

## Humans ‘are not so special after all’: Neanderthals also knew how to start fires, evidence suggests

At some point, our ancestors harnessed the power of the flame to keep warm, cook food, produce new materials, shoo away predators, and illuminate dark caves.

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Archaeological evidence suggests hominins of various types were using fire as far back as 1.5 million years ago, but no one really knows how they acquired that fire. This paradigm-shifting ability—to both intentionally start and control fire—is known as pyrotechnology, and it’s traditionally thought to be the exclusive domain of our species, *Homo sapiens*.

But as [new evidence](#) presented [October 25] in *Scientific Reports* suggests, Neanderthals did possess the capacity to start their own fires. Using hydrocarbon and isotopic evidence, researchers from the University of Connecticut showed that certain fire-using Neanderthals had poor access to wildfires, so the only possible way for them to acquire it was by starting it themselves.

“Fire was presumed to be the domain of *Homo sapiens* but now we know that other ancient humans like Neanderthals could create it,” said Daniel Adler, a co-author of the new study and an associate professor in anthropology at the University of Connecticut, in a press release. “So perhaps we are not so special after all.”

**Read full, original post:** [New Evidence Suggests Neanderthals Were Capable of Starting Fires](#)