

toilet as dirty, and allow only their feet to touch it," wrote Dave Praeger, founder of PoopReport.com. "I think it would be funny if you spent a few days pooping as a seat-squatter."

My contact with this man has been limited exclusively to the context of emails about his poop-enthusiast web site. Nevertheless, I accepted Dave's challenge without a moment's thought—it seemed to me too that a few days as a seat-squatter would be pretty funny. In truth, the days that followed would teach me that seat-squatting isn't really funny, or even easy to do. Seat-squatting is a serious lifestyle change that requires planning, courage, commitment and intense physical training.

Day One

My experiment began on a Tuesday. To prepare, I ate an entire box of fiber-filled Puffed Kashi cereal, simultaneously giving myself generous bulk to deploy and substantial gas with which to propel it. Three hours later, as my breakfast binge rumbled and churned in my stomach, I stood in the hallway outside my bathroom, practicing my stance.

My confidence quickly dissipated due to an unforeseen geometric quandary: Western clothing. I imagine that the squatting set in the Eastern cultures Dave described wear full-length tunics or gowns that can be quickly pulled above the knees to pop a squat. But I wear jeans and boxer shorts, and every time I squatted down, my trousers formed a perfect biscuit basket directly below my bung. Clearly, if I tried to dangle a loaf, it would drop into the seat of my pants.

Deploying my pants to mid-thigh created a different problem: the fabric of my jeans and undies bunched at the knee and, as I am not a small man, the narrow circumference of my waistband at thigh-height squeezed my legs too close together for me to comfortably grunt out my chunks. At best, I

would only be able to pinch a thin fudge ribbon, not the whole dirty cable. Obligated to crap in the buff, I stripped naked from the waist down and strode purposefully onto the cold porcelain tiles.

Here I ran into the many problems associated with actually mounting the pot. For example, consider the challenge created by seat curvature. My commode has a pleasing oval bevel designed to cradle the contours of the average American ass; as such, it does not well accommodate a pair of size 12 EEE feet. In my practice runs out in the hallway, I had not imagined that I would need to stand on my tip-toes in order to securely plant my feet. Dear Reader, if you think this is easy to accomplish, I invite you to test your own balance by squatting bent-kneed and pigeon-toed on the floor.

I backed up to the pot. Bracing myself against the door of the shower stall, I gingerly placed my left foot onto the thin plastic seat. As I shifted my weight, the seat twisted wildly off-center. I wondered: could the toilet seat withstand the torque imposed by 210 pounds of my bulky Yankee frame? Luckily, as I put my right foot down, the seat returned to its proper position.

I slowly lowered myself into a stooping pose and relaxed, thinking the magic was about to begin. But no, my fears were justified—just as I leaned forward on my elbows and prepared to unleash a monstrous log of Kashi's much-ballyhooed mix of seven whole grains and sesame, I heard a whip-like crack, and the plastic butt-bolster beneath my toes broke from its moorings. Like an overweight and curiously ungraceful cat, I jumped and landed with a thud on the right-hand side of the potty; in cartoonish Newtonian symmetry, the plastic seat caromed to the left, taking with it the flapping lid, broken hinges and all.

I gaped at my topless toilet in disbelief. What would my roommate say?



Blissfully, my tumultuous stomach did not give me much time to mourn the collateral damage to my loo. Too late now, I realized that I probably should have lifted the seat in the first place.

Oops. Duly noted. Still, with the toilet seat now out of the picture, there was no choice but to squat on the rim; so I planted my bare feet on the pee-crust-ed porcelain edges of my potty and tucked back into the cannonball position. Within seconds, a wave of Kashi coursed out thick and

hearty—an uninterrupted avalanche of semi-soft stool with the color and consistency of German beef stew.

Right away I recognized the ergonomic advantages of squatting. Bent at the waist and curled forward nearly into a fetal position, I presume I must have triggered some innate biological response. The crap came fast and easy, popping cleanly and politely from my chute, driving straight down into the deepest part of the bowl, leaving no messy stains or skids to further profane my dilapidated crapper. Despite early setbacks, I could feel the stirrings of a paradigmatic conversion to zealous Squattistry.

I wiped standing up and drove quickly to Home Depot to replace the broken seat before my high-strung roommate got home. I installed the replacement seat without incident, and my roomie was none the wiser. I was a man on top of the bowl and on top of the world.

Day Two: Morning

Wednesday brought with it two words that make every seat-squatter tremble with fear: charlie horse.

At 11:49 AM, I excused myself from class and walked upstairs to a secluded

shitter on the second floor of Aldrich Hall. It was the middle of a class period and the place was deserted. Sequestered in the handicapped stall, I removed my boots, boxers and khakis, raised the institutional toilet seat, and climbed in stocking feet onto the basin's edge. My legs were trembling. Was it the fear of discovery that made me a little wobbly? As I crouched down into fetal-fecal mode, I steadied myself by gripping the toilet paper dispenser with one hand and the clothes hook on the stall door with the other. I perched like a football center and waited for this morning's bacon, eggs, toast, muffin and four espresso shots to drop out of me. But nothing happened: Captain Darksnake would not surrender.

There was a time in my life not long ago when I could ride my bicycle a hundred miles a day for days in a row without getting tired. But somehow on that Wednesday morning the mere act of squatting exhausted those same leg muscles to instantaneous fatigue. A sharp pain shot straight through my left leg, from the edge of my quadriceps to the tendon behind my knee, and I stood suddenly, popping my head above the stall walls as I did. I'm glad I was alone in that bathroom, because I don't think it would have helped my employment prospects if one of my professors had seen me there, feet in socks, shirttails untucked, penis akimbo, hopping on one leg and rubbing the other... definitely not the sort of academic one expects to encounter in a Harvard Business School bathroom.

