



Making a Stand to Take a Pee

As a general rule, it is believed men stand to pass water and women sit or squat over the toilet bowl. However, in the past this stock practise has not always been the case. In ancient Egypt the men squatted and women stood to pee. In more recent times the nineteenth century Apache Indian men would usually squat while the women would relieve themselves standing up. In Japan, the high society ladies of nineteenth century Kyoto perfected the art of passing urine into a bucket whilst standing bolt upright, all without making a mess. This technique prevented creasing or soiling their kimonos. But this was not practised everywhere in Japan. Likewise, women in rural Switzerland learned to pass water standing up, probably because in cold climates squatting could be hazardous if the body made contact with ice or frozen ground.

Elsewhere, the story goes that the intrepid explorer, writer and translator Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890) almost lost his life by taking a pee. Cleverly disguised as an Afghan Muslim, Burton crossed Arabia intent on entering Mecca, a city forbidden to Europeans. His Arabic was flawless and his gestures accurate, but on the journey he stood while relieving himself, which immediately blew his cover. At that time Arab tradition required Muslims to squat to pee to prevent splashing from unclean liquid on their skin or clothing. Quickly realising his gross error, Burton murdered his companion to save his secret identity and became one of the first westerners to set eyes on Mecca.

The advantages of producing a standing urinal for females have been understood by sanitary ware manufacturers for decades. Getting women to use them is another matter. Long queues and unhygienic toilets are a common problem for women accustomed to sitting on the toilet. The options are to squat on the rim, or crouch over the bowl. Both methods can cause spraying which makes the toilet even less appealing for the next user.



Early attempts were made in Britain in the late 1920s and early 1930s to market a standing urinal for women resulting in the *Urinette*. Similar products, such as the *Sanistand* and *Hygeia* were produced in the USA in the early 1950s and installed in 'heavy use' institutions and university campuses, but they never really caught on. Small numbers are still being manufactured today, including the *Lady P* by Sphinx of Holland. The main problem is that people don't know what they are. Most female urinals look like a wall hung bidet-style toilet bowl over which the user hovers. Not surprisingly, they have sometimes been mistaken as conventional toilet bowls with imaginably disastrous results. Many women are naturally not accustomed to passing water standing up and even those that have tried it admit it is a skill which has to be learned to be successful,

unless you want to look particularly accident-prone!

Let's run through the basic procedure. The art of peeing upright is to mimic the posture of a man by passing water from the released trouser zip. If the zip is long this should be OK. If it is short, trousers and underwear can be pulled down to knee-level. Force the labia forward and spread the inner lips of the vagina (the labia minora) by forming a 'V' with the index and forefinger of one or both hands. Pee maintaining a steady strong flow to minimise dribbling, increasing bladder pressure towards the end to blast away the last drops of urine.

If it proves difficult to master this action there are a number of aids available for women, in the form of urinal funnels to assist the process. The funnel fits over the mouth of the urethra and is attached to an exit pipe, (a bit like a penis.) Brands include *TravelMate*, *Freshette*, *On the Go*, *La Funelle* and *Lady J*. These have found favour amongst outdoor enthusiasts, allowing them to go to the toilet at will, without the



Paper cone urinal funnel from El Piss

need to remove layers and layers of clothing. In Caracas, Venezuela some women use a nifty paper cone from the El Piss Company, for fear (probably erroneous) of contracting sexually transmitted diseases from filthy toilet seats. The cone is first squeezed to open it, and then simply pressed firmly up against the body with both hands. With a bit of practise the cone can channel and direct the flow of urine as desired.

The notion of using an attachment, such as a urinal funnel, is not a new one. Oddly enough it was first used by males. During the eighteenth century dignified Chinese men used gilded canes, a cubit in length (about 18 inches), bored through, into which they urinated. The smart cane removed urine a comfortable distance from the body. The Chinese would stand to pee

because they thought squatting made it difficult to empty fully and caused kidney problems, such as stones.

