

Pee like a man

A friend and I recently had one of those make-a-wish moments. You know.....the childhood thing when two people say exactly the same thing at exactly the same time, laugh in surprise, then link little fingers and make a wish.

In our case, the meeting of minds was triggered by a need to pee. To be precise, it was a squat pee in the Australian bush with mountain bike weary legs on a wet slippery forest floor. It's always a bit tricky. Bum too high; pee on pants. Bum too low; pick up a little nipper or sucker lurking below.



A muddy Sarah lines up with the lads and says bye bye to uncomfortable squatting and embarrassing bare bottoms.

While performing our balancing act and generally scanning the vicinity for anything with fangs, Sarah pointed out a bloke leaning one handed on a tree watering the roots in complete comfort and with ease. Following a long unified sigh we said: "I wish I were a man."

The discussion continued and I admitted to Sarah it wasn't the first time I'd had the man pee wish. For instance, the time when camping in the Andes on the Inca trail, I opened the door of a squat toilet to find the floor was covered in so many misdirected middle-of-the-night poo plops, I needed the dexterity of a circus performer to position myself over the pee hole.

I also told her about another nightmare pee experience in the Amazon where squatting on the decaying jungle floor was like hanging out the golden arches of Mcdonald's – a glowing signpost for everything that bit, nipped and chewed advertising that prime rump was on the menu. Just like a surprise giveaway, everything rushed in to get a chomp whether they need it or not.

In fact, throughout the day as we shared more stories and "me too" moments, we realised that over the years, we had both stupidly developed a skill of drinking just enough water so we didn't have to pee more than necessary, dicing dangerously with dehydration and our health. We parted with a pact to find a solution. In the days that followed we found not one solution, but three.

The answer to our want-to-pee-like-a-man dream is a small funnel shaped piece of plastic called a female urination device (FUD) that allows women to urinate standing up and without removing clothes.

The three brands, SheWee, GoGirl and WhizFreedom have similarities; they're all reusable, washable, liquid repellent and claim reams of uses such as camping, trekking, climbing, sailing, traffic jams, when women find themselves with unsanitary toilets or without one at all. But each one looks slightly different and all have patented designs. So which one, if any, is the best? – we trialed the lot.

Each manufacturer must know that our trials wouldn't be without errors because all three came with advice to practise in the shower first. The good news is they all work, but there's "a knack" to using them and the design differences means a slightly different knack is required for each FUD.

The shower trial was a good idea but getting an FUD into unzipped pants and seeing if we could aim successfully into the loo without showing any bottom or without peeing on ourselves was a more practical test, we thought, of how it might work outdoors. So after mastering the shower test, we recommend the pants test too before putting any of the FUDs into full field use. Oh and by the way, it's a good idea to keep a mop and bucket handy... and perhaps an empty washing machine.

SheWee's small narrow design made us both nervous to begin with. However, despite its narrow look, it had the best flow through of all three and we both got the knack after a couple goes. Made from hard plastic, the Shewee is the stiffy of the pack, so it isn't difficult pee with unzipped pants and underwear pressing against it. But be aware that the knack with this one is holding it away from your body slightly at the top and it goes horribly wrong if you don't. You'll also need to remove it with toilet tissue to catch the drips.



Available in 20 countries. Price: £7.70 www.shewee.com



The Go Girl is a bigger unit which raised an eyebrow when it popped out of its packaging and sprung into shape. Made from flexible medical grade silicone this softer FUD boasts the most reuses and (says its designers) a unique non-drip design, which means no wiping. It worked, but it took the most goes to get the all-important not-too-hard not-too-soft seal against the body. We could only get it to work by showing some bottom because it was too floppy to pee with underwear and unzipped pants pressing against it. Despite the large funnel, it had the poorest flow of the three so some control would be required for the larger pees to prevent spillage. In this case durability doesn't win over usability; it just wasn't hard enough for us.

Score: 4/10

Available in 12 countries. Price: \$9.99 www.go-girl.com

The Whizfreedom is much stiffer than the go girl but still a bit flexible which made it easier to get the all-important body seal just right. It worked first time in the shower and first time with pants. Even though the plastic is flexible, it was still firm enough pee with underwear and unzipped pants pressing against it without the seal being breached. The flow didn't quite match the Shewee, but it still coped with the bigger whizzes. This not-too-hard not-too-soft option just needed a bit of a man shake for drip free removal and was the clear winner for us.



Score: 9/10

Available in 87 countries. Price: £9.99 www.whizproducts.co.uk

920 words

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