

MY EXPERIENCE WITH SQUATTING

As Told By Shane Bauer

Like most Westerners, Shane Bauer had few, if any, opportunities or experience with squatting throughout his entire life.

Born and raised in a society where everyone has to sit for bowel movements, Bauer one day found himself caught in a situation when he had to squat in order to do so.

Many a Westerner would not be able -- or willing -- to do it. But Shane did. Although he might not be the only Caucasian man in the world to do so, what was remarkable in Shane's case was that he not only wrote about his experience with squatting, but also did something else.

He wondered about the reasons behind the existence of the sit-down toilet, and why Westerners are so incapable of using the natural posture demanded by the squat toilet.

His curiosity was the catalyst that led him to carry out a personal research on the origins of the sitting toilet and the pros and cons of the both toileting postures, namely sitting and squatting.

Shane Bauer's account of his own experience with squatting, and what he had discovered in his research makes for fascinating reading. The article he wrote, *The Toiletization of the West*, is a classic piece of work that is humorous, educational and -- for those who are thinking of switching to squatting -- encouraging.

In his article, Shane Bauer first described, in vivid detail, the emotions that went through his Western mind when he first came face to face with a squatting toilet:

"I entered the public toilet stall and a feeling of bafflement, even embarrassment, washed over me. My eyes followed the back wall down to the floor, focusing on the ceramic hole over which I was expected to squat and let my bowels loose."



"I considered how badly I really had to go, whether I could hold it long enough to enjoy excretion later in comfort. I decided that it was best to go then since I didn't know how long it would be before I would see another throne to sit on."

His 'ordeal' just beginning, Shane wrote about what happened next:

"I found the (squatting) feat to be very complicated, and had to take off all clothing from the waist down to pull it off. It felt primitive, as though I had been forced into humility."



Courtesy 'Small Public Toilets' © 2002

"When I was finished and walked outside, I felt like what a man walking out of a strip club might feel: Everyone knew what I had done, and they all detected my shame."

Continuing his story, Shane recounted his string of encounters and experience with squatting toilets, and his realization over time that squatting is better than sitting. He also mentioned what had caused him to do some research on the topic of toileting posture:

"My first run-in with the squat toilet was in France, but extensive travel throughout the world has brought me into ample contact with it and has made me realize how much easier and quicker squatting can be."

"The more of these toilets I ran into, the more I wondered about the reasons behind the existence of the sit-down toilet and why Westerners are so incapable of using the natural posture demanded by the squat toilet."

Drawing on many sources for his research, Shane made several astounding discoveries about sitting toilets that would come as a surprise to many:

The Position Traditionally Used By Human Beings

"People in ancient times didn't have chair-like toilets; they assumed the natural crouching position (squatting) that two-thirds of humanity still uses today.

"In fact, we were born with squatting facets on our heel bones to help us keep balanced, but since people in Western societies sit to defecate now, they disappear as we mature. We have trained ourselves to unlearn a basic function of the body."

The Link Between Sitting Toilets and Western Diseases

"Since people in the West have begun sitting to crap, a host of almost exclusively Western health problems has emerged. Steven Arnott, in his book *Wash Your Hands!*, pointed out that:

'Squatting is said to be the healthier option as it aligns the rectum and anus in a near vertical position.

'Sitting tends to create a [kink between the rectum and anus](#), often necessitating much straining to force a turd around the bend. Squatting also spreads the buttocks to reveal the anus, whereas sitting can do the opposite.'"

On Hemorrhoids

"Dr Berko Sikirov, an Israeli physician, discovered that [hemorrhoids](#), found in approximately 50 percent of people over forty in Western societies, is caused by the continual aggravation of straining that is needed to force out a turd while in the sitting position."

Sitting Toilets = Incomplete Evacuation + Colon Diseases

"Another problem is that while sitting it is impossible to completely empty the colon and the residue hardens, a process known as fecal stagnation.

"The Journal of Epidemiology has listed fecal stagnation as a major risk for [colon cancer](#). The stagnant feces expose the colon to toxic carcinogens that cause colon cancer as well as [appendicitis](#) and inflammatory bowel disease."

Prostate Problems

"An Australian researcher, Wallace Bowles, found that the pudendal nerve, which connects the prostate to the brain, is damaged over time by the strain of sitting defecation. Without brain signals, the prostate grows uncontrollably, ultimately leading to cancer.

"Doctors once believed, and many continue to believe, that there was non-Western immunity to the diseases caused by the sitting position.

"The proof of the connection between these diseases and sitting lies in the comparison between Western societies and traditional African and Asian societies where squatting is normal, and these diseases are virtually non-existent."

Bauer did not stop here, but went on to find out why sitting toilets became a part of the world today. The next question he asked was:

With all these health risks, what made us begin to sit to defecate, and why do we continue to do it today?

Again, Shane proved himself to be an excellent detective and researcher. What he discovered was astounding and put to rest all arguments that there is nothing wrong with sitting toilets:

Who Invented The Sitting Toilet?

"The sit-down toilet was an effect of the increasing class and racial stratification of the Victorian Era in England (1837-1901). The flushing sit-down toilet was invented in 1596 by Sir John Harrington, a godson of Queen Elizabeth I, who knew nothing about human physiology.

"The invention didn't become well known until Thomas Turiferd gave Queen Victoria was given her first ceramic toilet in 1859. The Victorians are often remembered today as the people who 'civilized' England and are characterized by their prudish and repressed social behaviors."

Sitting vs Squatting = Civilised vs Primitive?

"The 'porcelain throne' was justified by the idea that sitting was more dignified and suited for the aristocrats so that they wouldn't be like the natives in the colonies."

"Victorian social pressures about what it meant to be 'civilized', combined with the fact that bodily functions were taboo in 19th century England, let the new toilet spread into English society without resistance.

"Nobody dared to speak against it. Who would denounce something that the queen herself used? But the toilet's secret unpopularity was signified in the Harrods of

London by high sales of squatting stools that people set up over their sit down toilets."

"Bathroom practices have long been indicators of social status. In the Middle ages, while the poor used sticks and scrapers to wipe, the wealthy used such materials as unspun hemp or wool.

"The ultimate status symbol for the Chinese mandarins was 'not having to clean your bottom at all: [their] long fingernails made it impossible for them to wipe themselves - a public declaration that their bottom washing was to be done by a servant."

Why Sitting Toilets Will Not Go Away Anytime Soon

"The idea of being more 'civilized' than the rest of the world cannot be attributed to the Victorian era alone...

"Today we are obsessed with the 'image' of civilization. We separate ourselves from the 'underdeveloped' world by the modernization and dehumanization of our everyday activities.

"We watch fabricated lives on television for entertainment; we eat plastic wrapped food instead of cooking it ourselves; we often prefer email over face to face conversation; we **sit** while we shit instead of **squatting**."

The Consequences of The Western World's Choice of Toilets

"In doing so we are compromising our health to maintain the illusion that we have somehow evolved from what makes us animals.

"We sit because it psychologically removes us from a bodily function that reminds us that no amount of technology can separate us from the animal world.

"We make defecation impersonal by sitting down on a stool of porcelain, and we ignore our physiological need to do otherwise.

"Those Victorian social pressures have been passed down for the past one hundred and fifty years.

"As a child, I remember making fun of other kids who would have to poo while we were playing out in the woods. The funniest thing to us was when they would squat down. We found their bodily position 'grosser' than what actually came out. Protocol for the proper way to ca-ca has become one of our cultural values.

"Sitting on the toilet is only one of the many ways that we subconsciously hold our society above cultures in 'Third World' countries. Despite the physiological reasons against it, we have continued to accept serious health problems over committing such a socially disgusting, heathenous act as squatting."

Bauer's Call For Change

Transformed by his experience with squatting, Shane Bauer issued a call for a change and appealed for his countrymen to go back to squatting, 'the natural crouching position (squatting) that two-thirds of humanity still uses today':

"It is time for a change; let's tear the toilets out of our walls and reclaim the ways of our ancestors! Maybe the West isn't ready for a bathroom revolution, but we don't have to accept the diseases of industrialization."

Bauer then explained why it is never too late for one to enjoy the benefits of squatting:

"The epidemic (of health problems associated with the use of sitting toilets) is easily reversed. A study by Dr. Berko Sikirov, published in the Israeli Journal of Medical Science showed a 90% cure rate from hemorrhoids after switching to the squatting position.

"Wallis Bowles, in his article *Prostate Disorder: Causes And Cure*, says that:

'An ongoing informal study indicates that, providing prostate enlargement has not progressed too far, symptoms gradually reverse when men abandon seated bowel movements and squat instead.

The study indicates that improvement usually occurs within three months and, within about six months of making this posture change, most men (including men in their seventies) regain normal prostate function).'"

Epilogue

Depending on who you are (whether you are for sitting or squatting), Shane's encounter and experience with squatting could be seen as a happy or sad ending.

Upon his return to his home country, Shane -- coming face to face with a sitting toilet -- has to decide whether to submit to the way of the porcelain throne again...

When it comes to toileting posture, there would be Westerners who -- after their first run-in and experience with squatting -- would swear that they would never do it again. Well, in Shane's case, it was different...

"After living in Yemen for a summer, a society that embraces the naturalness of squatting, I came back to my house in California and was confronted by the almighty throne once again; I knew that it would be in the US to stay.

"After two and a half months of defecation bliss, this piece of European engineering was not about to put me through twenty minutes of struggle.

"I stood up on the toilet edges in a quiet statement of rebellion against this European innovation, found my balance, and hunkered down, conquering a small, malignant piece of human history."