

GEORGE'S GUIDE TO GETTING A SEAT ON THE SUBWAY

by George Ding



Rule number one: Don't queue. Your best chance of getting a seat is being the first person to charge through that train door, and being at the back of a line won't help. If you see people lining up, simply ask them what scissors do – and then do it.

If the line has already collapsed into a mass of bodies, then push, jostle, climb or crawl your way to the front. If you're not getting dirty looks from people around you, you're doing it wrong.

Once you've made your way to the front, take the time to purge yourself of all compassion before the train comes in. Develop a process. Some people visualize the Silk Market or their childhood priest. Mine involves votive candles and Wiccan magic. Whatever you do, make sure that you are not even faintly concerned with the wellbeing of those around you.

DID YOU KNOW? Queuing actually INCREASES the amount of time you wait.

When the doors open, CHARGE! Force your way through the rush of people like a salmon fighting upstream to spawn. Once you're on the train, sprint to the nearest empty seat.

If there aren't any empty seats in sight, keep cool. Resist the urge to yell "Fire!" Instead, move to the least crowded section of the train and identify passengers who you think will get off soon. Think like a criminal profiler by looking for clues as to where people might get off. For example:

- Businessmen with a carry-on: Dongzhimen or Sanyuanqiao
- Migrants with plastic sacks: Beijing Railway Station

- Children and out-of-towners: Beitucheng or Tiananmen
- Koreans: Wudaokou and Wangjing
- Poor people: any Line 13 interchange

TIP! Avoid people who are sleeping or watching movies on their phone – they're in it for the long haul.

Once you decide on a mark, make sure to take up as much space in front of him as you can. You can also hedge your bets by hovering over two seated passengers. If either gets up, sit down immediately.

It goes without saying that if a seat opens up anywhere within your field of vision, you should race to it regardless of who is standing nearby. Once, a woman took my seat while I was in the middle of sitting down. I still have her autograph. If, for whatever reason, you feel bad about taking a seat that someone else has waited patiently for, then you have failed to follow my instructions on purging compassion. Shame on you.

If all else fails, go up to random people who are sleeping and, when the train doors open, shake them awake and scream, "Hey, isn't this your stop?!" If you do it right, they will panic and run out the door.

Once you're seated, the game changes from acquisition to retention. The biggest dangers now are kids, old people, pregnant women, and the disabled. (Note: If you are an infant, old man, pregnant woman or handicapped, please refer to "George's Guide to Guiltina a Seat on the Subway.") Under no circumstances should you make eye

contact with these people. If you have sunglasses or a good Stevie Wonder impersonation, now would be the time to use it.

FACT! Bones in children are more pliable and heal faster than those in adults. They can recover easily from any tumble!

Of course, the only surefire way to prevent seat-jacking is to be unconscious. So break out that neck pillow and have a good nap. If you absolutely must read or crochet on the subway, make sure you can realistically feign narcolepsy. You know that narcoleptic dog on YouTube? Study him. Watch how his limbs go slack right before his face slams into the ground. Become that dog. If you spot a mother walking her toddler in your direction, BOOM, you're snoozing. See a cripple inching his way toward you? BAM, out like a light. After they pass by or some sucker offers their seat to them, wake up again. Don't be afraid to do this multiple times on the same trip. If someone calls you out, start to object angrily but then abruptly fall asleep.

DID YOU KNOW? Over 10,000 seatjackings occur each day – that's one every 8.6 seconds. 73% of these thefts are committed by elderly people.

If you've tried all of the above and still find yourself standing, your last option is to plop down on the ground right where you are, even if it's in the middle of the train. If someone says something unpleasant to you, tell them to say it to your face. When they stand up, take their seat.