

Why manspreading needs to stop

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ABSTRACT

A man may give any number of reasons for spreading his legs, the most common of which is that it's more comfortable for him because it allows airflow to his testicles. When women are expected to be responsible for all housework, men may feel perfectly within their rights to leave a mess in shared living spaces, such as discarding dirty clothes on the floor and leaving dirty dishes in the sink.

TESTO COMPLETO

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We've all experienced it -- you're on public transit or sitting in a crowded public venue when suddenly you feel someone else's leg against yours. You try to overlook it, assuming the person beside you is just adjusting his position. But the leg doesn't move, and its owner seems unaware of the imposition. I'm talking, of course, about manspreading .

Manspreading in its most basic form is the predominantly male tendency to take up more public space than is their due. This often translates to men sitting with their legs widely spread such that they take up enough space for at least two people. The phenomenon often takes place often on trains and buses, where many people are forced to coexist in a small space.

A man may give any number of reasons for spreading his legs, the most common of which is that it's more comfortable for him because it allows airflow to his testicles. The fact that men are willing to prioritize their own comfort at the expense of other people is indicative of rampant entitlement. Also, apparently these men aren't considering that it's wildly inappropriate to discuss your degree of genital comfort with strangers on public transit.

But manspreading isn't limited to the physical spread of men's legs. It can also be the tendency of men to spread their authority so widely that it imposes on other people's use of shared space. It's such common practice for men to unduly dominate spaces meant to be shared equally that often, we don't even notice it.

Manspreading can happen when a man spreads his belongings all over a common area and takes up more than his share of space. This is especially pertinent in the home if a man adheres to traditional gender roles. When women are expected to be responsible for all housework, men may feel perfectly within their rights to leave a mess in shared living spaces, such as discarding dirty clothes on the floor and leaving dirty dishes in the sink. This implies that the man in question believes that his convenience is more important than another person's right to a clean home, particularly if he's relying on a female housemate like his mother or significant other to clean up after him.

Men also tend to "spread" themselves in shared intellectual spaces. It's common for a man to dominate an opinion-

based conversation without realizing it because he's so strongly convinced he's right. Men often feel compelled to go overboard in trying to convince the people around them, especially if those people are women, of their perspective. This is a form of benevolent sexism; a man may push his point of view because he believes he's doing other people a favor by making sure they know what he believes to be true.

For example, a few years ago I was a member of a feminist club that consisted mostly of women, but a few men would also attend meetings. One man was very adamant in his beliefs, so much so that he would constantly interrupt and talk over women in the group. He wanted to explain concepts of feminist theory with which we were already familiar. To him, displaying his knowledge was more important than any of the women in the group getting to discuss their lived experiences of sexism.

Manspreading is symptomatic of a larger system of male entitlement under which men believe they have the right to take whatever they want. This belief is reinforced daily when manspreading is allowed to happen, going unchallenged in any form. A man selfishly taking up two seats on the train may seem insignificant, but if it's never addressed, men may internalize entitlement in all aspects of life. As Carlynn Sharpe of Kennesaw State University describes in her essay , entitlement is a huge contributing factor to rising rates of sexual assault, which happens because a man believes he has the right to someone else's body.

Men spread their bodies, their belongings and their speech because we live in a world that encourages competition among men. Throughout their lives, men are told that the only way to be a man is to be the best, the loudest and the most confident. If this is what society values, it's no wonder men feel compelled to make their presence known at any cost.

The best way to combat this system of learned entitlement is to speak up. If a man is taking up too much space with his body or with his words, tell him that you don't appreciate his overexertion of influence. If you're on public transit and you want a seat, say something. If you're a man and you see manspreading happening, say something -- sometimes men who live under the presumption of entitlement are more likely to value a fellow man's word than a woman's. The more people are aware of this issue, the more we can try to rectify it.

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