

## Neanderthals' healthcare skills helped them survive through Ice Age

Neanderthals cared for their sick and wounded, and new research suggests this well-documented behavior was more than just a cultural phenomenon or an expression of compassion—it really did help them survive.

To endure the harsh conditions of Ice Age Europe, Neanderthals adopted several strategies, including group hunting, collaborative parenting, and food sharing. New [research](#) published in Quaternary Science Reviews is adding another trick to the Neanderthal survival guide: healthcare.

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For the study, the researchers analyzed the skeletal remains of 30 previously discovered Neanderthal individuals. These specimens exhibit wounds ranging from mild to severe, yet each of these individuals managed to survive their injuries (paleontologists can visually tell when a broken bone or fracture has healed). In many of these cases, the researchers say it's highly unlikely that the individual would have survived without help, and that a well-developed system of care had to have been in place.

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Because they lived in small groups, the loss of a single individual could be catastrophic. Treating severely injured group members was a matter of overall survival. That's not to say Neanderthals didn't act out of compassion—they very likely did. What the researchers are saying is that it served a pragmatic, overarching purpose that helped the group to survive as a whole, and by extension, the entire species.

**Read full, original post:** [Neanderthals Survived in Ice Age Europe Thanks to Effective Healthcare](#)