

Jessica Cox

World's First Armless Pilot, Inspirational Speaker, & Disability Rights Advocate

The doctors don't exactly know why Jessica Cox was born without arms. Sonograms and other prenatal tests did not reveal this rare congenital condition. However, from infancy her feet became her hands. Like all children, she went through the various stages of development. She learned to feed herself and write with her feet.

Jessica Cox has famously eliminated the words "I can't" from her vocabulary. Despite being born without arms due to a birth defect, she has never allowed that to be a limiting factor. Throughout childhood, she participated in many activities, including swimming, gymnastics, and tap dancing. Jessica started Tae Kwon-Do when she was ten, earning her first black belt at fourteen in the International Tae Kwon-Do Federation. She rejoined American Tae Kwon-Do Association in college and earned a second black belt.

When first learning to drive, Jessica was encouraged to use special modifications. Even after her car was modified, she decided to remove them and drive without. She holds an unrestricted driver's license.

As an undergraduate at the University of Arizona, Jessica attended classes taking notes with her feet. At 25 words-per-minute, Jessica was able to type out her papers with a regular computer keyboard on the floor.

Jessica's greatest challenges are not the ordinary daily tasks required for her to live independently. Putting in contact lenses, washing and brushing her hair, and fixing breakfast in the morning are all tasks that come second-nature to her as they would to anyone else. Her greatest triumph in life stands far above any physical feat. It is her unrepentant regard for herself a whole person, her high degree of self-acceptance that gives her the freedom and power to insist that society accept her, too, just as she is.

Her unconventional views on how to overcome a challenge have earned international invitations to more than 20 countries from companies, including Boeing, GE, Oerlikon, Nestle, State Farm, AT&T, NASA, US Air Force, Johnson & Johnson, IBM, JP Morgan Chase, Smithsonian, AXA, and Mahindra. Her life story is also the subject of the international award-winning documentary, *Right Footed*, which aired on National Geographic in more than 80 countries.