

## Why can't everyone do the 'Asian squat'?

### Notes & Cues:

### Article:

Among the more practical advice that can be offered to international travelers is wisdom of the bathroom. If you are traveling to China, you should be prepared to practice your squat.

What I mean is deep squat, where you plop your butt down as far as it can go while staying aloft and most importantly, not on your toes. This position is crucial in China, where public restrooms are still dominated by squat pans, which many Chinese find more hygienic.

So ubiquitous is the position in Asia and so invisible it is in the West that it's been dubbed the "Asian squat." Today, the internet is rife with suggestions that most Americans cannot squat properly. Why?

The key factor seems to be ankle flexibility. Body shape also seems to play a role—short limbs, big heads and long torsos make it easier to balance. Both show in part why kids have no problem squatting. So humans are born squatters; some of us lose it when we stop trying.

In the U.S., a group of pro-squatters believe America's bowel problems can be blamed on toilet seats. Squatting is of course how our ancestors pooped for millennia. Yet this ability has been lost to many Western toilet sitters—and it's not so easy to get it back.

### Summary: