

RAKE, DEPOSIT, JUMP, PULL

by Bill "WBG0" Lanphier

Late Thursday afternoon, December 16, as the sky darkened and the wind picked up, Fritz Renfrop, 61, hurriedly raked the leaves that had fallen from the big ash in his backyard. He had timed the raking not only in hopes of avoiding the rain and the leaves becoming soaked, but also to rake when exactly half of the leaves had fallen. Fritz speculated that he would be able to borrow the green organic waste containers from two neighbors, and each half of the leaves would, by his process of alternately compressing the leaves with an 11-pound tamper and aggressively jumping on the leaves inside the containers, just about fill all three containers twice.

For the raking, Fritz wore his old work jeans. Because he had recently gone from approximately 80 drinks a month to two, he had dropped several pounds, and the jeans, purchased during the drinking "phase," were now two inches too large in the waist.

So Fritz, alternately raking, depositing leaves, and jumping on them, found it necessary to pull up on the jeans roughly every two and one-half minutes, by his watch. This proved rather difficult while wearing gardening gloves, though, and Fritz discovered that grabbing the jeans by the side belt loops was much more efficient.

As Fritz raked, deposited, jumped, and pulled, he mused on the fashion of intentionally wearing trousers very low on, or even below, the hips, and the mechanics of pulling them up at regular intervals, assuming the goal was to prevent the trousers from falling to the floor. In what way did this group—certainly experts at the task—prefer to pull up their trousers, Fritz wondered? Grab the loops? Get a good purchase on the uppermost edge? Or, maybe both hands in the pockets, pulling up in such a fashion as to avoid the hands slipping out of the pockets?

Musing further, Fritz wondered how long one could go, hypothetically speaking, without intervention, before the trousers actually fell to the floor? If the wearer is seated, indefinitely, Fritz correctly surmised. But what about an activity like raking leaves? Fritz checked to see if any neighbors were watching, then continued his task without ever touching the jeans. Fritz was impressed that, despite raking, bending over to pick up the leaves he had raked, depositing them, and jumping on them, he could go, on average, nine minutes before the oversized jeans fell to the ground around his ankles.

Pleased with the knowledge gained—scientists often collect seeming insignificant data that later proves of great worth—Fritz smiled to himself before considering that a neighbor might appear out of nowhere and become deeply troubled by the sight of a scruffy man, rake in hand, neat pile of leaves nearby, with his jeans around his ankles and, inexplicably smiling.

Quickly returning his jeans to their original position about the waist, Fritz further pondered why someone would choose to wear ill-fitting clothing. Are there any advantages, Fritz wondered? Sure, Fritz's activity level during the testing was rather high, but any exercise at all is better than nothing, Fritz thought, and tugging at one's clothing dozens, maybe even hundreds of times throughout the day certainly must, to some measurable extent, however slight, improve muscle tone in the hands and forearms.

Health care professionals have long expounded on the many benefits of wearing loose-fitting, breathable clothing, and they include, of course, good personal hygiene, so there's another advantage right there. Oversize clothing can, while revealing the boxer shorts, also serve to conceal dangerously enlarged hernias or growths (elephantiasis, for example).

Fritz then considered the advantages for those individuals who choose to stay "under the radar." For example, billowing pantaloons allow the stealthy transport of, say, an umbrella, blueprints, or walking stick.

How about financial benefits? Well, yes, thought Fritz. As every parent knows, a growing youngster goes through clothing at an alarming—read expensive—rate. For a small child who is game for the concept, a pair of durable, size 38 jeans could conceivably last him from elementary school well into college, and beyond. Every penny counts! Even if the youngster isn't keen on the idea of the

38s, he can certainly wear jeans that are initially just a few sizes over, and grow into them, thereby doubling the serviceable life of each and every pair.

Fritz paused to accept that he had stopped growing 40 years prior (and was now actually shrinking), yet he still marveled at the multiple benefits of oversize clothing and particularly pants. Content in having gained a broader perspective, Fritz again smiled to himself, admired his work and, before pulling up his jeans, managed to slip a gardening rake into them.

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