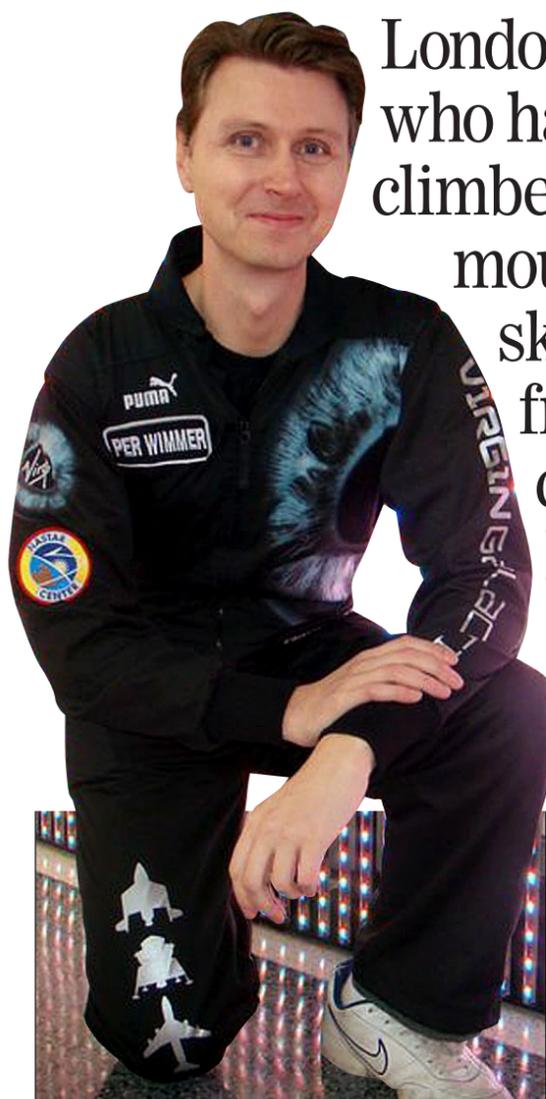


# City banker for the high jump



London man who has never climbed a mountain will skydive from plane circling Everest in 200mph winds and -60C... and before that he's got a 6-day trek to get there



View from the top: investment banker Per Wimmer, left, will parachute at 29,500 feet. He says the risk is "appealing"

A LONDON man is to attempt the first charity skydive from a plane circling close to the summit of Mount Everest.

City banker Per Wimmer will be one of 28 jumpers leaping from 29,500 feet in a temperature of about minus 60C.

The 39-year-old hopes to complete the tandem dive to raise money for Unicef.

Mr Wimmer, from Islington, said: "It's going to be an incredible experience and I really like the idea of being the first to do it."

"There are a lot of risks such as the lack of oxygen when we jump out of the plane. We'll be jumping just lower than a jumbo jet's normal altitude, so we need to carry

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Science Correspondent

our own supply. The speeds we reach will also be incredible as well as the cold. Then we get to the landing, where we may have to contend with 200mph winds that blow us off course.

"The entire thing is obviously a risk but I think that is what appealed to me."

Mr Wimmer will wear a parachute three times the normal size for the jump and be equipped with an oxygen mask and thermal jumpsuit.

He will freefall at 180mph — 60mph faster than in normal conditions. After his parachute opens

he will land on a small drop zone close to Everest's base camp at an altitude of 12,350 feet — the height at which most skydives begin.

The jump is scheduled for early October but will depend on the weather.

The team will need clear skies and a lack of wind as well as perfect climbing conditions.

Mr Wimmer, who is unmarried and originally from Denmark, runs his own investment bank.

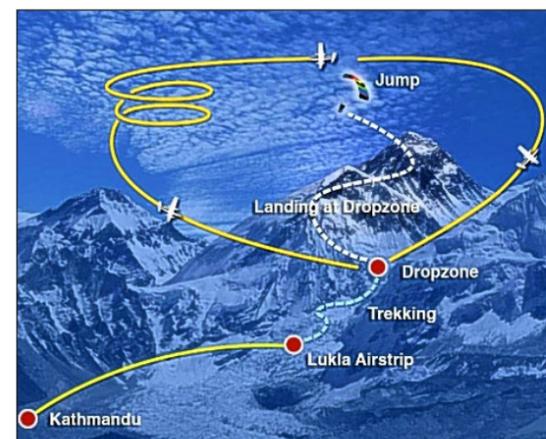
He has no mountaineering experience and has skydived only once before. He was one of the first people to sign up for Richard Branson's space tourism flights.

Trip organiser Nigel Gifford, a mountaineer and skydiver who

has made more than 1,000 jumps, began preparations two years ago.

He said the challenge would combine two harsh environments — high altitude and extreme cold: "I first went to the Himalayas when I was 27 and I'm now 62, so this is the culmination of years of adventure experience and I see it as having no equal."

After flying to Kathmandu, the team will be taken by helicopter to Lukla, where the attempt will begin. They will then spend six days on an acclimatisation trek to the landing zone.



Route map: after a helicopter ride from Kathmandu to Lukla there is a six-day trek to a drop zone near Everest base camp

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