I watch the Food Network and imagine myself side-by-side with Paula Deen, whipping up beautiful dishes in a nice kitchen with organized spices and a sweet knife set. Then I come to, realize that I manage a wind tunnel, and cooking is not my forté.

**Z: Outside of the tunnel and drop zone, what do you enjoy doing for leisure?**

J: I love to travel! I go to Sweden every summer to visit my family. Any little random trip I can

take, I try to take advantage of. I'm somewhat of a homebody though. After a long, hectic day at work I like to be at home with my cat and a good book. I suppose that is the introverted side of me.

**Z: Any clues on what things are sure to make you smile?**

J: Being around my family. Airports and knowing I'm about to go on vacation. An awesome skydive where something hysterical happens and then recapping it under canopy equals huge smiles. Witnessing random acts of kindness that momentarily restore my faith in humanity. Cliché, but the smell of jet-fuel. I'm a pretty smiley person; it isn't hard to make me smile.

**Z: If you could go back in time at any point in the last 10 years, would you change anything in your life?**

J: No. Any tiny change would completely alter the course that I'm on now! I am pretty content with that path. I have made a lot of mistakes, as do most people, but I have also learned a lot from those mistakes. The person that I am today is a reflection of my past 10 years, so I don't think I would change anything. But the going back in time thing is a whole different story. We can save the time travel paradox discussion for a rainy day, over Champagne!

**Z: People always like to talk about what they do well, but what I want to know is—what do you suck at?**

J: <Laughs> I suck at a lot of things! I'm pretty clumsy, and I'm unfortunately I'm not one of those people who just picks up on things really quickly. I sucked when I started tunnel flying; I was a rather slow learner. I suck at singing; I have a pretty squeaky voice, so I just refrain from singing.

**Z: What really pisses you off?**

J: When people lie! I mean, I understand why people lie; they don't want to hurt others, or to save themselves from a bad situation. People who are inconsiderate piss me off. I also hate when people are obnoxious, or rude for no reason.

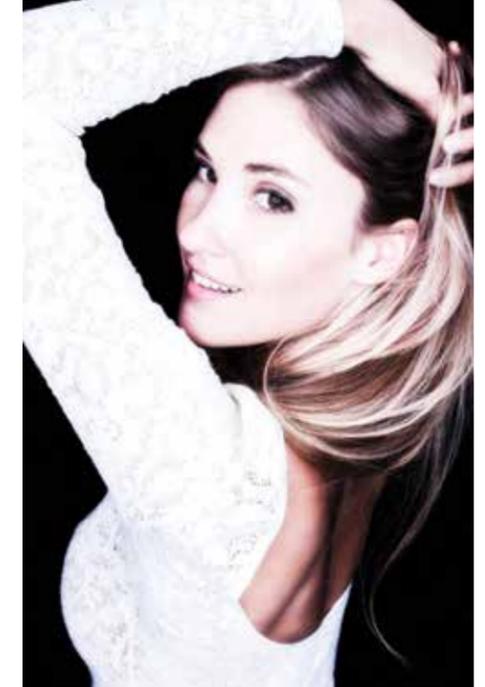
**Z: If we were to throw a steak on the grill, how would you like it prepared?**

J: Medium-rare, or rare if I can get away with it. It depends on the restaurant, but if I am at a nice restaurant I will usually get it rare. People who get their steak well done ... why?

**Z: If you could do something to help improve our sport, what would it be?**

J: It would be nice for skydiving to be more accepted and understood. It's difficult to explain skydiving as a sport to someone who doesn't skydive; they always look at me like I'm crazy. I think indoor skydiving has and will continue to improve our sport as more people experience it and become interested in body flight. It will be awesome to see how skydiving as a sport evolves as more people continue to push the envelope, as technology and video quality develop, and as skydiving/BASE/tunnel flying get more exposure via various media outlets.

**Z: If money and time were unlimited, where would your next trip take you?**



J: All over the world! I would never stop exploring. I think I would start in Thailand. Or maybe South Africa.

**Z: When you were a kid, did you ever do anything crazy or mischievous that your parents never knew about?**

J: I always got caught! My grandparents in Sweden live on a river that flows out to the Baltic Sea, and every year they open a dam which makes the river current extremely strong and dangerous. I remember one fine summer day in Sweden when I was about six, I was determined to go swimming in that raging river without drowning. I ended up getting a long rope and a life vest and tied the rope to a rock on shore and the other end to my life vest. I then ran full speed off the dock and jumped into the current. I quickly learned that I was not the pro body surfer that I had fashioned myself to be. Luckily my dad came running down and hauled me back in before I got swept out to sea. I didn't get away with much when I was younger. I was always plotting something.

**Z: In the event you knew you were having your last meal, what would you have prepared?**

J: I hope I wouldn't know I was having my last meal, because that would make it super unenjoyable. In fact I would probably lose my appetite. But to entertain the question, I would order a steak. Medium-rare! And lobster, with a glass of red wine.

*If you have any questions for Jennifer, send them to [APinterview@zlew.net](mailto:APinterview@zlew.net). I will pick a few to ask and post them at [blueskiesmag.com](http://blueskiesmag.com).*



**ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER/PHOTOGRAPHER:**  
Zach started jumping in 1997 and flies camera for Dallas Khaos Khobalt. He enjoys jumping, taking pictures, taking pictures while jumping, and whiskey.

### LIGHTNING ROUND

Weights or cardio? Cardio.

Ice cream or cake? Neither.

Swoop or tip toe? Tip Toe!

Muscles or brains? Brains.

Saver or spender? Saver.

Fly or drive? Fly.

Business or laughs? Laughs.

Comedy or tragedy? Comedy.

Violin or guitar? Violin.

Desire or discipline? Desire.

Brute force or careful consideration?

Brute force.

Poker or blackjack? Neither.

Spicy or mild? Spicy baby.

