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GREAT SEX FOR WOMEN

Maximizing Female Sexual
Pleasure & Desire



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An Introduction to Female Desire

What is Female Sexual Desire, and What Can Cause it to Fluctuate?



Female sexuality is multi-faceted and often profound, yet almost every woman faces unique challenges in the bedroom at some point in their lives.

Sexual desire is a combination of many factors, including physical, emotional, and even spiritual cues. Your sexual desire might be awakened by nothing more than the stroke of your partner's fingers across your skin or by the sight of a sexy celebrity barely clothed on the cover of a magazine. On the other hand, sometimes all the foreplay and sexual stimulation can't awaken your libido. How can we explain these vastly different experiences, and how can women increase their sexual desire and pleasure throughout their lives?

Sexual pleasure often requires a bit more finesse, and sexual desire is something that needs TLC and constant attention. It is a garden that needs to be tended and watered often, otherwise it easily becomes overgrown and overtaken by the minutiae of day-to-day life. However, most women don't realize that, and they also don't realize that their low sexual desire is completely normal and treatable. Instead, they

internalize those feelings of anxiety and loss, which might explain why a recent study from International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health found that many young women report feeling guilty or distressed over their sex lives. And no wonder!

After being inundated with sexual messages throughout the day from magazines, commercials, billboards, and television programs, it can be very distressing to enter your bedroom and find your libido dormant. Even women who don't have libido issues might believe that they do when they compare their sexuality to that of women displayed in TV and movies. These fictional women are always raring to go, and they always have orgasms in 60 seconds or less...which is not at all realistic or attainable for real-life women.

First, it's important to understand that low desire and sexual issues are not uncommon, even for young women. In women, low libido is rarely due to physical causes alone. Instead, it often has many different causes, which is why treatment must be comprehensive and multi-faceted. A recent study published in Obstetrics and Gynecology magazine found that 43% of women ages 18 and up experience sexual difficulties, and 10% of women ages 18 to 44 suffer from Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD). HSDD differs from occasional low libido because it causes severe distress or disruption to a woman's life, and it remains a persistent problem over weeks, months, and even years.

There are many culprits behind HSDD, and one of the most common is medication such as antidepressants. Almost half of all women on SSRIs report sexual side effects like low libido, and many women experience lack of desire as a result of hormonal birth control pills. Thankfully, there are many ways to curb these symptoms such as by changing the dosage of medication or by switching to a medicine without sexual side effects.

However, sometimes by the time these physical causes are treated, the damage of low libido has seeped into other aspects of a woman's life. Since she has shut down sexually, it's likely that she and her partner have begun to feel disconnected and even contentious, and it's also likely that her sexual self-esteem has taken a severe hit. She no longer feels like a sexual being or knows how to get in touch with her sexuality. As a result, reaching orgasm becomes complicated and she no longer feels comfortable initiating sex or taking charge of her sexual pleasure in the bedroom.

Treatment of HSDD requires a comprehensive approach that takes all of these factors into account. The physical side of low desire must be treated, along with the emotional side and a woman's relationship with her partner and herself.

Although menopause is often considered another main factor behind low libido, many women also experience a dip in libido following lifestyle changes such as

pregnancy or childbirth. The physical act of childbirth can change the way a woman feels sexually, although that change is often more a mental perception than an actual physical change. To top it off, juggling work, kids, and all the stress of modern life can also cause a woman's libido to take a huge hit. To put it simply, many women simply don't have the time to be sexual because it takes more than a weekly date night to awaken the sparks within. It's not a switch that can be thrown on simply because it's Saturday night and the kids are with the babysitter.

While everyone experiences low desire occasionally, HSDD is pervasive and routinely interferes with a woman's sexual pleasure and relationship. However, some people question where lack of desire is really a medical condition, or if it is merely a natural part of aging. There is a bit of truth in each argument. Yes, diminished libido is often part of Mother Nature's plan as women's childrearing window closes, however, that does not mean that our sexuality goes out the window as well.

Many women still long for the connection, pleasure and intimacy that only sex can give, and if men can have their Viagra, why can't women also have tools to help them prolong their sexual pleasure as long as possible? What's good for the goose is certainly good for the gander in this case. After all, as men get a revved up libido from Viagra and other similar medications, they want their partners to be able to keep up and enjoy themselves as well, something which isn't widely possible for every woman without some type of medical assistance or at least a little sexual know-how.

Additionally, when it comes to sexuality, it's important to remember that if you don't use it, you lose it! Regular sexual activity will not only lead to more orgasms for you and your partner, but it will also improve circulation to your genitals and help increase natural lubrication. Sex aids can also be a wonderful way to increase your pleasure and heighten your sexual arousal, whether you want to use them alone or with your partner. And, if you are shy about heading to a sex store, you can discreetly order from a site like drugstore.com and your neighbors will be none the wiser!

But if these things sound familiar, you are not alone, and if low libido is a pervasive and distressing problem in your life, I'm here to offer you some tips and resources to combat these issues.

The Unique Experience of Female Sexual Desire



I think we've all experienced this scenario at one point or another... Your sweetie has got that look in his eye, and you can tell he's about to make his move, but you're anything but in the mood. Though your initial reaction may be "Not tonight, honey," you may, in fact, want to go with the flow. This is because, much to your surprise, you might find you actually do want to have sex – once things start to heat up, that is.

This study by Canadian Researcher Dr. Rosemary Basson might explain the science behind your change of heart. Dr. Basson has done some fascinating work on what gets a woman's libido going. It seems that when it comes to sex, sexual arousal may actually occur before sexual desire. While that may not sound earth-shattering, this research is important both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, Basson's findings run contrary to the Masters and Johnson take on female sexual response, which is as close as you can get to the Bible in the world of sexual studies. On a practical level, it encourages women to understand that if they hang in there the passionate response will follow.

Basson's research was inspired by a 1999 survey conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago. In this study, 15 percent of men admitted to having trouble with their libidos, but always because of clearly defined reasons, such as stress, alcohol, or heart disease. However, 30 percent of women shared that they lacked libido, and for no apparent reason at all. Now, if women, like men, followed the desire/arousal/sex way of thinking, that means a whopping 1/3 of women were suffering from a low libido. This study led Dr. Basson to suspect that there might be something off about the female sexual response model by Masters and Johnson that medical professionals had been referring to since 1966.

In the Masters and Johnson model, both male and female sexuality is defined as a linear process that occurs in four stages: Excitement (arousal), Plateau (buildup), Orgasm (climax), and Resolution (afterglow). However, based on the findings of the survey at the University of Chicago, Dr. Basson conducted interviews with hundreds of women to get to the bottom of what really gets their libidos going. The information gathered was so adverse to the Masters and Johnson chart that a new model was created to represent female sexual response! Unlike men, desire is not the facilitator for women. Desire is, instead, the result.

Rather than being linear, Dr. Basson's model explains women's sexual response in a cyclical fashion. While raw attraction may drive physical intimacy for women when it comes to new partners, many women in long-term relationships don't experience a primal desire for sex, and therefore, rarely initiate it. Instead, seeking out or consenting to sex is often a means of fulfilling a deeper need, such as emotional closeness.

In a nutshell, the differences between the male and female sexual responses are:

- Men desire sex and then become aroused, while women choose to become aroused, and then desire sex.
- While orgasm is part and parcel of the experience for men, that may not always be the case for women. Many women have satisfying, fulfilling intercourse without ever achieving climax, while others achieve it easily. It varies from woman to woman. For those who can't achieve orgasm during intercourse, but want to, there are always outside options for stimulation!
- For men, sexual response is linear, as stated in the Masters and Johnson model- Excitement, Plateau, Orgasm, Resolution. But for women, sexual response is fluid and cyclical: Arousal leads to desire. Desire leads to sex, which ultimately results in deep satisfaction and a sense of well being, regardless of whether orgasm is achieved or not. Or a woman can have multiple orgasms before basking in the afterglow, while men need varying amounts of downtime between orgasms.

Regardless of what the differences are, an active sex life with your partner maintains emotional closeness and satisfaction for both parties, and physical intimacy is crucial in maintaining a long-lasting and fulfilling bond. Understanding the difference between sexual arousal and sexual desire are critical to maintaining that connection.

Orgasms: Genetics, Mechanics, & Myths

The Magical World of Orgasms



Orgasms are the ultimate in sexual gratification. In fact, many of us equate this peak experience with total nirvana. Less celebrated, but just as true, is that our sexual responses are as fluid as our relationships themselves.

First things first: never judge your orgasms. Freud himself once slipped into this trap, calling clitoral orgasms “immature” and stating that vaginal orgasms were the mark of an adult female sexual experience. This is simply not true. In my opinion, an orgasm is always wonderful and, while they are all different, no one kind is any better than another.

Second, by most counts, women experience clitoral orgasm most often and most easily, since stimulation of the clitoris is fairly straightforward. Vaginal orgasm is equally powerful, and is certainly something you and your partner can try and achieve. The most important thing to remember—whether you achieve an orgasm clitorally or vaginally; one time or multiple times; before, during, or after intercourse—is simply to enjoy it. Explore all the possibilities in your pursuit of sexual pleasure, but don't allow the destination to become more important than the journey.

But here's the thing: Orgasm isn't always easy. Many people suffer from an inability to reach orgasm, whether it is the result of negative messages or experiences from childhood, poor body image, relationship woes, stress, or physical difficulties such as sexual dysfunction. If you are struggling to reach orgasm, remember that it isn't a

reflection on your relationship. And don't lose heart: with communication and openness, your orgasmic potential can still be realized in all its glory.

It's also important to make sure that your relationship is primed to its full orgasmic potential. Touching each other in ways you both enjoy isn't enough. Respect and trust are just as key to your relationship satisfaction, both inside and outside the bedroom. To build this trust, you must feel safe expressing your sexual needs and desires. This includes being able to talk about when sex isn't working. Many people find it daunting to talk about sexual pleasure, which is understandable, considering that sex isn't something that most of us grew up discussing openly. However, there is nothing more important than being able to talk to your partner openly and honestly about sex.

Once you start talking about what's really going on in the bedroom, you can start to pinpoint where the trouble might lie. Is it a new issue that started happening after a recent relationship rift? Could the trouble stem from aging or a health issue? When you figure out when the difficulty started and how often it's been happening, you can decide what the next step should be. If it's an ongoing issue, you might consider seeing a doctor. Therapy, even sex therapy, may also be a good option. A sex therapist can help you work through any trust issues, and suggest sexual tips and techniques that can lead you on the road to better sex.

The Journey of Self-Exploration



Masturbation is good for your sex life because it helps you to get in touch with your own sexual response. It also keeps you in an amorous frame of mind, and can help to contribute to that slow burn I keep talking about. Newcomers to the world of

self-touch sometimes think just the opposite—that they will expend their sexual energy on themselves—but fortunately for all of us, sex is the gift that keeps on giving. It's one of the few hard and fast sexual rules: The more you enjoy your sexuality, the more sexual energy you produce.

Masturbation is a time for you to let your mind wild and explore your body without any inhibitions. This means that in order for you to reach orgasm, you need to be relaxed and free of stress, if only temporarily, even while masturbating. If you are new to masturbation, this will be of special importance, and in this section, I'm breaking down how to find pleasure on your own!

1. **Find a time and a place when you can be alone and are truly able to enjoy and explore yourself, such as in the bathtub or in your bedroom when everyone's at work or school, or after the kids are asleep.** Set the scene to help yourself get in the mood. It might feel silly to 'romance' yourself, but you will be more likely to reach orgasm if you light some candles and play some mood music. It will also help to add to the general mood of seduction and love.
2. **It's not a time to think about how you want to lose weight, how you need to mow the lawn, or even how silly you feel masturbating.** It's OK to feel and think those things, but notice it when you do and right your focus back to the present. After all, it's called self-love for a reason...it's a time to let go of all your anxieties and insecurities and just love yourself. Seducing yourself, loving yourself, and feeling the different sensations that radiate throughout your body is all part of the program.
3. **Start with the mental foreplay.** It's always great to have some 'go-to' fantasies at your disposal. This way, you can cull through your mental rolodex whenever you have the time or inclination to self-stimulate. These fantasies can be as wild as you prefer, whether it's about your sexy next-door neighbor, a well-built celebrity, or even a long ago ex-boyfriend. Nothing is off limits in the fantasy realm.
4. **With these sexy images, thoughts and fantasies at the front of your mind, it's time to move onto the physical foreplay.** Start slow by exploring your whole body, stroking, squeezing or massaging your breasts and/or nipples, stroking the erogenous zones you can reach (see p. for more on erogenous zones), running your fingers along your inner thighs and labia, and finally stimulating your clitoris. Use your index finger to lightly begin applying pressure to your clitoris, slowly and rhythmically rubbing yourself. As you begin to get more aroused, you can intensify your pressure and speed up.
5. **Stimulate your other erogenous zones as you do so.** Massage your breasts or use your hand to stimulate your periurethral area, applying deep and strong pressure to the area. And if you don't have a sex toy handy, don't despair. You

can use handy household items like a hand-held shower head in the bathroom, which can apply tons of feel-good sensations on your clitoris and genitals.

Make a commitment to masturbate on a regular basis. Doing so will keep you connected to your body and your sexual response, and it will keep your sexuality fresh and alive. Not to mention, it's just darn fun!

The Orgasm Myth You've Been Led to Believe



Multiple orgasms are often considered the Holy Grail of sexual experience, yet accomplishing these sexy feats isn't always easy. However, this does not mean it's impossible! Those multiple orgasms are totally reachable if that's something that you want to accomplish, either on your own or with a partner.

No two orgasms are alike. In fact, there are many different types of orgasms, especially for women! The first, and most widely known, is the single orgasm. Sexual experiences for singular orgasm follow this sexual response pattern: excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution. Men experience all of their orgasms in accordance with these stages, although time spent on each stage can vary widely. For instance, a man who practices tantric sex might spend hours moving through the excitement and plateau stages, climbing up and down the pleasure scale before he allows himself to attain orgasm. On the other hand, a man having a 'quickie' can zip through all four stages in as little as 10 minutes!

Women can also experience a single orgasm. Just like men, women can spend a varied amount of time on the excitement and plateau stages, delaying orgasm for hours or as long as they like. Some say that the longer you delay orgasm, the more

pleasurable and intense the sensations are, which explains why many people enjoy pushing the limits of single orgasm and seeing how long they can go before they have to give in.

Women are lucky creatures because single orgasms are just the beginning. Unlike men, women don't require a refractory period in between sexual experiences. Instead, women can jump right back into the plateau or excitement stage and build their way up to another orgasm in just minutes! Of course, just because women have the ability to be multi-orgasmic doesn't mean that they always are. It can take a lot of work to be able to tap into this ability, and it won't always be possible (sometimes even reaching a single orgasm can seem impossible!).

If you want to explore multiple orgasms, masturbation is a great place to start. Here's what you can try...

1. **Once you have reached orgasm, stay present in your body.** Continue to stroke your erogenous zones and even your clitoris and labia but much more softly and indirectly. Keep the erotic thoughts going. The clitoris is typically hypersensitive immediately following orgasm, so it can be uncomfortable to stimulate it right away.
2. **After about 30 seconds, slowly start to directly stimulate the clitoris or G-spot again.** You'll notice that each progressive orgasm feels more intense and that multiple orgasm gets easier and easier with practice. You will learn the pace that works for you and how to bring yourself up and down the pleasure scale in order to master your multi-orgasmic abilities.
3. **Even if you can't reach yet another orgasm, you can 'practice' until you are able to.** Soon, you might even be able to have three, four, five, or more orgasms in one self-stimulation session!

Ultimately, it's important not to put much pressure on yourself when it comes to reaching multiple orgasms. An orgasm is an orgasm is an orgasm, so whether you have one, two, or three, or whether you have them alone or with your partner, simply lay back and enjoy the ride!

What is a “Coregasm”?



A recent study from Indiana University has found that around 5 to 15 percent of women have experienced an orgasm while exercising. Researcher Debby Herbenick first had the idea for her study when she realized that many women in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (penned by famous sex researcher Alfred Kinsey in 1953) confessed to having their first orgasms during exercise.

Decades later, it seems that women are still enjoying some pleasurable benefits of crunches and other physical exercises. While researchers aren't sure how these so-called 'coregasms' occur, repetitive movements and muscle fatigue seem to contribute to the occurrence of exercise-induced orgasms. It could also be related to the fact that our core abdominal muscles are linked to our pelvic muscles, which could make crunches and other core-activity more likely to spark coregasms than other types of exercise. Other women also report having orgasms while in spin class or while lifting weights, so it seems that almost no exercise is off-limits.

Whether you have ever experienced a “coregasm” or not, the truth is that any type of exercise can help to improve your orgasm ability. Regular exercise not only burns calories and keeps you fit and ready for sexual activity, but it also improves blood flow, meaning that you could improve your sexual response and increase the intensity of your orgasms just by hitting the gym on a regular basis. And, who knows? You might even get an unexpected coregasm out of it!

How to Manage Early Ejaculation



Orgasm can come too soon for men and women alike. Early ejaculation is an issue that affects millions of men. It is a condition in which a man reaches orgasm sooner than he would like and to such an extent that it negatively detracts from his sexual enjoyment. However, men aren't the only ones who suffer from early ejaculation. Researchers in a 2012 study from the Hospital Magalhaes Lemos in Portugal surveyed over 500 women (ages 18 to 45) and found that over 40 percent of women reached orgasm sooner than they would like at some point in their sex lives. So while we commonly think that men are the ones who are likely to suffer from early ejaculation, almost half of women in the survey stated that they have experienced similar issues.

Early ejaculation can be frustrating for many reasons. For one thing, some women might feel extra-sensitive (in a physical sense) after reaching orgasm, and they might not want to continue to be touched or stimulated until a few moments have passed. For another, some women might feel disconnected from their partner if they already have reached orgasm and the sex continues on for a while.

Additionally, part of the problem could be that women often have very high expectations of their sexual response. They want their sex lives to be like what they see in the movies: Passionate, fulfilling and perfect, right down to the mutual orgasms that they enjoy at the same moment as their partner. Reaching orgasm before their partner (or after their partner) might make them feel as though they are doing something “wrong” or as though their sex life must be lacking in some way. This is part of the reason why I always encourage women to adopt this motto: an orgasm is an orgasm is an orgasm.

In other words, orgasms aren't always perfectly timed and expertly executed as they are in the movies! Sometimes a woman might reach orgasm through manual stimulation before sex even begins or maybe will reach orgasm through oral stimulation post-sex. Whatever the case, the reality is that only 30% reach orgasm through intercourse alone, so if you are reaching orgasm during intercourse, the timing of it doesn't necessarily have to be something that you get hung up on. Instead, I always encourage women to simply enjoy orgasm whenever and however they occur.

However, if you do find that you're reaching orgasm sooner than you would like, here are some tips!

1. **You might try slowing down your sexual response by being aware of your pleasure scale.** If 1 is a state of non-arousal and 10 is orgasm, try to be aware of when you are getting close to orgasm. For example, when you are climbing to 7 or 8, ask your partner to slow down or switch up your foreplay. Go back to making out or spend some time pleasuring him in order to bring your arousal down to a level where you can better control it.
2. **You might also consider working towards a goal of multiple orgasms like we talked about earlier!** Unlike men, women are lucky enough to be able to achieve multiple orgasms without a refractory period (in which the man has to rest before he can achieve an erection again). Women have no set limit on the amount of orgasms they can enjoy during one encounter, but it can sometimes take practice to reach that Holy Grail of sexual pleasure.
3. **The next time you're inching, or possibly racing, toward an orgasm, stay aroused and in the moment. If you need to slow down, switch things up.** Try a new position that will give you a moment to slowly come back down on the scale.

Whatever you do, remember that practice makes perfect, and even if you orgasm sooner than you'd like, try to enjoy the moment with your partner!

The Role Your Genetics Play in Your Pleasure



When it comes to your orgasms, you might have more in common with your family than you would like to believe.

Orgasms are pleasurable whenever and however they occur, yet not everyone reaches orgasms quickly or consistently. And, it turns out, your sexual pleasure and orgasm habits might be linked to your family history and your genetics, which means your mother might be responsible for more than just your great smile or your proclivity for cellulite.

Although it might be a little awkward to think about, recent research suggests that a woman's ability to orgasm is passed down from her parents, at least in part. In fact, British researchers recently found that a woman's orgasm ability is about one-third genetic. A well-designed twin study showed that identical twins share more similarity in how and when they reach the big O than fraternal twins do. Since identical twins share 100% of their DNA and fraternal twins share only about 50%, growing up in the same house with the same attitudes about sex cannot explain this piece of the orgasm puzzle. It's the genes.

The finding can inspire visions of distant great-aunts experiencing the very same difficulties as you in reaching sexual satisfaction. The difference is that great-aunt Mavis did not have access to all of the information and freedoms that women do today.

The ability to orgasm during intercourse is 34% inherited. It's nice to know because the finding opens the door to conversations with mothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers in a way that is legitimate instead of just weird. Think of it as constructing your orgasmic family tree.

But a number is still just a number. There remains another 66% of ecstatic potential that is not accounted for by your DNA. Plus, the 34% that is influenced by genetics is still modifiable. Just as you may inherit the tendency for heart disease or crooked teeth, the beauty of our lot is that we can change our circumstances.

Biology is not destiny. We've been hearing it for decades, ladies, and it couldn't be more true than in the case of orgasm. So what have we learned that great-aunt Mavis may not have known? First and foremost, we've learned that sexual satisfaction is as much our right as it is a man's right. That's a big one. Next is that the clitoris is usually the instrument of choice for conducting a symphony of pleasure. Every woman is different. And finally, the very ironic fact that achieving orgasm is not even necessary for a woman to have enjoyed sex. (The men are cringing, and the women are sighing with relief...)

I think it's wonderful that science is marching ahead to reveal the true underpinnings of the female orgasm. We've come a long way from Freud's damaging "expertise" on the subject. A woman's orgasm is a varied and complicated experience. The more we understand, the better. But I doubt that we will ever have a scientific equation for women that says, "A + B = Big O." That's part of what makes it so special when it happens.

Improving Sexual Performance & Well-being With Yourself & Your Partner

15 Solid Sex Tips



Women are supposed to be the complicated ones when it comes to sex and sexuality, yet men can be just as complex even though they probably would never admit it.

Males can stay more tight-lipped about their bedroom desires than what most women expect. Getting to the core of what a man wants can be tough, and getting the best sex advice is not always easy, even if you ask your BFF or watch videos on sex tips for women. Sex therapists and insightful surveys make it possible to get the low-down on what men really want in the sack. Here's a list of the most solid pieces of sex advice for women.

Harness the power of your own confidence. As many as 1 in 10 women have problems feeling confident in the bedroom when it comes to either how they look or their abilities to please their partner. Even though you may feel uneasy about how you look or how what you're doing is making him feel, it is best to lower your inhibitions and really try to be confident. If you really struggle with your own perceptions of body image, you can ease your way into things by:

- Turning off the lights
- Blindfolding him so he can only feel what you do

- Picking out something to wear that makes you feel better about your body
- Being mindful of what your own inner voice is saying; positive thoughts can boost confidence (e.g. *I am so unattractive. vs. I look so sexy.*)

To feel more confident, it is important that you keep in mind that he is looking at your body and not you. You may see all the flaws and negatives, but he sees a sexy, sensual and beautiful woman, and he's most likely to be thrilled with your every movement.

Use the power of touch beyond the genitals. If you dig into sex tips for women from men, one thing you may find surprising is men liked to be touched too. Learn about a man's erogenous zones and use that knowledge in the bedroom. Believe it or not, guys like to be touched sensuously just as much as women.

- Rub your hands along his thighs in a teasing way.
- Caress his shoulders and back as you press your own body against his.
- Cup his face, stroke his cheeks, or comb your fingers through his hair.

This sensuous touch can really heighten your partner's senses during foreplay and can be incredibly arousing during sex. While attention to his genitals is ever-important, touching other erogenous zones builds anticipation during foreplay and helps nurture that sensual connection during sex.

Don't be afraid to give new things a try. Diversity can really spice up your sex life. One of the best sex tips for women is to be open about trying new things. It is hard to know what new things either of you like if you only ever try the same things. Men often complain about always having sex in the same position, always having sex in the same place, and/or always following a certain routine (e.g. fondling, oral, intercourse). Some guys are hesitant to give new things a try because they fear a female's reaction. So, taking the lead and showing him you're willing to try something new is bound to make things more interesting and exciting. Something as small as ordering a new sex toy to use on him or for him to use on you can open up a new realm of possibilities in the world of sex. However, it can also be fun to bring in some sexual games, some roleplaying, some new positions, or just a little dirty talk.

Use oral sex tips for women to your (and his) advantage. It is no scientific secret that oral sex can be one of the most arousing things for a man, but pleasing him using oral sex tips for women can be surprisingly arousing for you just the same. One of the best sex tips for better sex orally is to use your hands. There are so many ways to put your hands to work while using your mouth, such as:

- Cupping, gently squeezing, and lightly tugging his scrotum
- Forming a fist around his shaft and gripping firmly as you move up and down
- Using short pumps and squeezes to stimulate his head with your fingers

With your mouth, alternate between flicking the tongue, sucking, and kissing the different parts of his genitals. He will most assuredly have a good time as you experiment and find all the things he likes. Don't be afraid to ask him if he likes something you're doing with your mouth and hands. The entire ordeal can be really arousing for both of you.

Stay focused on the moment. Minds wander during sex. It happens and it's perfectly normal, but it's critical to pull your mind back and focus. You may find yourself thinking about your long list of things to do or stressing about a project you need to finish at work. The problem is, a wandering mind during sex takes you out of the moment and reduces your focus on the sensual or pleasurable feelings your partner is trying to deliver. Just as you need to practice mindfulness in other areas of your life, you need to do so during sex.

Get vocal—it's one of the best sex tips for women. If you ask 100 guys to give sex advice for women, at least 99 of them will likely bring up the fact that they like a vocal woman in bed. Getting vocal is all about just opening your mouth and letting the thoughts slip out.

- If something feels good, express it.
- If you want him in a certain position, let him know.
- If you feel like groaning, moaning, or breathing heavily, don't hold back.

Your partner is going to find all your vocalizations arousing, and it can even arouse you in the process. If you're normally quiet during sex, try getting vocal while you masturbate alone to see what gets you excited and it'll likely work just the same for him.

Speak up when your partner does something you like or don't. Just as all those feel-good vocalizations are a good thing, so is speaking up and letting your partner know what you like. Likewise, a guy is only going to know you dislike something if you let him know. Whether it is simply expressing that you like it when *he rubs his X on your Y* or *it'd be so sexy if he'd (fill-in-the-blank)*, this is affirming what you like, which is really hot for both of you. Guys often struggle to know whether they're doing it right and you're enjoying their efforts. Speaking up when you do like something and gently leading him elsewhere when you can't really heighten the sexual encounter.

Consider fulfilling your partner's fantasies or opening up about yours. Most men do have sexual fantasies that they would love to share, but they don't want their partner to think their fantasy is creepy. But on the same note, most men wish their partner would fill them in on their sexual fantasies. Such insightful information can easily be used as sex advice for women. If you're a little shy about sharing your fantasy aloud, make a game out of jotting down different fantasies on paper with an agreement that this will be a judgment-free experience. Stuff the written fantasies in a box or bag and

pull one out the next time the two of you are in the heat of the moment. Fantasies can have themes, involve certain roles, or even just be associated with certain scenarios. In any case, these imaginative ideas should be shameless and guilt-free. If you pluck out a fantasy that has you a little concerned or makes you uncomfortable, talk about it. Find out what it is about the fantasy that is arousing to your partner and work off of that.

Keep an open mind about porn. Pornography is such a fickle part of modern sexuality. While men are most often stereotyped as porn-watchers, some women enjoy it just the same. And, there is a line between healthy porn-watching and porn as an addiction. When used in an appropriate way, watching porn can be a healthy part of a sexual relationship and a good way to enhance arousal. In some situations, women are put off by the idea that their partner is aroused by the sight of another woman or by certain scenarios. However, if you can get to the root of what it is about the woman or the scenario that is enticing to him, you can bring those ideas into your own sexual endeavors or at least open up a discussion about what is appealing to him. Porn is often a secret thing, but it doesn't have to be. If you have hard limits about watching porn yourself, say so, but if your partner enjoys it, it is best to try to let them have their own sexual identity to a logical extent and not put them in a position where they feel they have to be dishonest. Sexuality and arousal can be extremely idiosyncratic or unique to the individual. Learning how to appreciate this fact can be one of the best sex tips for women to remember because it allows a man to be himself without feeling ashamed or guilty.

Don't take loss-of-erection personally... Just move on. It happens to all guys at some point, and there's not necessarily anyone to blame. If his erection goes soft halfway through foreplay or sex, don't take it personally. Overreacting to the situation is going to make him feel embarrassed, awkward, and emasculated—even more so than what he may be feeling without you saying a word. So, instead of pointing it out and taking it to heart, shift gears, try something else, and resurrect the moment. Whether it is teasing his erogenous zones, letting him watch you do some self-pleasing, or sensuously nibbling and kissing on his neck and ears, try to take his mind off what happens so he can naturally grow aroused again.

Compliment your partner outside and inside the bedroom. Men can be self-conscious both outside and inside the bedroom, but many women do not take this into consideration when it comes to sex or how it can affect sex with a partner. A confident man is going to perform better sexually, and you have the power to make him feel that way.

- Try letting him know how sexy he is when he slips off his tie and loosens his top buttons.

- Whisper compliments about his body (or body parts) while out together in public.
- Tell him how incredibly tasty he looks when he is aroused and waiting for you in bed.

These little compliments can really give his confidence levels a boost when it gets down to the good stuff.

Try using sex to get aroused instead of always waiting for arousal for sex. If you constantly wait around for being aroused to have sex, it can mean you are missing a lot of good opportunities to have a sexually satisfying encounter with your partner. Try initiating sex before you ever get aroused. You'll likely get turned on in the process. Likewise, it can do your sex life a lot of good to apply this sex tip for women to your solo play efforts. Try getting out your favorite sex toys and playing around before you're ever aroused. You can learn a lot about how your body responds before arousal in the process.

Learn to appreciate the spur-of-the-moment sexual encounter. Creating a "sex schedule" can be beneficial if you rarely find the time to come together. However, those sudden-sex moments can be really hot, and most men are thrilled with the idea on occasion. Spontaneous, passionate and spur-of-the-moment sex is all about getting that physical need fulfilled. Intimacy, cuddling, and affection are amazing and important, but sometimes, it's great to just have sex for the purpose of having sex. No expectations, no plans, pure pleasure. Spur-of-the-moment sex can be initiated by either party, so be bold and start creating the sexual spontaneity you desire. You may have more fun than you imagine.

Ask him to pitch in more around the house. I call this 'choreplay.' It can be hard to get in the mood if you're always taking on the lion's share of housework and childcare. If your partner can step up more around the house, it will give you more time to practice self-care—such as hitting the gym, going to the salon, taking a warm bubble bath, and just being able to decompress and get in that sexy, sensual mood. So let your partner know that choreplay might lead to more pleasure for him in the long run!

Take time to nurture that emotional connection. Guys are not just sex-crazed animals who only want that physical connection; they also like to feel emotionally bonded to their partner. After sex, take advantage of the moment (and the extra flowing oxytocin in both your bloodstreams) and touch, cuddle, caress, and bond. Yes, men do often shy away from the softer sides of intimacy outside of sex, but they crave it even if they won't necessarily say so because it is outside of social norms. If you have a guy that typically jumps straight from the bed and into the shower after sex, try joining him, gently washing him off, and caressing him. You may find he enjoys this sweet, after-sex bonding time more than you anticipated.

The Kegel Flower Exercise



One exercise I often recommend to my female patients who want to increase pleasure and connection to their bodies is the Kegel Flower exercise. It can really help you identify the key muscles and how to exercise them effectively. Once you really identify and understand your kegels, you can relax them to alleviate pain, and tighten them to increase pleasure. Here's how it goes:

1. **Take a few deep breaths, inhaling fully through your nose, and then powerfully exhaling all that air out through your mouth.** Now, squeeze your pelvic floor muscles as tight as you can, lifting and tightening inside your vagina, your kegels, and your anus. Now take a deep breath through your nose ...and hold it. As you do so, visualize yourself closing up like the petals of a flower as they close up to protect their delicate buds. There is strength and power in this delicate action.
2. **Next, blow all the air out of your mouth in a whoosh as you relax all your muscles, and open your vagina, anus as wide as you can, like a wide-open flower in bloom.** Now let it all rest gently open.
3. **Let's do this one more time. Once again, squeeze your Kegel muscles inward and hold in a breath, tightening up like a flower closing its petals once again.** Hold your breath, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, and now, blow that air out your mouth and open up wide, resting gently open.

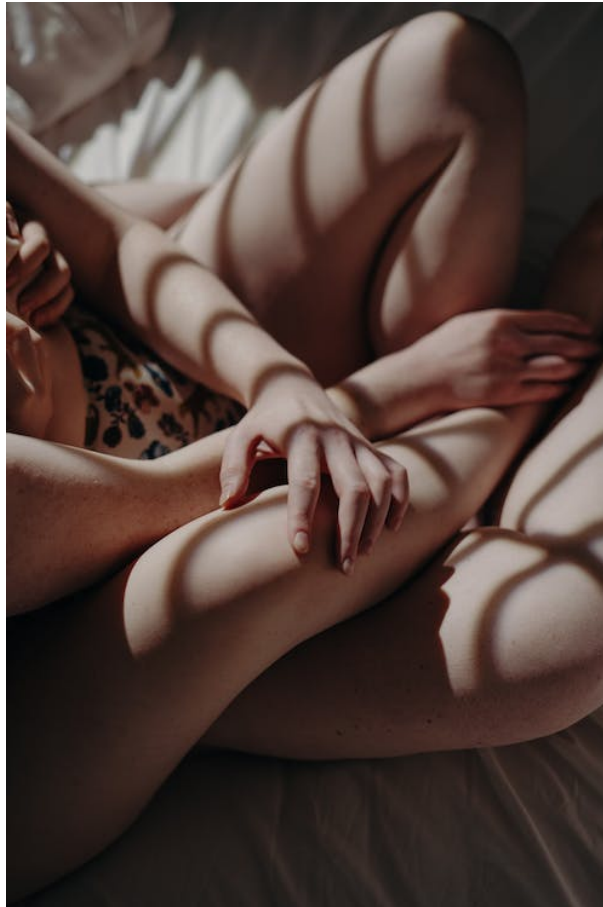
Do you see the difference between clenching those muscles and opening them? Now, this next time, put your attention on this resting, gently closed state of your vagina. If you need to do another kegel flower breath to get there, feel free! But from this gentle place, we're going to squeeze as you did before, but THIS time, only the **front**.

1. **Imagine you are squeezing just around your vagina, even picture squeezing upfront around your clitoris.** Your anus is completely relaxed or open. Do you feel the difference? Front part tightened, behind relaxed. This requires you to tap into that mind-body connection, because it sometimes feels a bit tricky at first. But, once you get the hang of it, you will be doing a true Kegel – that is, intense, mindful vaginal contractions without the puckering or tightening of the anus.
2. **If you're standing, it can be helpful to lay your hands on your bum as you do this.** If you feel your butt clenching up when you're Kegeling, then you're actually working your sphincter, and that's not what we are going for – but don't be discouraged! This stuff takes practice, and it's not second-nature until you really invest the time.

You should do a few hundred of these kegel contractions a day, but let's just shoot for 50 a day to get you started if you are new to this. Then work your way up! You don't have to do the flower breath every time, but it certainly helps. Do your kegels in traffic, waiting in line at the drive-thru, while cooking dinner, when you're watching television at night, or while you're bored in a long meeting. Once you become a pro at these, increase your number and keep trying to set new goals for yourself.

You also can work your way up to using dilators, which we'll discuss next, or weighted Ben-Wa balls to keep increasing your pelvic floor strength and tone. Now, go do your homework! 50 kegels – or more if you want extra credit!

Experiencing Painful Sex? Try a Dilator



Nearly 1 in 10 women say that they find sex painful, yet only 51% of women tell their male partners when intercourse hurts.

Sadly, this bears out what I have found in my experience as a sex therapist: Although painful sex is one of the most common issues that women face in the bedroom, most are too embarrassed or uncomfortable to bring up the issue with their OB/GYN or even their partner.

Painful sex can occur for many reasons: It can be due to shifting hormones, irritation, infection, trauma, endometriosis, menopause, eating disorders, medications, and other times for no known reason at all.

Although painful sex is common, the good news is that there are many things you can do to help make sex more comfortable, but this can't happen unless women are empowered and allowed to discuss sex and their bodies without shame. If women realized that they don't have to simply suffer in silence, that they can and should talk to their doctors, and that they are allowed to be honest with their partners about their sexual pleasure, I believe we could see many cases of painful sex easily resolved.

One of the first things I recommend to women who suffer from painful sex is a dilator. Dilators are dildo-like instruments that help to naturally stretch the vagina in order to help make sex more comfortable and enjoyable. They make your vagina more elastic and more relaxed, restoring your genitals to a gentle, functional, and comfortable state.

Dilators can be very beneficial for use during menopause, when our vaginal tissue can become thinner and drier, making sex uncomfortable or even painful. They can also help treat sexual dysfunction like vaginismus, which is a condition that causes painful vaginal spasms and prevents intercourse or makes it extremely painful.

If you experienced tears or trauma during childbirth, dilators can help treat everything from cystitis to perineal tears to episiotomy, and pelvic pain. Plus, they can also be an invaluable tool in recovering after hysterectomy or cancer therapy.

In other words, dilators are crucial tools for women in all stages of life, so let's dive into how to safely use them!

First, always use plenty of lubrication, but never use silicone lubricant with silicone sex aids, as it can degrade the material on the toy. Instead, use oil-based or water-based lubricant, and try this process:

1. **To insert the dilator, lay on your back with your knees bent and gently open.** Find your vaginal opening and slowly press the dilator into your vagina as if you were inserting a tampon, being sure to take your time and listen to your body. Do not ever force a dilator until you feel pain. Some pressure and slight discomfort is normal, but it should feel like a soft stretch, not searing pain. When you hit that point of pain, stop! This is your limit for now.
2. **Stay at this depth and focus on deep breaths in through your nose, out through your mouth.** It may help to visualize a flower softly opening in the springtime, or a wave breaking on a shore. (Lighting some candles and playing relaxing music before you begin to use your dilator can help set the mood and keep you calm).
3. **Gently squeeze and release around the dilator, as if you were doing a Kegel exercise.** (Use the muscles that you use to stop-and-start your urine flow). You can also try softly turning the dilator inside of you, as if you were winding a clock, or pushing the dilator in-and-out several times to help loosen and relax the pelvic walls. Never push yourself to the point of pain and never continue if you feel overwhelmed or triggered. Using a dilator can be extremely emotional, especially if you have sexual trauma.

Dilators come in different shapes and widths, so I recommend using a beginner dilator until you are comfortable fully inserting and holding the dilator squeezed between

your vaginal walls without pain or discomfort. This could take a week, a month, or more. Every woman's body is different. After you can do this without pain, swap out for the next size up. If this graduation feels too much for you, that's OK. Go back to the thinnest dilator and give yourself some more time.

Once you find the size that suits your body, do your Kegels and practice gentle penetration until you feel ready to move up to the next width. And, if you are out of town, or sick, or too busy to dilate for a week or more, don't jump back in with the widest dilator. Start with one of the smaller sleeves to give your body time to adjust once again before going to the biggest option right away.

Finally, listen to your body. This is not a competition, and there is no benefit whatsoever to leaping to the next sleeve before you are ready. And, remember, this is a solo exercise, meant for you to do on your own so that you can fully listen to your body, be relaxed, and attune to your needs. (Once you can insert and hold the widest dilator inside of you, you will probably be able to have sex without discomfort, as the widest sleeve is about the size of an average penis). And remember, honesty is the best policy – with yourself and your partner.

A Natural Lubricant Can Nourish Your Body



Did you know that lubricants can actually be absorbed into your body via the mucous membranes within the vagina? OK, I know the word mucous is kind of gross, but we NEED to talk about this! So many women just grab whatever bottle of lube is available at the drugstore without considering the fact that their vaginas are literally going to absorb these chemicals and additives.

But just as it can absorb yucky chemicals and stuff you may not want in your body, it can also absorb healing nutrients and vitamins. That's why I wanted to make [Yoni Silk](#).

The word 'Yoni' is actually Sanskrit for 'sacred gate,' and as I have just explained, your vagina really is a gateway into your body, so you have to be super mindful and intentional about what products you are putting inside or near your vulva. And I truly believe that your yoni, i.e. your vulva, is sacred, and that your body deserves to be celebrated and cherished – by you and your partner.

So that is why I wanted to make a lubricant that would actually honor this sacred gateway of the vagina – a lube made with nothing but organic and all-natural ingredients that will actually 'power up' your vagina.

Yoni Silk only contains the safest ingredients from Mother Earth herself, and it also contains nutrients that will actually help improve your sexual response and really enhance your orgasmic potential, such as Organic Damiana (which is an ancient herb celebrated for its aphrodisiac qualities since Mayan times) and organic Vitamin E – which is appropriately known as the ‘sex vitamin’ because it provides energy, stamina and increased blood flow and oxygen all over the body and to your genitals! Yoni Silk also includes Organic High Grade CBD which can help repair tissues and promote healthy blood flow.

Plus, Yoni Silk is not only great for your tender parts, but great for usage all over the body! Apply it to chapped lips or dry knees and elbows, or use it for a seductive massage oil with your partner.

Remember, your vagina is so powerful, but it needs extra TLC compared to the rest of your body. So make your vulnerability your strength with Yoni Silk!

The Different Stages of Your Sex Life

Sex During Pregnancy: Is It Safe?



Pregnancy doesn't mean that you have to kiss your sex life goodbye for nine months.

People often think that pregnancy signals the end of your sex life for nine months. However, the truth is that sex during pregnancy can be quite pleasurable. In fact, many women experience a boost in their libido during pregnancy, particularly during the second trimester. During the first trimester, you are often dealing with morning sickness, fatigue, and other symptoms that make sex (among other things) difficult.

However, as you move into the second trimester and these symptoms dissipate, you will find that your libido returns. Shifting hormones (such as progesterone and estrogen) will heighten your sensitivity in pleasure spots like your genitals and your breasts, and you will experience greater lubrication in the vagina as well. And, as you

grow into your new curves, you might enjoy a boost of self-esteem, as many women feel more feminine and alive than ever before.

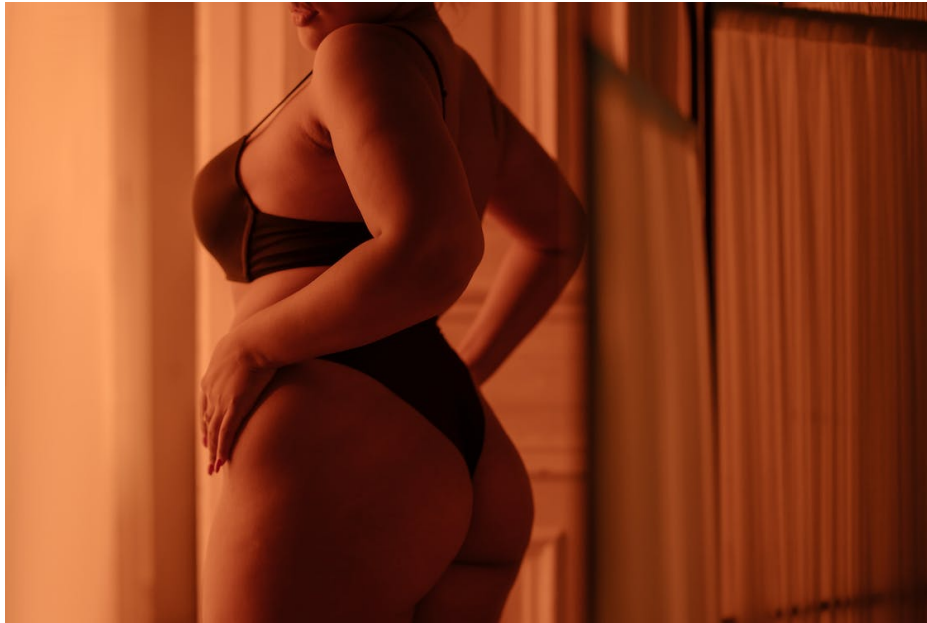
Of course, just because you are in the mood for sex doesn't necessarily mean that your sex life won't change somewhat. You will have to find new positions that make sex comfortable, and your growing belly means that some of your favorite positions might not be possible any more.

Luckily, there are several positions which will give you pleasure and keep your baby safe at the same time. Man-on-top is still possible, but make sure he doesn't place any weight on your stomach. Instead, have him kneel while you lay before him. Put your legs straight up in the air and rest them on his torso as he penetrates (no, penetration won't 'poke' the baby!). You might find that woman-on-top is most pleasurable and comfortable for you, whether you kneel facing him or facing his feet. Seated positions, such as when he sits on a chair and you straddle him, are also a good idea. Side by side positions are also a good idea, especially if you lie facing the same way and he penetrates you from behind. (Facing each other can be more difficult as your belly might get in the way).

One of the benefits of sex during pregnancy is that you don't have to grapple with contraception concerns, however, there are a few things to remember. First of all, it's important that your partner doesn't blow air into the vaginal cavity while he is performing oral sex, as this can potentially cause an embolism to occur within the womb. It's also important to make sure that you are not performing any positions which will put any weight on your belly.

A good rule of thumb is that if you are comfortable, your baby likely is as well, but it's a good idea to talk to your doctor about safe sex tips for you and your baby. It's also important to make sure that you have the green light to engage in sexual activity. Women who have high-risk pregnancies or who are prone to premature delivery are sometimes encouraged to not engage in sexual activity, as sex can hasten labor. However, barring any medical concerns, sex during pregnancy can be a wonderful way to stay connected to your partner during this special time in your life.

Getting Back In the Saddle After a Baby



Anytime you undergo stress, financial burdens, illness, or a major life change, you're likely to experience changes to your sleep, diet, and of course, your sex life. And having a baby combines all of these into one! Of course, pregnancy and childbirth aren't illnesses, but they can be highly taxing to the body and require medical support and even interventions, not to mention recovery time (which can be complicated when you're trying to care for a new baby at the same time).

So, it's no wonder that new parents can lose that lovin' feeling after they bring the baby home, and not only are you dealing with the physical symptoms of childbirth recovery, the stress of bringing home a newborn, and lack of sleep, but your hormones are all over the place. But I don't just mean women! Research has shown that new fathers also experience significant hormone changes in the months following the birth of a child. A dad's testosterone levels take a dive (about a 30% decrease).

The reason for this is probably largely biological. Women experience hormonal shifts during pregnancy and after childbirth in order to ensure that they remain close and bonded with their baby (for example, oxytocin, the "bonding" chemical is released in the brain during breastfeeding in order to help establish the crucial bond between mom and baby). It's in the best interest of our species for parents to be deeply connected with their children, especially their helpless infants, because this ensures that they will take good care of the child until he grows into a self-sufficient adult. In those early days of mankind, involved and caring parents were crucial in order to ensure that children could grow and thrive.

All of this could help explain why dads undergo hormonal changes as well. I find that when I tell new moms about these hormonal changes that dads can experience, they often have a look of relief on their faces. For many women, when their partner seems distant or not as amorous after childbirth, they assume it's because he is no longer attracted to them or because they think their bodies don't look or feel the same during intimacy. To find out that there is an actual evolutionary reason for why new moms and dads might BOTH have less interest in sex can bring some comfort that this is normal and OK.

But, of course, as a sex therapist, I still think that sex and physical connection are really important. I know that an unsatisfactory sex life is one of the leading reasons for why couples end up splitting, and I also know that with just a few tweaks and intentional focus, many couples can reset their sex lives and find pleasure once again, even after having a baby. Here are a few tips to keep your sexual connection intact when you have a new baby (or babies) at home:

1. **Find some way to keep touching each other.** Now, you both may be super touched-out right now (especially mom, especially if she is breastfeeding). But it's so hard to re-light that physical flame once it has completely gone out, and it's much easier if you just keep those flames stoked a little bit. You don't need a roaring fire, but you don't want the flames to completely get put out. So, even if it means cuddling each other for a few minutes while the baby is asleep or holding hands when you go for a walk with the stroller, find some way to keep touching each other.
2. **Set reminders on your phone to kiss your partner.** I know this might sound weird at first, but if you're an exhausted new parent, you probably know by now that if it doesn't get written down or scheduled, you're going to forget it. So, I want you to set a reminder on your phone to kiss your partner once a day, preferably for at least 10 seconds or even more. A full mouth, passionate kiss is a relatively quick way to briefly connect in a sexual way with your partner, even if you don't have the time or energy for more than that.
3. **No time or energy for intercourse? That's totally understandable. Try masturbating together.** You may find that you do have energy for that. But rather than masturbating alone in separate rooms, try mutual masturbation. I know this may feel totally taboo and intimidating, but you might also find that it feels really erotic and sensual. Plus, it will give you a front row seat into finding out what types of touches and strokes your partner desires.
4. **Quick and dirty is more than good enough.** When you do have 10 minutes to yourselves, don't let the opportunity pass. Don't put off sex because the living room isn't picked up or because you didn't shave for a few days. If you look for excuses for why it's not the right time for sex, you're always going to find them.

Instead, look instead for the reasons why now IS a good time for sex, like the baby is asleep, you're together, you're feeling good, and you have time for a quickie, etc. Not every sexual experience needs to have bells and whistles and pretty lingerie. All you really need is each other and just a little bit of privacy and time alone.

5. **Bring the energy you want to see into the relationship.** Many times, women can struggle to feel desirable after having a baby. They may not like the changes they see in the mirror or they may worry that their bodies won't feel as good to their partner. So, they give off insecure energy that their partner often reads as "stay away." It becomes a vicious cycle: She pulls away because she is not feeling good about herself. He pulls away because he thinks she doesn't want him. She senses him pull away which reaffirms the 'fact' in her mind that she is not desirable. Do you see how our energy can really attract certain experiences into our reality? By assuming we aren't sexy or desirable, we give off those low vibrations of insecurity and shame, and in turn that energy comes right back to us as our partners are our 'tuning forks' that will almost always end up vibing at our same level. So if you want your relationship vibe to be positive, passionate, and desiring, you need to check whether that is the energy you are putting into your relationship. You have the power to create the relationship you desire, but it's not just going to fall into your lap. You have to be the one who creates the energy and makes room for that possibility in your world.

Intimacy After Menopause



Just as important as negotiating physical difficulties, we must also address the potential emotional difficulties of sex in later life. One of the main troubles for older people is the antiquated notion that making love is only for youngsters. This is not true! In fact, many people find that the older they get, the more they are able to let loose in the bedroom and release their inhibitions. Maturity brings with it many benefits, including an ability to truly tap into your inner sexual desires. In addition, once you've gone through menopause, you don't have to worry about birth control, which can bring a new sense of freedom to the bedroom.

When you get to midlife, I know there can be some fear surrounding the change that will come with menopause – specifically how our bodies will react in an intimate setting, but I'm here to stave off some of that fear!

One of the best things about sex in later life is that our inhibitions tend to melt away. As we age, those things that seem intimidating or embarrassing earlier in life seem less scary. This is probably because, as you go through life experiences, your ideas of what things are—and are not—okay sexually expand and grow. This is true whether you are with a long-term partner or whether your relationship has changed and you are with someone new—and it means that some of our best sexual experiences can come years after what is traditionally considered to be our sexual prime. Long live sexual pleasure!

Although older people are often ahead of younger couples when it comes to being in touch with their bodies and desires, they don't necessarily take the precautions that they should when it comes to safer sex. Researchers were recently surprised to discover that people who are middle-aged and older are increasingly becoming infected with STIs, with rates doubling for those over the age of 45 in the last 10 years. It was

also found that men who take Viagra and other erectile enhancement medications were at a higher risk of STIs, presumably because they are having sex at higher rates and not using protection. Practicing safer sex (such as by using condoms and dental dams) might seem foreign to you, especially if you are new on the dating scene and it's not something you did in your youth. However, it is incredibly important. In addition to other STIs, older people are being diagnosed with HIV at higher rates. AIDS occurs more often in people over the age of 40 than in younger people and 10 percent of all AIDS cases in the United States occur in people over the age of 50.

HIV/AIDS can be life-threatening at any age, but the older you get, the harder it will be for your body to fight it. Because of this and many other concerns, it's crucial to practice safer sex each and every time you have sex, and to schedule regular STI testing (a step that many older lovers tend to forgo). Sadly, many doctors tend to skip this step as well, either because they wrongly assume it isn't necessary or because they don't know if their patient is sexually active. So, speak up and be an advocate for your own health. Request STI testing and ask the same of all your sex partners. Remember, you can enjoy sex throughout your life, but first you must take precautions to safeguard your health. Safer sex is sex at its most pleasurable and beautiful.

A new study led by the University of Pittsburgh found that while sexual frequency may decrease with age, it is not just due to menopause and its possible complications (such as dryness and decreased libido). Rather, the researchers found that other factors like poor body image, fatigue and stress can complicate a woman's desire and ability to enjoy intimacy.

In the decades I have been helping women with their intimacy and sexual health concerns, I can certainly say that sexual desire doesn't just turn 'off' because a woman hits menopause. There truly is no 'sexpiration' date, and indeed I have found that women often even learn to enjoy intimacy to a deeper and more meaningful degree as they age.

It's certainly true that menopause, aging, and other lifestyle concerns can impact our ability to have the sex, but it just changes things a bit! You can absolutely still have amazing sex with a partner, and the following tips can help you safeguard their sexual pleasure into menopause and beyond.

1. **Try yoga and/or meditation.** I think many women struggle to turn their brains 'off.' We have so much on our plate these days and it can feel like our minds are constantly churning. I find that women in particular struggle with this issue because we are primed to feel guilty if we ever take a moment for ourselves. Instead, we lay in bed wondering "What am I forgetting? My son seemed a little distant tonight, is there something wrong? Did I remember to start the dishwasher?" It's a constant stream of guilt-inducing thoughts and fear that we

aren't doing enough as moms, wives, daughters, sisters, friends, etc." says Dr. Laura Berman. "For this reason, yoga and a regular mediation practice can be very beneficial for our minds and our sexual response.

2. **You are what you eat.** Many people believe that your diet can impact your sexual response and lubrication. Drinking dehydrating liquids like coffee, alcohol, and soda can drain your body of hydration. Instead, you should hydrate regularly and eat foods rich in healthy fats to help promote good cholesterol (which is needed to help create estrogen and lubrication). Drink plenty of water and eat heart-healthy foods like nuts, legumes, dark, leafy greens, avocado, and olive oil. Limit yourself to one glass of wine at dinner to help prevent the dehydrating effects of alcohol.
3. **Stop smoking.** Researchers at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital found that smokers routinely went into menopause 2-3 years earlier than their non-smoking counterparts, and they were also likely to struggle with fertility issues. Clearly, the toxins in cigarettes are incredibly damaging to a woman's reproductive health as well as her general health.
4. **Get sweaty to avoid sweating.** Research from the Mayo Clinic finds that practicing yoga can reduce hot flashes by 30% to 100%. Yoga teaches the body to relax: Breathing and heart rates slow down, circulation improves, and it also emphasizes mind-body control, which can reduce the severity and frequency of hot flashes.
5. **Practice self-care.** One thing I tell my female patients is that they have to put their own oxygen masks on first. It's second nature for women to put everyone else ahead of them, but when we do that, our own health suffers. We can't be our best selves if we are tired, cranky and miserable. Self-care is our responsibility and our right as human beings. We need to start normalizing the idea of carving out self-care as a natural and healthy part of being an adult.

Dealing with Low Sexual Desire

What Causes Low Libido?



Loss of desire can happen to any person at any age. Sometimes the reasons behind low libido are physical, while other times they are emotional or stress-related. Deciphering where and when your loss of desire began will help you to treat the issue effectively before it can impact your relationship.

Loss of desire is not only harmful to your relationship—it also harms your self-esteem and sense of identity. For each of us, sex is an important part of a happy and healthy life, and denying that side of yourself can be devastating. However, many of us feel as though this is our only option, especially as we age. Fortunately, the truth is that there is no expiration date on sexuality. Loss of desire does not have to mean that you should give up on sex or assume that your sexual experiences are over. Thanks to modern medicine and many other advances, there is virtually no roadblock in the bedroom that can't be overcome with medical or psychological assistance, or even with good communication. Loss of desire can occur for many reasons, including menopause or andropause, stress, fatigue, depression, anxiety, medical issues (including as a side effect of certain medication), or relationship or sexual concerns, such as early

ejaculation or erectile dysfunction. That's a long list of possible causes, and, in truth, there are even more individual factors that minimize our libidos, whether it's recent weight gain or an overwhelming work schedule that causes sex to be the last thing on your mind.

Finding your own personal culprit(s) will require a bit of investigative work, which should include speaking to your doctor. This is a very important step, not only because a medical professional can help determine if a particular medication or hormonal imbalance is part of the problem, but also because loss of desire can sometimes be one of the first signs of a more serious health concern (such as decreased circulation). Explaining your symptoms to your doctor is the only way to uncover what your body is trying to tell you. After identifying any medical concerns, you can then tackle emotional or relationship issues, if these exist. To do this, it's important to talk to your partner about what's happening inside of you. If your partner doesn't know why you are always turning down sex, or why you have become distracted and disconnected, then you are going to hit some major relationship issues. In love as in most other parts of life, knowledge is key—and your partner won't know what's wrong unless you speak up. If talking about the emotional issues you are facing seems overwhelming, you can enlist the help of a sex therapist. This unbiased source can help you to work on any troubling issues both individually and as a couple.

A simple truth is that the more you have sex, the more you crave sex. (The opposite is often true: The less you think about sex, the less important sex becomes to you.) One way to treat low desire is to consider sex even when you don't feel in the mood—so long as there aren't serious physical or emotional issues preventing you. Choosing to have sex can help boost your libido and deepen your connection with your partner. If you feel unable to enjoy the actual act of intercourse, you can find other ways to keep that part of yourself alive, perhaps through fantasy, self-stimulation, or erotica. As you go through this self-treatment, it may help to remember that desire is a passionate, powerful force that helps define our very identities. Without it, we lose an intimate piece of the person our partners fell in love with—which is why it's important to keep your sexual side thriving.

FSDD Treatments for Low Desire in Women



When low sexual desire threatens to derail your relationship, it's time to consider your treatment options.

Sexual desire often ebbs and flows, but when your libido seems permanently diminished or non-existent, it can wreak havoc on your relationship and your self-worth. Your sexuality is a big part of who you are, not only as a lover, but also as an individual. Thankfully, there are a myriad of safe, effective treatments for low desire, so no one needs suffer the negative side effects of a fizzling sex drive. Consider the following options:

1. **First, book an appointment with your doctor.** Low sexual desire is often the result of many medications or physical conditions (see ___ for low libido causes), and talking with your doctor can help you to suss out what the real problem might be. It could be anything from a side effect of SSRI medication to diabetes, so it is very important to rule out any physical ailments before proceeding onward.
2. **Second, get your hormone levels tested.** Hormones play a huge role in our sexual desire and sexual response, so when something is out of whack hormonally, it can have a big impact on your desire. Ask your doctor for a full hormone panel. And, remember, even if you aren't yet at an age where menopause or perimenopause could be a factor, your hormones could still be imbalanced. For example, PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) and endometriosis are both associated with low libido.
3. **Third, get your thyroid levels tested.** Your thyroid is responsible for manufacturing hormones, and when thyroid levels are out of balance, it can cause a lack of desire among other things. If you have also been feeling fatigued or if you have been suffering from unexplained weight loss/gain, it could be thyroid related.

4. **Fourth, now that you have out-ruled physical culprits, it's time to address possible emotional causes.** Is your stress over-the-top lately, or have you and your partner become disconnected or argumentative? If you aren't feeling relaxed or comfortable in the bedroom, it's no surprise that your libido has disappeared.

As you move through each of these steps, treatment plans will become clearer. For example, if the cause is hormonal, you and your doctor can discuss how to get things back on track. Hormone therapy is a possibility, but there is some risk involved and each individual has different needs so this is something your doctor should advise you on. If the issue is thyroid-related, a simple thyroid medication might have you back on track, or if the issue is related to your medication, your doctor can perhaps adjust your dosage or suggest medication which has less sexual side effects. If your low libido is the result of relationship woes, an appointment with a couples' therapist or a sex therapist might be in order. If stress is behind your low libido, it might be a good idea to cut back on your crazy to-do list and plan a vacation for just you and your partner. Time alone together is crucial, especially when it comes to your sexual connection.

The longer you wait to treat low libido, the more pervasive and entrenched these issues can be, so it is wise to seek treatment as soon as possible. Remember, everyone deserves a happy, healthy sex life, and low libido is a fixable problem that need not ruin your intimate pleasures.

How to Approach Vaginal Dryness



If you had a painful, uncomfortable medical issue that interfered with your happiness and well-being, would you seek assistance from your doctor? Apparently not if that medical issue is vaginal dryness. An overwhelming number of women believe that vaginal dryness is a sad fact of postmenopausal life, and that there is nothing their doctor can do to alleviate their distress. And, in some cases, they simply don't feel comfortable bringing up their sex lives with their doctors.

In a recent HealthyWomen survey I worked on with funding from Pfizer, we found that 40% of women suffering from vaginal dryness believe that their sex lives are private and not a topic that is up for discussion with their doctors. And, sadly, while almost every survey respondent reported that they were very well aware of male sexual issues such as erectile dysfunction, one in ten women surveyed were not acquainted with female sexual issues.

However, vaginal dryness is more than just an issue of comfort. It can negatively interfere with a woman's sexual enjoyment and her relationship, and one in four women reported that it made sexual activity painful.

The good news is that the medical community is finally considering female sexual issues along with male sexual issues, and these advances come none too soon. In fact, more than half of post menopausal women experience vaginal dryness. Fortunately, there are a number of treatments such as prescription estrogen creams which can reverse vaginal dryness and restore vaginal tissue. Lubrication is also crucial, but even better are lubricants which can actually increase your enjoyment. There are many lubricants on the market which can help to intensify sensations and increase sexual enjoyment for both you and your partner.

Conclusion



I hope that this book has helped you to gain a deeper understanding of your own sexuality, desire, and sexual health. I hope it has provided you with the tools and knowledge you need to feel empowered and in control of your sexual well-being. I believe that by understanding and exploring your desires, you can lead a more fulfilling and satisfying life. Remember that everyone's experience of sexuality is unique and there is no right or wrong way to feel or express yourself. Be kind to yourself and your body, and never stop learning and growing in your understanding of yourself and your desires.

xo,
Laura