People Adapt

Human Adaptation

Humans, like some members of the biosphere, have adapted to nearly every kind of landscape and climate. Natural selection has played a role in shaping human forms. But, people have adapted in other ways, too.

Native members of the Masai tribe in East Africa tend to be tall and slender with long limbs. This type of body provides a lot of surface area to regulate body heat.

In contrast, natives of cold climates, like the Aleut of Northwestern Alaska, tend to have short torsos and limbs. These characteristics conserve warmth.

Physical attributes are not always enough to make humans comfortable in extreme environments. We’ve adapted through clothing and culture, too.

Think of the loose flowing outfits traditionally popular in warm climates like India. Or, the warm, layered clothing popular in colder climates like Russia.

Also, think of the traditional Mexican siesta. That mid-day retreat from the heat is an adaptation to life in a hot, sunny climate.