

Etiquette – What Not to Do in the Buff

There are a few basic rules of etiquette relating to Pagan rituals that are well known to most experienced Pagans. They apply equally to sky-clad and clothed rituals. These rules include, but are not limited to:

- Many rituals call for participants to hold hands. Other than this, keep your hands to yourself unless clearly and unambiguously invited.
- Never make remarks about another person's physical appearance.
- Never take photos of people without their prior consent. This includes anyone in the background.
- What happens in Circle stays there – don't discuss with someone who wasn't there what other people did, unless it somehow affects you (i.e. if you felt unsafe and now want impartial advice.)

Rites and Responsibilities: The Law

For information on personal safety and sexual assault prevention, please see the "Safety in the Circle" pamphlet, also produced by the Pagan Awareness Network Inc.

Remember: It is ILLEGAL for anyone to touch you in an inappropriate manner without your prior consent.

This is true irrespective of whether you are at a clothed or a sky-clad ritual.

Be aware also that laws exist in each state of Australia concerning public decency: it is illegal to be caught naked in a public place. A public place is any place you might reasonably expect to be seen by a member of the public. This can include private property – a back yard with high fences is unlikely to be regarded as a public place, but the front garden in view of the street is a different matter.

Privacy is the key to any successful sky-clad ritual.

How to Support PAN Inc.

Why not consider becoming a member of PAN?

An annual membership, concession membership, or family membership, brings many benefits, including discounts at participating Pagan Friendly Businesses, our quarterly member magazine 'The Small Tapestry', support and advertising for Pagan events and gatherings across Australia, and reports on any legal and media work happening within the Pagan community.

Your membership dollar also helps PAN sponsor local groups & events and further its educational aims.

For more information, please contact PAN Inc.



Pagan Awareness Network Inc.

Australia

PO Box 1062, North Sydney, NSW 2059

W: www.paganawareness.net.au

E: info@paganawareness.net.au

ABN: 23 055 701 170 491

PAN Inc.

Sky-clad: The Bare Facts

Last Revised June 2015



An educational pamphlet provided by



Pagan Awareness Network Inc. Australia

The Pagan Awareness Network (PAN Inc) has created this pamphlet to educate about a facet of Pagan practices that some find confronting or just plain weird: ritual nudity, also known as working ‘sky-clad’.

Some Pagans, especially those involved in traditional Wicca, perform their rituals and ceremonies sky-clad. This is a legitimate custom with real significance.

Sky-clad rituals occur in different contexts: small groups in private homes, large public Pagan festivals, in same-sex groups, mixed groups, and family-based covens.

People actually do this? Why?

Many Pagans reject the standard Western moral taboos regarding the naked human body. They regard these taboos as unhealthy and unnatural.

Pagan work sky-clad for a number of reasons – usually the intent is to make a self-empowering and positive statement that there is nothing shameful about the human form.

For many Pagans, the naked female body symbolises the Goddess, and the naked male body symbolises the God. It is a reminder that the Sacred exists in all of us.

In closed covens, working sky-clad can foster feelings of trust and equality – there are no social distinctions when clothing is laid aside. Many Pagans claim that working sky-clad enables one to better raise and direct magickal energy.

Is it compulsory?

Definitely not. Not all Pagans choose to work this way. It is an optional experience.

If you are interested in joining a coven or other group, establish straight away whether sky-clad work is part of that group’s activities. If the idea doesn’t appeal to you, look for a group that practices clothed instead.

I’d like to try it, but how do I get over the fear of being naked in front of others?

Talk to Pagans you trust who have gone sky-clad. Be honest about your fears and expectations. Ask them about their first sky-clad experience. Chances are they quickly got over their initial fear and joined in with gusto.

Remember, you don’t have to do ANYTHING that makes you feel uncomfortable. No one should be judged by their preference for sky-clad or robed ceremonies.

Is there sex involved?

No. Unless the purpose of the rite is sex magick, sky-clad rituals are no more sexual in nature than clothed rituals. Being sky-clad during ritual does not EVER imply a sexual invitation or expectation.

What if I don’t have a good body?

You do have a good body. Society pressures us to feel ashamed if we do not conform to an impossible ideal of physical beauty. Many Pagans consciously reject this cultural “imprinting”.

What if someone laughs?

It is considered a gross breach of etiquette to laugh or make remarks, as this debases the sacred context and group trust.

Will everyone look?

People are naturally curious. However, if you get a sleazy vibe, listen to your instincts. Cover up and/or leave the Circle.

What if I get cold?

Put your clothes back on.

Can I just strip down to my underwear?

Discuss it with the group leaders. Chances are you’ll feel more awkward being the only one and soon get the rest off.

I’m under 18. Can I join a coven that works sky-clad?

Sorry, no ethical group will let you participate in a sky-clad rite if you are under 18. This is for their protection as well as yours – Pagans have to deal with enough bad press, and no group wants accusations of paedophilia or ritual abuse.

Be very wary of any group or teacher who allows or encourages U/18’s to work sky-clad with adults.

Of course, there is nothing stopping you from practicing sky-clad as a solitary. Just make sure you lock the door, unless you want awkward questions from your Mum.

I’m a guy. What happens if I get a hard-on during a sky-clad ritual?

Experienced Pagans know that there is nothing shameful or embarrassing about something as natural as human sexuality. As long as you’re not acting in a way that is threatening or offensive, it shouldn’t be an issue. If you are worried, speak in advance to the group leader.

It is possible that someone present may feel confronted if the situation arises, but they have the same option as you - to leave if you feel awkward or uncomfortable.

What if I’m photographed without permission?

This is a risk at Pagan festivals (although many strictly prohibit cameras). Ask the organisers in advance about their policy on photography. If you see cameras in evidence, approach the people concerned and politely ask them to respect your right to privacy. Most people will. Speak to the organisers if you still have concerns. When in doubt, the safest course of action is to stay dressed.

Pagan Festivals: Getting Your Gear Off With Strangers!

Some Pagan festivals are ‘clothing optional’ – this means you can be dressed, undressed, or anything in between. People often take the opportunity to wear body ochres, paint themselves, wear masks and costumes. Many newcomers find it easier to go sky-clad for the first time at a festival – the relative anonymity of being part of a large group of naked people can make ‘taking the plunge’ less confronting.

Even at clothing- optional events there may be times when clothing is compulsory – for example, naked people may not be permitted in kitchens for health and safety reasons.

If you go to a festival and are unsure of the dress code, ask one of the organisers. Many festivals, especially adults-only events, supply a ‘Code of Conduct’ to attendees and it is important to read this material in advance.