

Nature Knows Best

Health Benefits of the Natural Squatting Position



JONATHAN ISBIT

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Jonathan Isbit
186 Westside Drive
Boone, NC 28607
<http://www.NaturesPlatform.com>

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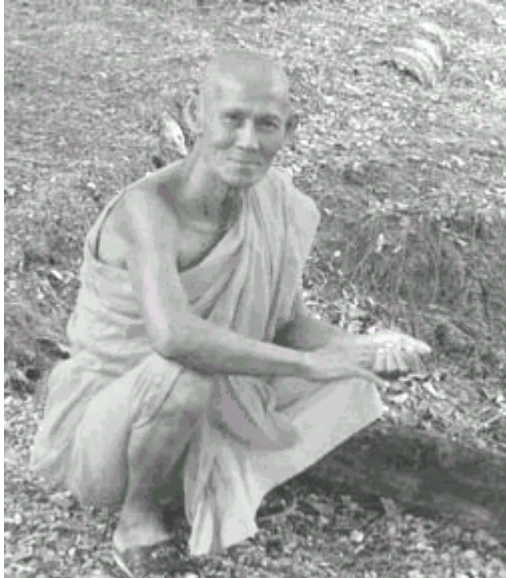
I would like to recognize several individuals who have played a key role in the creation of this book.

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A monk in Thailand, resting in the posture used by man since time immemorial.

Introduction

Thirty-seven years ago, I happened to pick up a book on yoga and learned something amazing. Among all the strange and difficult postures, was the simple one shown on the cover of this book. The caption read, “This is the most natural and healthy way to perform our bodily functions.”

It was a shock. But the concept appealed to this 20-year-old’s sense of irony and fondness for non-conformity. I immediately adopted the method, and for the next 37 years continued to enjoy its benefits.

The subject was, of course, unmentionable. So, as much as I wanted to help others avoid their daily struggle on the “porcelain throne”. I never mentioned my secret to anyone. I had my own life to live and felt resigned to the fact that this ignorance would just have to continue – generation after generation. Little did I know.

Twenty-eight years after my initial discovery, the thought started coming that “now is the time to share it with the world.” As a vehicle for spreading the knowledge, I felt inspired to create a device that would convert a conventional toilet into a squat toilet. I had no experience inventing anything, nor any inclination towards the business world, but I couldn’t shake the feeling that I simply had to accomplish this mission.

I didn’t find out why it was so important until much later. When I finally started marketing the product, I scoured the Internet and the libraries for all the research that had ever been done on the benefits of squatting.

Each day brought a new revelation of the harm caused by the modern toilet. Squatting seemed to be the “Rosetta

Stone” that solved many mysteries, which for decades had baffled the medical profession.

Doctors had been groping in the dark for the cause of all the colon, bladder and prostate disorders which – for some “strange” reason – were absent in the developing world.

I carefully studied the anatomy, history and epidemiology of each disease. Whether it was something deadly like appendicitis or colon cancer, or something merely annoying, like bladder incontinence or hemorrhoids – the conclusion was unavoidable: Each disease could clearly be traced to the cumulative damage caused by an aberrant method of evacuation.

To take one example, consider the history of appendicitis. Before sitting toilets came into common use in the mid-Nineteenth Century, the disease was unknown. It didn’t even have a name until 1886, when a Harvard professor, Reginald Heber Fitz, coined the term “appendicitis.” He was also the first one to recommend the immediate removal of an inflamed appendix.

Currently 40,000 appendectomies are performed in the U.S. each year, merely to prevent appendicitis. In spite of that, seven percent of the population will contract the disease. Among squatting populations appendicitis is virtually unknown.

How does the modern toilet cause appendicitis? The appendix is attached to a part of the colon that cannot be squeezed empty while sitting. Wastes get lodged in the appendix, where they stagnate and form a breeding-ground for virulent bacteria. The appendix gets infected and inflamed. If it bursts, the result is often fatal.

In a similar way, I analyzed nine other common diseases and came to the same conclusion. They were all due to one of two problems caused by the long-term use of sitting toilets. The first is “fecal stagnation.” Wastes cannot be fully expelled in the sitting position, so they stagnate and solidify. The tissues of the colon wall suffocate and become vulnerable to cancer and inflammatory bowel disease.

The second problem is damage to the pelvic nerves from chronic straining on the toilet. This injury is responsible for prostate and bladder disorders that have reached epidemic proportions in our society.

As my research progressed, I felt like a prosecutor building a case against the dearest and most trusted friend of every member of the jury. At first glance, the charges seemed preposterous – like some kind of practical joke. And the subject matter was something that most people don’t even want to think about.

Breaking this taboo was a daunting challenge, but I took comfort in the words of Justice Louis Brandeis, who said, “A little sunlight is the best disinfectant.”

I assembled all the evidence and put it on my website, NaturesPlatform.com. For the next 6 years, I was constantly adding and revising, as more information became available.

I contacted hundreds of doctors to tell them the good news. With rare exceptions, their response was absolute silence. One doctor said she was completely convinced – but could never recommend squatting to her patients for fear of losing her medical license.

It became clear to me that millions of people around the world were suffering needlessly and dying prematurely, due

to the ignorance of the medical profession. And that my chance discovery 37 years ago was no accident, but was part of the cosmic plan to restore mankind to a natural state of health.

May this book help us reach the goal.

Jonathan Ishit
Boone, North Carolina, USA
March 8, 2007



African children attending a celebration.

Historical Background



Man, like his fellow primates, has always used the squatting position for elimination. Infants of every culture instinctively adopt this posture to relieve themselves. Although it may seem strange to someone who has spent his entire life deprived of the experience, this is the way the human body was designed to function.

And this is the way our ancestors performed their bodily functions until the middle of the 19th century. Before that time, chair-like toilets had only been used by royalty and the disabled.

But with the advent of indoor plumbing in the 1800's, the throne-like water closet was invented²² to give ordinary people the same "dignity" previously reserved for kings and queens. The plumber and cabinet maker who designed it had no knowledge of human physiology – and sincerely believed that they were improving people's lives.

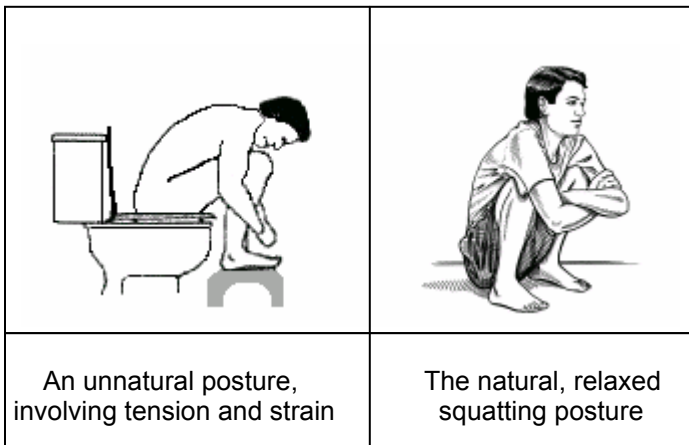
The new device symbolized the "progress" and "creativity" of western civilization. It showed that Man could "improve" on Nature and transcend the primitive cultural practices followed by the poor "benighted" natives in the colonies. The "White Man's Burden" typified the condescending Victorian attitude toward other races and cultures.

The British plumbing industry moved quickly to install indoor plumbing and water closets throughout the country. The great benefits of improved sanitation caused people to overlook a major ergonomic blunder: *The sitting position*

makes elimination difficult and incomplete, and forces one to strain.

Those who could not overlook this drawback had to keep silent, because the subject was considered unmentionable. Furthermore, how could they criticize the "necessary" used by Queen Victoria herself? (Hers was gold-plated, befitting the self-styled "Empress of India.")

So, like the Emperor's New Clothes, the water closet was tacitly accepted. It was a grudging acceptance, as evidenced by the popularity of "squatting stools" sold in the famous department store, Harrods of London. As shown below on the left, these footstools merely elevated one's feet in a crude attempt to imitate squatting.



(Learn more about this comparison on page 73)

The rest of Western Europe, as well as Australia and North America, did not want to appear less civilized than Great Britain, whose vast empire at the time made it the most powerful country on Earth. So, within a few decades, most

of the industrialized world had adopted "The Emperor's New Throne."

150 years ago, no one could have predicted how this change would affect the health of the population. But today, many physicians blame the modern toilet for the high incidence of a number of serious ailments.

Westernized countries have much higher rates of colon and pelvic disease, as illustrated by this report in the *Israel Journal of Medical Science*:

The prevalences of bowel diseases (hemorrhoids, appendicitis, polyps, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, diverticular disease, and colon cancer) are similar in South African whites and in populations of prosperous western countries. Among rural South African blacks with a traditional life style, these diseases are very uncommon or almost unknown.¹⁹

The following sections will examine these and other diseases in more detail to see how an unnatural toilet posture could produce such a wide range of harmful effects.

Toilets from Ancient Times

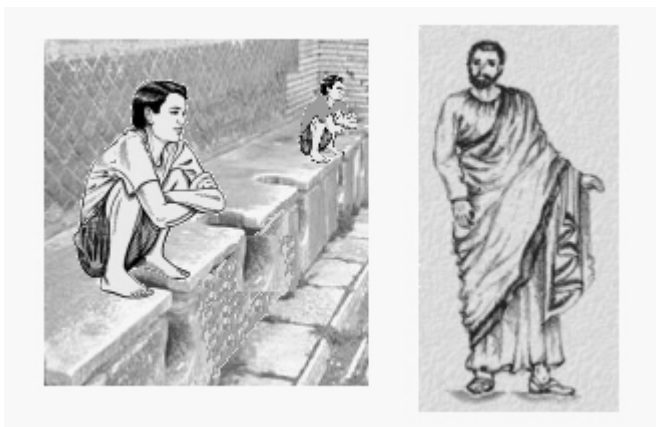


Pictures of ancient public toilets tend to confuse Westerners, who assume that they were used in the sitting position. This impression is often reinforced by the pose of a comical tourist.

*But, in reality, these are **squat** toilets.* They are elevated, not for sitting, but because there is an open sewer underneath. The cutouts in the vertical wall allow people to clean themselves with water, which is done from the front when squatting.

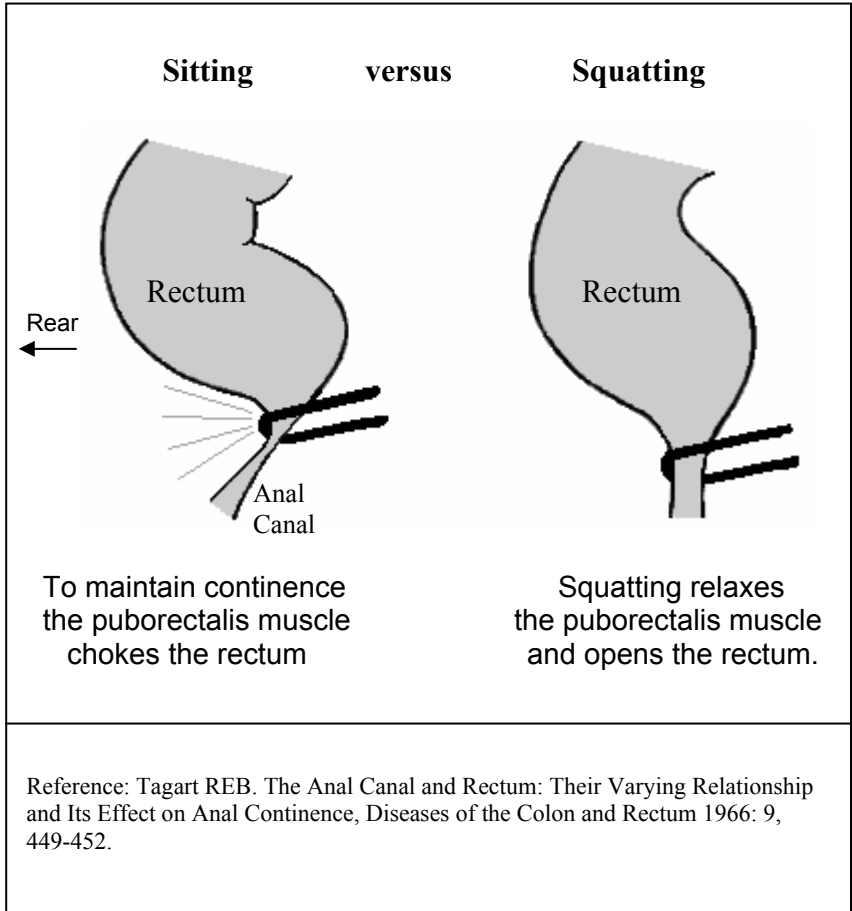


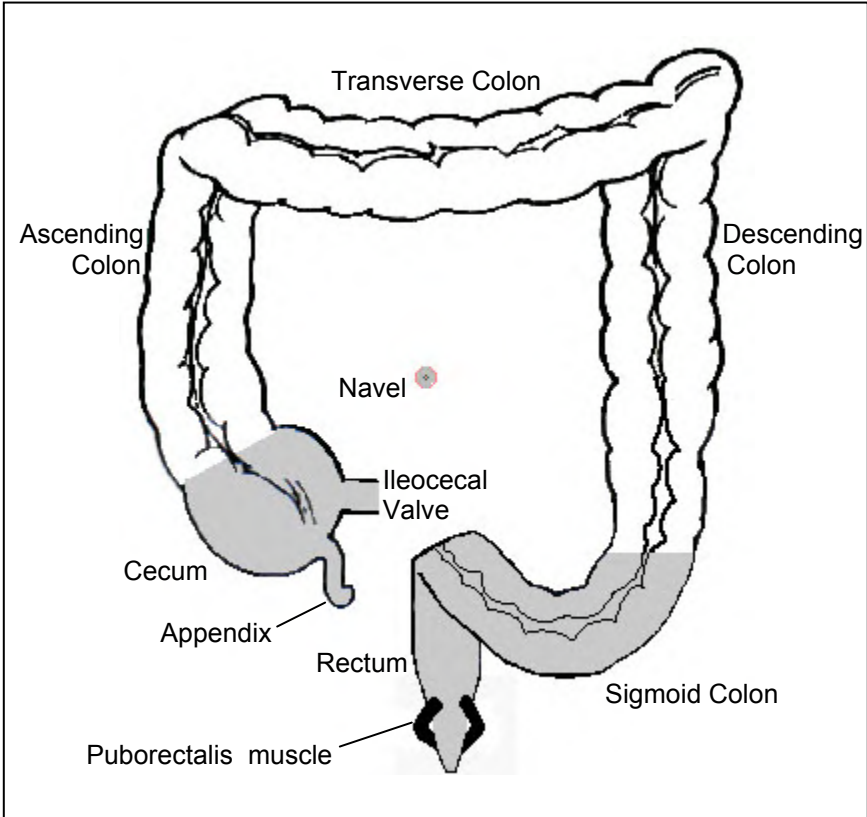
The ancient Romans used the posture shown below on the left. (Togas were easier to deal with than trousers, and provided some degree of privacy.)



The last picture shows a typical tourist. He might be surprised to learn that, except for royalty and the disabled, everyone used the squatting position until the second half of the 19th century.²²







80% of colon cancers develop in the gray-colored areas, which cannot be fully evacuated in the sitting position. Fecal stagnation is the major cause of colon disease.

Seven Advantages of Squatting

- 1 Makes elimination faster, easier and more complete. This helps prevent "fecal stagnation," a prime factor in colon cancer, appendicitis and inflammatory bowel disease.
- 2 Protects the nerves that control the prostate, bladder and uterus from becoming stretched and damaged.
- 3 Relaxes the puborectalis muscle (diagram on page 10) which normally chokes the rectum in order to maintain continence.
- 4 Securely seals the ileocecal valve (diagram on page 11), between the colon and the small intestine. In the conventional sitting position, this valve is unsupported and often leaks during evacuation, contaminating the small intestine.
- 5 Uses the thighs to support the colon and prevent straining. Chronic straining on the toilet can cause hernias, diverticulosis, and pelvic organ prolapse.
- 6 A highly effective, non-invasive treatment for hemorrhoids, as shown by published clinical research.
- 7 For pregnant women, squatting avoids pressure on the uterus when using the toilet. Daily squatting helps prepare one for a more natural delivery.

Appendicitis

The cecum is a small pouch where the colon begins, in the lower right section of the abdomen (see the diagram on page 11.) Wastes from the small intestine flow into the cecum through the ileocecal valve (theoretically a one-way valve.) The appendix is a narrow tube attached to the cecum, with a channel opening into the cecum.

Waste matter can get lodged in this channel, causing the appendix to become infected and inflamed. Immediate surgery must be performed to remove the appendix before it bursts. Otherwise, the result is usually fatal.

Why does the appendix get blocked with fecal matter? Did nature make a blunder in its design?

One clue comes from the field of epidemiology. Appendicitis is a disease of westernized countries, virtually unknown in the developing world.^{19,31} The reason is that the cecum was designed to be squeezed empty by the right thigh, in the squatting position. On a *sitting* toilet, it is physically impossible to compress the cecum.

Instead, one pushes downwards with the diaphragm, while holding one's breath. This maneuver inflates and pressurizes the cecum. It is analogous to squeezing a tube of toothpaste in the middle and causing the bottom of the tube to inflate. The pressure can easily force wastes into the appendix, with disastrous consequences.

The back-pressure can also overwhelm the ileocecal valve, whose purpose is to protect the small intestine from fecal contamination. Barium enema exams and intestinal surgeries routinely show the leakage of wastes into the

small intestine. Crohn's Disease develops in the area soiled by this toxic backwash.

Despite all the straining, the cecum never gets evacuated. Residual wastes adhere to the colon wall, increasing the risk of cancer and inflammation (including appendicitis.)

By contrast, in the squatting posture, the right thigh squeezes the cecum from its base. Its contents are thoroughly expelled into the ascending colon, where peristalsis carries them away. There is no need to hold one's breath or push downwards, since the posture generates the pressure automatically.

The force is all directed upwards, so the appendix stays clean and the ileocecal valve stays closed. These organs were not "poorly designed" – as is currently taught in medical schools. Like the rest of the colon, they were designed with squatting in mind.

Historical Background of Appendicitis

Most people assume that appendicitis has always been with us. But in fact, it emerged quite recently, coinciding with the introduction of sitting toilets toward the end of the 19th century.²² According to the Medical Journal of Australia,

The epidemiology of appendicitis poses many unanswered questions. Almost unknown before the 18th century, there was a striking increase in its prevalence from the end of the 19th century, with features suggesting it is a side effect of modern Western life.³⁰

In 1886, Reginald Heber Fitz, a Harvard Professor of Pathological Anatomy, became the first doctor to recognize