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Meta Description: Looking to learn skydiving terms the pros use? What is wuffo, manifest, or a freeflyer? Read our skydiving terminology glossary to see just what these mean. If you have extra questions, reach out to Skydive Taft to connect with some of the most experienced skydiving instructors in the sport.

Skydiving Terminology 101: The People

If you're new to skydiving, you might feel overwhelmed by all the skydiving terms being thrown around! Freeflying? Which part is free?! Exit? Where?! Whuffo? What?!

First, a little secret: skydivers luuuuuuuuurrrrve to talk about skydiving. It's, like, totally their favorite thing. So never feel like you can't ask a question! You're just helping them get back to their favorite topic.

I know, I know—you're an overachiever! You want to be the one answering questions! Lucky for you, we've put together a glossary of some of the skydiving terminology you're most likely to run into while hanging around the dropzone. If you don’t see the term you’re looking for, see our second and third parts about the gear and the jump.

Wuffo or whuffo - A non-skydiver. Someone who says "wuffo you jump out of them perfectly good planes for?"

Belly Flyer - Someone who skydives while falling belly-to-earth (also known as the "boxman" position, but you can call it "boxwoman" if you want). Belly jumps usually consist of linking up with other skydivers also falling belly-to-earth and making formations together. These people are fond of "turning points", a skydiving term for making multiple formations. Ask a belly flyer and they'll tell you ALL about it; probably with diagrams

Freeflyer - Someone who skydives in orientations other than belly-to-earth. Freeflying includes things like sitflying, backflying, and flying head-down. It's a dynamic form of skydiving where

you're working with both horizontal and vertical planes. It takes a long time to master and often involves spending gobs of money in a wind tunnel (also called "indoor skydiving"). Freeflyers like to wear super tight outfits. They will tell you this is to minimize wind resistance and make them fly fast, but also they just like it.

Wingsuiter - Someone who wears one of those "squirrel suits". Wearing a wingsuit gives you increased glide, so you can travel up to several horizontal miles in a single skydive. Yes, wingsuiters still use parachutes to land. No, not all wingsuiters jump off mountains.

Manifest - The place or person who schedules you for your skydive. Most dropzones have a "manifest counter","manifest window", or simply "manifest", where you go to say "Put me on a load!" This magic skydiving term signals to manifest that you want to be scheduled for a plane ride up to jumping altitude.

Tracker or Angle Flyer - Skydiver who puts their body into a rough delta or triangle shape (arms slightly angled out, legs apart and pointed) so that they are like an arrow moving forward through the air. Tracking is important at the end of a skydive to move away from the other skydivers in the group so that each person can pull their parachute a safe distance from the others. A tracker or angle flyer will also fly the first part of a skydive with other human arrows moving in the same direction, and they'll "break off" and separate at the end when it's time to pull (deploy the canopy).

Packer - Someone who packs parachutes for pay. Many skydivers pack their own main parachute, but the lazy, rich, and busy prefer to pay someone else to do it.

Pilot - The person who flies the freaking airplane. Duh. No super-exclusive skydiving term here.

DZO - Dropzone owner. Being a DZO is a lucrative career that people get into for the gigantic paycheck and complete lack of stress. HAHAHA! It's actually a pretty huge pain in the butt and an often thankless job, and it can only be done really well if you truly love the sport and the people. At Skydive Taft, our awesome DZOs are Claudia Blank, Lelo Mras, and Michael Choi. Give 'em a hug and a big thank you next time you see them!

S&TA - Safety & training advisor. Each S&TA is appointed by the USPA (United States Parachute Association) and can provide advice and training for many extraordinary jumps, verify rating renewal requirements and issue license tests. They may also be called upon to investigate skydiving accidents and report safety problems and violations. These are some of the most experienced and knowledgeable people in skydiving. Lelo Mras is our S&TA at Skydive Taft.

There you have it—a few of the important skydiving terms used to refer to people in skydiving. Stay tuned for the second and third parts:

Skydiving Terminology 101: The Gear

Skydiving Terminology 101: The Jump