

Fossilized ape pelvis suggests human ancestors walked upright much earlier than previously thought

Scientists have long thought that humans evolved from an ape that moved about on all fours like a chimpanzee, and they've puzzled over how and when our distant ancestors came to walk on two feet.

A fossilized pelvis of *Rudapithecus*, a long-extinct relative of humans and modern apes, may hold the answer. New research on the fragmentary remains suggests that when the beagle-sized ape descended from the trees, she didn't [knuckle-walk like chimps or gorillas](#), as previously thought. Rather, she stood upright on two legs — much like a human.

"We've always asked, 'Why did our lineage evolve? Why did we stand up from all fours?' But *Rudapithecus* begs the question: 'Why did we never drop down on all fours in the first place?'" said Carol Ward, a professor of anatomy at the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia, and lead author of a paper about the research [published Sept. 17 in the Journal of Human Evolution](#).

"It causes us to approach the fossil record and our understanding of our origins in a fundamentally different way than we ever have before," she added. "It's a game-changer. The textbooks now get to be rewritten."

Read full, original post: [Ancient ape fossil yields surprising new insights about human evolution](#)