

## HOW YOU CAN LEARN TO SQUAT AGAIN

A person's ability (or inability) to squat is a good indication of his or her physical condition. To do a squat, one must not only possess a flexible body, but also have well-developed leg and back muscles.

Although human beings are born with the innate ability to squat, a lack of practice in squatting could render a person incapable of squatting, or holding the squatting position for even a minute.

The ability to squat is also important for health reasons. Contrary to Western ideas about toilet design, human beings were not meant to evacuate waste in the sitting position. The best toileting posture is squatting – the posture used by most Asians, Africans, people in Middle Eastern countries and many other regions of the world.

Dr Henry L Bockus, in his book *Gastroenterology* (Vol 2, pg 469, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co, 1944), explained why squatting is better:



"The ideal posture for (elimination) is the **squatting position**, with the thighs flexed upon the abdomen.

In this way the capacity of the abdominal cavity is greatly diminished and intra-abdominal pressure is increased, thus encouraging expulsion."

However, as a result of the confluence of several factors/events in history – the mistaken idea that sitting is more dignified and 'civilized' than squatting (the posture used by native peoples in the colonies and developing world), the availability of sewers and indoor plumbing during the Industrial Revolution and invention of sitting toilets – one third of humanity ended up abandoning the squatting posture for bowel movements.

Today, with few exceptions, eg: in France, it is virtually impossible for a visitor to find any squat toilets in Western countries.

The habit of sitting for defecation has given rise to a strange defining characteristic of Western peoples: one in three adults (according to one study) is incapable of holding the squatting position for more than thirty seconds.

But there is more to a person's ability to squat than meets the eye...

## **Sit or Squat?**

The truth is that human beings were designed to evacuate waste in the squatting position.

In the sitting posture, it is physically impossible to empty the colon completely. In spite of all the straining, it is impossible to empty the colon completely. The use of sitting for defecation has also been linked to the growing epidemic of colon, bladder, prostate and pelvic-related health problems in the Westernised countries. (You can find out more by visiting <http://www.toilet-related-ailments.com>.)

## **Squatting Exercises**

For those who want to switch from sitting to squatting, the first thing is to regain the ability to squat. There is no other way other than actually doing it, as shown in this Expert Village video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L95GvVjBK2M>

### ***SQUATTING TIP***

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If you have difficulty in doing a squat, place one or two tall-back chairs at your side and use your hands to hold on to them for support. Or you could practise squatting with a big exercise ball placed between your back and a wall.

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Aside from squatting, there are also other forms of exercises that can improve flexibility, sense of balance and strength that are effective in helping a person regain the ability to squat.

## **Yoga**

Yoga exercises are especially beneficial in helping a person regain the ability to squat again. The practice of yoga increases natural flexibility of the body, which is crucial in being able to squat correctly. Yoga also strengthens the muscles needed to facilitate the squatting position.

## **Pilates**

Aside from yoga, Pilates can also strengthen your entire body, which can help you to regain the ability to squat.

## **Ballet**

There are also several ballet exercises that are especially effective in enhancing a person's ability to squat:

### Demi Plies

Hold on to a chair and stand with your feet about hip's width apart. Keep your back straight and your pelvis tucked under your body. Slowly lower your body, keeping your feet flat on the floor. Hold for a count of ten and slowly stand back up.

### Grande Plies

Stand holding onto the chair, back straight, pelvis tucked. Slowly lower yourself. As you lower your body, rise up on your toes and go down as far as you can while keeping your back straight. You can hold there and in several other positions going up or down if you wish. Slowly raise yourself.

### Demi and Grande Plies

You can do plies, both grande and demi, from several off the five basic ballet positions:

- 1) First position is heels together, toes pointed outward.
- 2) Second position is feet about hip width apart with toes pointed outward.
- 3) Third position is rarely used.
- 4) Fourth position is toe to heel in the shape of a seven, either correct or backwards, depending on the lead foot.
- 5) Fifth position which is toe to outer instep, forming a sort of "T".

### **One Last Word...**

There are few things in life that, with so little effort required on your part, could provide such a profound and positive effect on your health.

By regaining the ability to squat, and making a simple change in your daily routine – squatting instead of sitting for bowel movements – you could prolong and greatly improve the quality of your life.