A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is lying down, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her hand is resting near her face. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and green, suggesting an outdoor setting like a beach or poolside.

THE SEX BIBLE FOR WOMEN

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING
YOUR BODY, BEING A GREAT LOVER, AND
GETTING THE PLEASURE YOU WANT

SUSAN CRAIN BAKOS

Author of The Sex Bible

A QUIVER BOOK 

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SEX
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QUIVER





*THIS BOOK is for
Marcella and Iva—
not for now, but for
someday when they are
grown. May they be
empowered in every area
of their lives, including
their sexuality.*



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: The Sexually Empowered Woman 11

Who Is a Sexually Empowered Woman? 17

1 THE SEXUAL RESPONSE 19

1: Your Sexual Desire and Arousal 21

2: Explaining the New Science of Desire 29

3: The Real Story on Arousal 43

4: Orgasm Explained 49

5: How His Orgasm Is Different from Yours 61

6: The Orgasm Loop 67

2 THE SEXUAL BODY 73

7: Do You Know Your Body as Well as You Know His? 75

8: The Love-Hate Body Relationship 87

9: Your Sexual Body Over a Lifetime 99

10: The Pathologizing of Female Sexuality 113



3	SEXUAL BEHAVIORS	119
	11: Foreplay	123
	12: Oral Sex	131
	13: Intercourse	141
	14: Anal Intercourse	165
	15: Sexual Variations: The Sex Acts	169
	16: Sexual Variations: The Partners	183
4	THE SEXUAL PASSAGES	189
	17: The Early Passages	191
	18: The Commitment Passages	197
	19: The Middle and Late Passages	205
5	RESOURCES	211
	20: Ways to Improve Your Sex Life	213
	21: Sex Toys	223
	CONCLUSION: Sex Is A Private Thing	233
	Acknowledgments	243
	About the Author	245
	Index	249





Introduction

THE SEXUALLY EMPOWERED WOMAN

A *sexually empowered woman has good sex at every stage of her life, from early adulthood through old age, because she claims her own pleasure.* Our bodies change throughout the life cycle, and our sexual responses evolve. But a sexually empowered woman owns each evolution and finds the greatest pleasure in it. She knows what she needs and desires, gets her needs met, and has orgasms reliably and often.

Obstacles in the path to female sexual empowerment are numerous. From the time we were little girls, we were inundated with all sorts of negative sex messages from our mothers, our grandmothers, religious leaders, and others. Then there's the general failure to understand the true nature of female desire and arousal, coupled with the physical differences between men and women, that make orgasm during intercourse nearly inevitable for him but not for her. Women's desire and arousal have been compared to and measured against men's, but they work differently. There is also a relentless focus on sexual

monogamy as the cultural ideal—the mythologizing and romanticizing of that idealized, committed couple who live happily into old age together. Not to mention the load of expectations we place on our primary sexual relationships and the ageism that makes so many women over forty or fifty feel no longer desirable.

Sexually empowered women of all ages move beyond these obstacles to call their own shots. They know they have options in choosing sex partners and sexual lifestyles, and even in how a lifelong monogamous relationship plays out sexually.

How can you do that—and keep doing it for the rest of your life? It takes attitude, knowledge about your body and its sexual responses, and good sexual technique (which begins with giving *yourself* orgasms). Sexual empowerment also calls for the wisdom and courage to seize erotic opportunities, whether it's ten minutes in the shower with your husband, a fling with a gal pal, or an opportunity with a new and younger man at age fifty.

Discard Old Attitudes

There are several old attitudes and beliefs that can limit your sex life:

- *Masturbation might not be sinful or wrong, but it is not necessary for women who have a partner.* In addition to this misconception, women also believe a fallacy that they might become so addicted to self-pleasuring, especially with a vibrator, that they won't enjoy sex with their man.
- *Women can't tell men how to make love to them because the male ego is fragile.* As if he might be too afraid to try again. (Isn't it a wonder then that the monasteries aren't full?)
- *Women reach a sexual peak in their thirties.* This is the myth that says it's an uphill climb before thirty—and downhill all the way after thirty-nine.
- *Women need the emotional safety and security of a committed relationship to be free and open sexually.* When she's sure of him, she's able to let go and enjoy sex.
- *Monogamy can always be hot if you marry your soul mate.* But if your desire falls off after a few years, does that mean you're not in love anymore?
- *Menopause signals the end of sex.* Women are “dried up” at this point.
- *Pregnancy, childbirth, and infertility treatment kill libido.* It's all about the baby or getting the baby, isn't it?
- *Women are naturally monogamous.* We only cheat when love has gone wrong and new love beckons.

- *Women can make men love them (and commit to them) if they play by The Rules or become sexual technique virtuosos or follow the current manipulation plan being promoted in the latest best-selling book.* In other words, use and/or withhold sex to bring him to his knees!
- *You're either gay or straight, nothing in-between.* If you play with a girlfriend, you can't be a real woman with a man.

Replace those old attitudes with sex-positive new ones. What you believe affects how you let yourself behave. Attitudes are like voices in your head, and those voices can admonish or encourage. They can repeat untruths, such as sex ending after having children or reaching menopause. Or they can help you to find your own sexual path. Sex-positive attitudes carry strength:

- I *deserve* a good sex life.
- I am *entitled* to orgasms.
- My sexual choices are my private business, and I will *own* them.
- I am *responsible* for my sexuality, meaning I will be ethical with partners and practice safer sex.
- I won't use sex to get what I want from men (or other women) and I won't be pressured into doing things in bed that I don't want to do.

That is your own personal sexual empowerment manifesto.



Learn How to Be a Great Lover

A good lover combines erotic technique with positive sex attitudes—and passion. Anaïs Nin, the late erotic diarist, once said that sex loses its power when it becomes only “mechanical.” Sex, she said, had to be mixed with “emotion, hunger, desire, lust, whims, caprices, personal ties, deeper relationships that change its color, flavor, rhythms . . .”

But you also need to know what you’re doing with your own body and that of your partner. Emotion, desire, lust, and all the rest dissipate like morning dew when lacking the skills to elicit response.

As you will read in this book, new studies on desire and arousal show that you can have arousal without desire and that, in fact, there are two kinds of desire: spontaneous and receptive. When you look at your lover and want him (or her), that’s spontaneous desire. Spontaneous desire exists early in relationships, but then it seems to fade away, especially for women. Yet women remain receptive to sexual arousal and do feel their desire awakened by kisses and caresses. Receptive desire is probably still there—and if you are a skillful lover, you can awaken it in yourself and your partner.

Seize Erotic Opportunities

In the more than two decades that I have been interviewing women (and men) about their sex lives, I’ve heard hundreds of stories about erotic opportunities—some lost, many seized—that held the chance to change a person’s sex life. Sexual turning points often coincide with life-cycle passages—the hormonal surges of menopause, for example, and with major events like marriage, affairs, and divorce. Those turning points are opportunities for having more sex, having better sex, taking a leap of faith with a new partner, or reconnecting with an estranged lover.

When the physical and the spiritual elements of love-making come together in a break-through experience, you’ve had a sexual epiphany. Babymaking sex can feel like that for some couples. Sex outside your comfort zone can make

you feel sexually empowered; and the epiphany is that you really are in control of your sex life. Even trauma, such as experiencing the death of a family member or close friend, getting fired, coping with a cancer scare, or having an affair, can lead to intense, life-altering sex. Emotional vulnerability leaves you open to new experiences.

Don’t let your erotic opportunities pass you by.

Sexual-Empowerment Issues

Why is sexual empowerment an issue for women—but not for men?

Sexuality is a big part of who we are, the core of our identity, male or female. As women, we are taught to tie up our sexuality in relationships, to bind and define ourselves by the brightly colored ribbons of love. We are not encouraged to become sexually empowered, to balance love and sex in our own unique equation, or to get what we want. Men, of course, are.

Western society can deal with a woman who is in charge of her sexuality as long as she doesn’t flaunt it. And being in charge does give a woman the right to say “no” as well as “yes,” especially if she is young and in a monogamous relationship. But if this sexually empowered woman likes sex too much or is too obvious about it—and she is not necessarily with one life partner, indivisible under God—isn’t she emotionally unstable or immoral (the religious expression of psychiatric judgment)? So say the standards that employ both religious restrictions and popular psychological diagnoses to keep women in line. Far too many people think this way.

Even in the twenty-first century, we women have to contend with these sorts of judgments and empower ourselves sexually in spite of them.





WHO IS A SEXUALLY EMPOWERED WOMAN?

Whether a celebrity or the woman next door, a sexually empowered woman is not perfect, but she has so much to teach all of us about claiming pleasure. Many of our role models, past and present, are sexually empowered women. We take what we need from any role model—and from these women we take the message of sexual entitlement.

When I asked a group of diverse women, “Who are your role models?” every one named a woman who is a voice for sexual empowerment:

- Angelina Jolie, because she pursues what feels good and right to her, regardless of social conventions and public comments.
- The *Sex and the City* characters, because they started an honest dialogue on every sexual topic from analingus to the zipless fuck—and author Candace Bushnell because she created them.
- Ellen DeGeneres, because she came out of the closet but doesn’t allow her professional life to be defined by her sexuality.
- Madonna, because she has embraced every phase of her sexual evolution.
- Classic erotica writer Anaïs Nin, because she did it all and wrote about it.
- Pamela Anderson, because she has made no apologies for breast implants—in/out/in—or that infamous private video with ex-husband Tommy Lee.
- Helen Gurley Brown, because she said single women were entitled to sex—and is still saying it at age eighty.
- Erica Jong, because she wrote *Fear of Flying* and has never denounced it.
- Gabrielle on *Desperate Housewives*, Mae West, Josephine Baker, Marilyn Monroe, Candida Royalle, Jenna Jameson—the list goes on.

Not every sexually empowered woman is like Samantha, the most active of the four babes from the classic series *Sex and the City*. In fact, she might be more like Charlotte, the conservative and romantic member of the group. You might be surprised to discover who is and who isn’t sexually empowered beneath her sexy dresses and tailored suits. There are many paths to claiming pleasure, some of them secret and well-hidden.

But sexually empowered women do share some attitudes and behaviors:

- They define their sexuality separately from their relationships.
- They are knowledgeable about their sexual responses.
- They can reach orgasm reliably.
- They pick good lovers, more often than not—men and women who meet their needs and revel in their sexuality.

Sexually empowered women have it all: attitude, technique, and the courage to seize erotic opportunity. You can have it too. *The Sex Bible for Women* includes the latest scientific and behavioral sex research, quotes sexual authorities, offers solutions and advice, teaches sex techniques, and shares stories from women at each stage of life and phase of sexual empowerment—all with the goal of helping you find your own empowerment. It’s your sex life, your way.

Remember, no one can empower you. I can give you the information you need, provide the tools to use, and coach you on attitude. But you are the only person who can claim your sexual pleasure. *You* are a sexually empowered woman now.





PART 1

THE SEXUAL RESPONSE

Human sexual response was little studied until the second half of the twentieth century. That makes it a relatively new science. Yet the components of sexual response, desire, arousal, orgasm, have inspired artists since people lived in caves and scratched paintings of them into the walls. We can be as driven by our sexual response systems as we are by the hunger for food and the craving for warmth and shelter. Even the Puritans could not will sexual response into moral submission.

You are, in part, what—and whom—you desire erotically, or, in other words, what turns you on.

Much of what we think we know about sexual response we learned from steamy novels and romantic movies. Smoldering eye contact between young lovers leads to breathless kisses and passionate groping, followed by simultaneous orgasms. And, yes, it could possibly happen more or less like that in the early days of love. But few of us are prepared for the reality after new love settles in over time: His desire is not like yours, and you are both more complicated than those simplistic romance novels and movie plots ever indicated that you would be. Read on and get the real story on how a women's sexual response really works, how our desire and arousal differ from men's—and how all of these things change over time and the course of relationships.



Chapter 1

YOUR SEXUAL DESIRE AND AROUSAL

Women have their own way of experiencing and responding to sexual desire and arousal—and yes, it's different from men's. Men equate desire with an erection; though an erection is, strictly speaking, the primary indicator of male arousal. In men, desire and arousal are more closely intertwined than they are in women: He thinks about sex and gets an erection; he gets an erection and thinks about sex. The great thing about an erection is its obviousness. The erect penis, power symbol of arousal, creates desire for sex in a man's mind when he sees and feels it—and so continues the circle of desire and arousal. He turns himself on.

SPONTANEOUS VERSUS RECEPTIVE DESIRE

Inspired by his erection, a man consciously fantasizes about sexual encounters, openly yearning and longing for sex, while a woman might not think about sex until she experiences the sensations of kissing and caressing. He has *spontaneous* desire. What we woman experience is *receptive* desire—under the surface, often very easy to ignite, but unacknowledged.

Men's spontaneous longing for sex sets the tone for the general definition of desire, even though desire in women is more often receptive than spontaneous. A woman doesn't see her desire and, in fact, might ignore it altogether until touch stimulation awakens it.

*“What a man is looking for is not just her body
but the reciprocal experience of desire. He wants to be wanted.”*

—Mark Epstein, M.D., psychiatrist and author of
Open to Desire: Embracing a Lust for Life

The biology of disparate desire is reinforced by social conditioning. Men receive fewer negative sex messages growing up and take those that they do receive less seriously than do girls, who are the social pleasers. Internalizing those messages works to further distance women from their own desire. As adults, men are often lauded for their sexual prowess when they have multiple partners, while women's sexual behavior is observed more critically. He brags about his conquests; she denies that she's had as many partners as she has. Sex surveys on numbers of partners reflect that dynamic, with men typically reporting twice the number of partners women do.

I have always wondered when I read the surveys: How is this possible? Who is having sex with these men? And don't say prostitutes. I know from interviewing thousands of men about their sex lives that men don't count prostitutes as sex partners. If they have to pay for sex, it's a service, not a partner interaction.

Single women worry so much about their numbers that having sex with an ex is touted in our magazines as a way to keep from increasing the tally. You've already counted him, so doing it again with him doesn't count. Married women worry about other numbers: how many times a week they do it (as compared to the other women taking the *Cosmo* quiz or their girlfriends or the gals in the *Sex and the City* reruns) or how many orgasms they have (again, by comparison).

It's as if we believe that good sex should add up—like our secret credit scores.

RESEARCH

Crunching the Numbers, Part 1

In July 2007, the National Center for Health Statistics released a paper on the numbers of sex partners reported by men and women. Like many other surveys conducted in the past several decades, this one found that men are more promiscuous than women. According to the report, men had a median of seven sex partners, while women had a median of four.

Finally, a mathematician took the sex-partner surveys apart. David Gale, Ph.D., professor emeritus of mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley, says, "Surveys and studies to the contrary notwithstanding, the conclusion that men have substantially more sex partners than women is not and cannot be true for purely logical reasons."

Using theorems and proofs, Gale concludes that men and women in a population have roughly the same number of partners. "Reporting these survey findings as accurate statistics only reinforced the stereotypes of promiscuous males and chaste females," he says. And he theorizes that the false conclusions people draw from these surveys just perpetuate men's inclination to brag and women's tendency to feel guilty or ashamed of their numbers.

RESEARCH

Crunching the Numbers, Part 2

Terri Fisher, Ph.D., a psychology professor at The Ohio State University suspected that women's answers to sex survey questions were often based on what they perceived to be social expectations. In other words, she thought women told researchers what they wanted to hear. To test her speculations, she divided a group of 201 unmarried, heterosexual female college students into three groups and gave them the same questionnaire. Members of group one were hooked up to fake polygraph machines. The girls in group two each filled out the surveys alone in a room and anonymously. Girls in group three completed their forms alone—but with the researcher sitting close enough to read their answers. Here are the number of sex partners each group reported:

Group one: 4.4 partners;

Group two: 3.4 partners;

Group three: 2.6 partners.

“Women appear to feel pressure to adhere to sex role expectations” to be more relationship-oriented and not promiscuous, Fisher concluded.

Maybe our partner numbers don't offer proof of where we rank morally or how we measure up in terms of experience and sophistication. But they do offer a hint as to why we are often in desire denial. If we can't tell the truth about how many partners we've had, are we lying (especially to ourselves) about being aroused?

No wonder that we fail to recognize or acknowledge our own desire and arousal. That critical biological difference in the way the sexes experience desire becomes a bigger issue when societal expectations are superimposed on our sexual response systems. We can't be blamed for not understanding that. Desire and arousal studies have only recently begun to focus on biology and physiology—and not on emotions influenced by cultural beliefs. Let's start with sexual chemistry, that initial spark, and examine desire and arousal in a less judgmental way.

SEXUAL CHEMISTRY

Two people can have sexual chemistry and choose not to act upon the desire their chemistry fuels. On the other hand, if the underlying chemistry doesn't exist between two people but they decide to have sex anyway, they likely will experience arousal. Maybe these chemistry-impaired lovers are simply taking advantage of an available opportunity for sex—the last call syndrome—or maybe they are trying to force an intimate connection with a man or woman they like and admire as a good prospective partner. Who hasn't tried to turn a friendship with a wonderful person into something more?

Even though it's a relatively unstudied phenomenon, we all recognize sexual chemistry when it occurs. We can also easily observe it in others, both real couples and actors playing roles. How often does a movie bomb because the lead characters had no chemistry, making their scenes together unbelievable? Any two beautiful people do not automatically create sexual chemistry.

STRAIGHT TALK

Sexual chemistry defined

Sandra Leiblum, Ph.D., writing in the journal *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, defines sexual chemistry as “a nonspecific, subjective experience of a mysterious physical, emotional, and sexual state” that fuels desire. “While it exists initially without sexual contact—frequent sexual contact intensifies sexual chemistry.” She concludes that there is an evolutionary basis for sexual chemistry. “It facilitates procreative coupling between a man and a woman with compatible genes.”

A New Take on Desire

There is no singular definition of *desire* used as a standard by lovers or clinicians. Defined as longing, yearning, or sexual urge, among other things, desire is sometimes defined merely as sexual chemistry. Desire remains elusive, unlike arousal and orgasm-states that show up as lighted areas in the brain in an fMRI (magnetic resonance imagery or brain scans). In fact, most people, even therapists, confuse desire with arousal.

Drs. William Masters and Virginia Johnson, the first couple of sex therapy, and later Helen Singer Kaplan, Ph.D., noted sex therapist and researcher, created a linear explanation of human sexual response that laid the groundwork for this confusion. Masters and Johnson saw sexual response as a progression with excitement, encompassing both desire and arousal.

Their stages of female sexual response were as follows:

- **Excitement:** The brain stimulates nerves, increasing blood flow to genitals—enlarging the labia and clitoris, lubricating and expanding the vaginal walls.
- **Plateau:** Blood flow to the labia increases, muscles tense, and the vagina elongates.
- **Orgasm:** Contractions and massive release of tension.
- **Resolution:** Gradual diminishing of sexual attention.

Kaplan altered this assessment by dividing excitement into desire and arousal to create this progression: desire, arousal, plateau, orgasm, and resolution.

This progression became the almost universally accepted definition of sexual response by which women especially were measured. Though the sequence works better as describing men, it's mostly wrong for both sexes. In men, arousal often precedes desire. Recent lab studies have shown that women who reported having no desire did experience arousal while viewing erotic imagery. Their heart and breathing rates accelerated and their genitals lubricated. Yet they insisted they were not aroused by the images and still felt no desire afterward. Conducted over a period of years at various research facilities in the United States and Europe, those studies prove that desire is even more elusive than one would guess, making the search for a good working definition of it more difficult.

If a woman exhibits the physical evidence of arousal but still claims she does not feel desire, isn't something wrong with the linear model of sexual response?

“Women have high expectations for nearly every area of their lives, but when it comes to sex, they settle for less.”

—Jeanna Bryner, *LiveScience* staff writer

RESEARCH

There seems to be a new study every month reporting that women have low or no desire and rate themselves “sexually dissatisfied.”

- In a widely publicized 1999 behavioral study of women age eighteen to fifty-nine reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 43 percent of women were labeled as having FSD, female sexual dysfunction, with that “dysfunction” most often being lack of desire.
- A international study of sexual satisfaction in twenty-nine nations in the April 2006 issue of *Archives of Sexual Behavior* found that less than half of American men and women were happy with their sex lives, while 71 percent of Austrian men and women were.
- Another international study—of twenty-six countries this time—found 52 percent of Americans were not satisfied with their sex life. Across the globe, people have sex an average of 103 times a year, but Americans average only eighty-five.

In both international surveys, the men were happier with their sex lives than the women. The big female complaint? Low or no desire.

Rethinking Desire

When we talk about desire, we often mean arousal: the racing pulse, the breathlessness, his erection, and her lubrication. Our brains seem to superimpose desire on arousal after the fact-and sometimes, as in the case of those women in the labs, not then either. We attach romantic meaning to desire and make life choices based on the fleeting experience of it. When we fail to understand the true nature of desire, we think it is gone simply because it has turned from active to passively receptive. According to sex therapists and women’s magazine cover lines, loss of desire is women’s (and some men’s) biggest sex problem. But desire might not be the real problem. Our failure to understand our sexual response system is the primary issue.

It helps to know, for example, that receptive desire is as valid as spontaneous desire. If we understand our own responses, we can learn how to evoke desire and stimulate arousal. We can stop being passive lovers waiting for our partners to figure out what we need and how to give it to us.



DISSATISFACTION AND THE “DESIRE PROBLEM”

Why do so many dissatisfied women say lack of desire is the problem? Misunderstanding desire is the crux of FSD. Blame the ignorance of neuroscience and the blanket acceptance of societal myths and attitudes. Desire is reported as missing, and women are labeled “dysfunctional” for the following reasons:

- *We have a one-size-fits-all model of intimate partnership that does not fit most people.*
Anthropologist Dr. Helen Fisher says that serial monogamy with a side order of infidelity is the norm. Lifelong passionate monogamy is not. But like the size 0 dresses worn by anorexic celebrities, it is held up as the ideal.
- *We don’t understand the true nature of desire.*
Most people think that desire precedes arousal, whereas often the reverse is true. That’s why the sex advice to just do it, even when you’re not in the mood, is so effective. Most people also think that the fall from the intense physical high of a new relationship signals the decline of love. It doesn’t mean that you love less—only that you love differently. The intense physical attraction has been replaced by a deeper, more familiar attachment to one another.
- *Our concepts of how people should be and how they should interact both emotionally and sexually in “intimate relationships” are based on myths—shared by lovers and clinicians—and set standards that almost no one can meet.* Ideal lovers are based on stereotypes (fairy-tale and movie characters). These stereotypes ignore male and female biological and psychological realities like desire and arousal differences. Most clinicians use these models in their practices.

- *The prevailing belief that anything other than lifelong intimate partnerships is undesirable—or, worse, pathological. And this belief stretches even further: Those lifelong partnerships are also supposed to be characterized by hot monogamy centered on intercourse-based sex with orgasms in all the right places!* These limiting notions of love and sex render most people by definition “deviant” and hamper people from telling the truth to their partners—and themselves. Women who were once considered nymphomaniacs if they liked sex “too much” are now diagnosed as having a personality disorder if they like sex too much with more than one partner—or even want a lot more sex than their partner does. No wonder there is so much shame associated with sexuality.

Our cultural propensity toward narrowly defining and pejoratively labeling women’s desire—whether that desire is low or high—creates the impression that many women are dysfunctional in one way or another. But that’s just not true. Women might be dissatisfied with their sex lives, but the roots of their unhappiness do not lie in problematic desire states. When they learn how to manage their sexual response systems, women can get satisfaction.



Chapter 2

EXPLAINING THE NEW SCIENCE OF DESIRE

U*ntil now, no one has mapped out desire patterns and explained how they work.* Nan Wise, L.C.S.W., A.C.S.W., B.C.D., a nontraditional therapist, professor, and neuroscience researcher, has developed an elegant and sophisticated tool for understanding and operating individual Desire Curves—the pattern of sexual

desire in relationships. The Desire Curve might be the most useful piece of applied neuroscience you ever encounter. According to Wise, if you learn how to make the Desire Curve work in your life—versus letting it run your life—you have Operational Intelligence, a big step beyond Emotional Intelligence.

“The misconceptions about desire are appalling.

We make decisions based on desire without understanding the Desire Curve where New Relationship Euphoria is the high point, not the Set Point—or the natural state of being.”

—Nan Wise, creator of the Desire Curve

THE DESIRE CURVE

The Desire Curve begins at your Desire Set Point, rises to the thrill of New Relationship Euphoria (NREU), then settles back to Desire Set Point.

Point One: The Desire Set Point The Sex You Crave

Your Desire Set Point is the amount of sex you want, whether you're in a relationship or not. It's the sex you crave for the sake of sex. Whether you want sex three or four times a week, or once a month, you will masturbate that often if you don't have a partner. Influenced both by hormones and genetics, the Desire Set Point varies over your life cycle.

There is also a male/female Desire Set Point differential: His desire is likely triggered more easily than hers in youth, but her desire might be deeper and more intense in midlife and beyond than his is. The following two examples further illustrate the point:

- Almost every man was a lust-driven teenager, but only a few are capable of making love twice in one night by age sixty. The hormonal arc of male desire and arousal follows a recognized path. Male testosterone declines gradually with age, making the male Desire Curve fairly predictable once the true Set Point is established in early adulthood.
- Women experience more varied hormonal fluctuations during a lifetime. And those changes play out in individual female Desire Curves. For example, a woman who wants sex more often during her perimenopausal years than she ever wanted it before is responding to a hormonal spike in her Set Point. As her estrogen levels decline, her testosterone, the hormone of sex drive in men and women, becomes more dominant. The female Desire Curve is less predictable.

Point Two: New Relationship Euphoria The Rush of Love

What's really happening in that hot relationship if it isn't love?

Also called *limerance*, NREU is a chemical high that lasts anywhere from eighteen months to three years in a new relationship. The first neurotransmitter chemical firing off in your brain when you are strongly attracted to someone new is phenylethylamine (PEA). A natural form of amphetamine, PEA floods the regions of the brain that influence sexual arousal. (Now you know the true meaning of the terms love addict and love junkie.)

Norepinephrine, a second euphoria-inducing chemical, kicks in and stimulates the release of adrenaline, causing your blood pressure to shoot up when you see or touch your beloved. PEA releases dopamine—the body's "feel good" neurochemical—which helps to stimulate the production of oxytocin, dubbed the *cuddle chemical* because it encourages bonding and attachment. This powerful cocktail of brain chemicals creates a state of euphoria in the new lovers. Intercourse and orgasm intensify the oxytocin production.

This series of events is not love—it's your brain on NREU. We just call it love when the couple exhibits all the physical signs of a neurochemical high:

- The lovers have glazed eyes only for each other, with cheeks flushed and palms sweaty.
- They might lose their appetites, and their sleep patterns might be interrupted.
- Their typical refrain is, "I'm thinking about him [or her] all the time."
- Each wants to know every detail of the other's life and delights in the idiosyncrasies and eccentricities that will one day, probably sooner rather than later, drive them crazy.
- They are obsessed with their object of desire: They wait for the phone to ring, the email to arrive, and so on.



Figure out your new partner's Desire Set Point before you end up married to someone who wants sex twice as much, or half as often, as you do.

It's not unusual for a man or woman with a low Desire Set Point to mate with a partner whose Set Point is higher. In the throes of new passion, they may not realize how mismatched their sex drives are. The partner with a low Desire Set Point suddenly wants more sex than he or she typically does—and

foolishly, of course, ascribes the rise of libido to true love and the fall of libido to the loss of it.

In a playful way, ask your partner questions: How often do you masturbate? How many times a week did you and your last partner have sex? Were you happy with that? Pay attention to your partner's mood during this conversation and don't make him feel as though he's being interrogated

As the love song goes, “you’re not sick, you’re just in love.” But that’s not true—you’re not in love, you’re high. We are biologically hard-wired to behave like crazy people when we’re in the throes of NREU and culturally taught to label this behavior love. But it is not love. It’s lust, closely followed by bonding—attachment to someone who might or might not turn out to be a good match.

What we call desire is *spontaneous lust*, largely a function of NREU. Rather than simply enjoying this state of erotic being, we romanticize and overvalue it. So go ahead and call it love in the notes you write one another, but understand that real love happens over time. When you get past the chemical high and discover your shared values and common vision for the future, you have finally found love.

Both men and women are fools for NREU—but those chemicals do have a greater effect on women. Just as women get intoxicated by alcohol faster than men do (owing to lesser body weight and a higher percentage of fat to muscle even in thin women), women get higher from the NREU buzz than men do when the lovers have sex right away.

Here’s how NREU gives you the big kick:

- Sex, especially if it includes intercourse and orgasm, adds *large* amounts of the attachment chemical oxytocin to the rush of neurochemicals already bathing her fevered brain.
- Women are more affected by oxytocin than men because it works in concert with estrogen and is somewhat subdued by testosterone.
- Intercourse produces more oxytocin in women than do cunnilingus or other sex acts.

Teresa Crenshaw, M.D., author of *The Alchemy of Love and Lust*, labels Oxytocin “hormonal superglue” for women. Indeed, it does work like that in a lot of women. And too often these women get crazy-glued to inappropriate men. They really do become lovesick. Nan Wise calls that blind and fierce attachment to someone you barely know “attachment flu.”

As women age past forty and their relative testosterone (to estrogen) levels are more in line with men’s (declining) testosterone levels, they become more like men in their ability to have sex without falling dramatically in love. With less estrogen and more testosterone, they are less the helpless captives of oxytocin. They probably won’t come down with a very bad case of attachment flu.

But the bottom line is this: *No one, not an older woman nor a young, virile man, is immune to the virus.*

NREU is the least-understood physical phenomenon we all experience. And that’s a shame, because it has so much impact on the choices we make and the lives we lead.

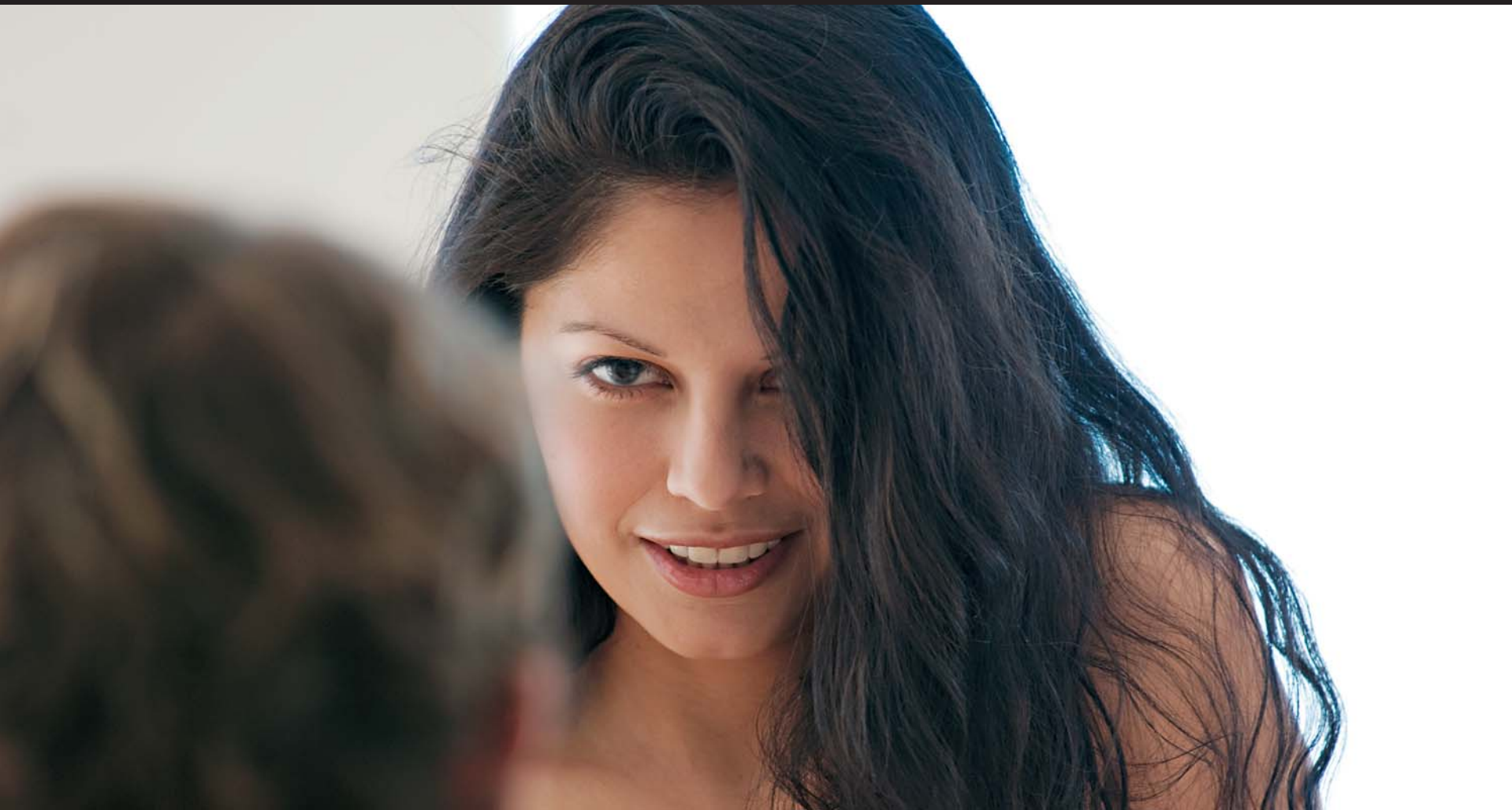
Point Three: Return to the Desire Set Point—Your Love-High Crash

The seven-year itch really should be changed to the three-year itch. After three years, if not less, you are back to your Set Points—lust home base. Is it a coincidence that there’s a sharp jump in divorce rates in the fourth year of marriage? When you come down from the high, you are like any sober addict.

RESEARCH

The-Three-Year Itch

Researchers at the University of Southern California analyzed two sets of married and cohabiting couples and concluded that the “seven-year itch”—the term indicating the onset of sexual restiveness in marriage—is overly optimistic. Most married and cohabiting couples reported that the sexual spark was gone or greatly diminished after three years. The research, combined with a survey done by the Pew Research Center, in Washington, DC, supports the Desire Curve theory.



Forget about thinking sexy thoughts. Sexual sensations are the cues that will light your fire. Try the following instead:

- *Build your sensuality.* Caress your body when you apply creams and lotions. Indulge in soft and silky fabrics.
- *Employ the vibrator to give yourself a jump start.* Keep at least one vibe in your nightstand. Use it for a minute or two when you go to bed, even if you think you're not in the mood for sex.
- *Experiment with lubricants.* Warming lubricants, “clit” jelly, and new products like Zestra are designed to increase blood flow to the genitals quickly.
- *Just do it.* Now that you understand desire, don't wait for it. Start making love—and arousal, then desire, will follow.

Reality isn't always pretty, and it isn't always quite what you thought it was when you were high on brain chemicals. If there is not a good basis for the attraction between you and your partner, whatever captivated you initially will now repulse you. And I mean *repulse*, not merely annoy. Suddenly the sensitive guy is a wimp, the strong, silent man is withholding and emotionally blocked, the charmingly spontaneous girl is a flake, and that dynamic, organized woman is a damned controlling bitch.

A well-matched couple will not be repulsed by one another—at least not most of the time—but they will experience some disenchantment. This disenchantment shows in a typical progression:

- No longer having sex every night they sleep together
- Not falling asleep in the spooning position
- Not falling asleep touching one another every night
- No longer kissing as they make love
- Rarely kissing at all
- Realizing it's time to put the passion back into their relationship

The lovers who have nothing in common once NREU subsides are angrily looking for the exits. Never mind falling asleep without touching. They prefer to fall asleep in separate beds, or separate states and, in some cases, separate countries.

We create our own bumpy Set Point landings because we aren't aware of or prepared for them. When you understand how Set Points work, you won't panic when you come back down to yours. It will instead feel like a smooth landing onto familiar ground. Because most of us don't understand the concept, however, those landings can be rough. We don't know where the passion went in our relationship, but we do know it's gone. And we're left with an ordinary person, not a prince or princess, beside us.

When unprepared lovers fall back to their Set Points, they not only see one another's flaws with wide-open eyes, they stop trying so hard to look good and please each other in bed. In other words: Just when we most need the tricks of courting behavior, like sexy lingerie and that flashy signature sex move, we stop using them. She doesn't shave her legs every day, and he rediscovers the joys of a weekend spent in tattered sweats. He doesn't see the point to prolonged foreplay, and she finds fellating him a bore.

Couples with mutually high desire Set Points are the lucky ones. They have high Set Points (strong sex drives) and will turn to one another even after the NREU subsides. Maybe they don't understand their Desire Curves any better than the next couple, but they know they like sex a lot and always have. Frequent sex smoothes the rough edges of the relationship and keeps them attached to one another.

If you and your lover are not that couple, you have to take responsibility and boost your own Set Point.



Some women instinctively know how to prolong, even re-create, NREU in their relationships. Here are the attitudes and behaviors (and little tricks) to make that happen:

- *Don't give yourself away.*
Women get too close, too fast. They use *we* too often, assume too much, commit too soon, and ask questions such as, "What are we doing for New Year's Eve?" in August. That puts both partners too firmly in the relationship comfort zone—a deadly hit to NREU.
If you've already done that, take yourself back. Remember who you are apart from your sexual relationship. Nan Wise advises her clients to increase desire by getting a hobby. Go out and do something that you are passionate about. Bring the passion back into the relationship.
- *Break sexual habits.*
Habituation is deadly in a sexual relationship. You have to shake it up. Learn some new tricks.
- *Get physical with your partner.*
Walk or run together. Enroll in a yoga for couples class. Go to the gym together.
- *Do what scares you a little.*
Try anal sex. Visit a nude beach. Let your secret "top" or "bottom" come out. Make sexual demands. Go to a swing club. Take some risks and get your adrenaline pumping. (Your brain needs a new chemical kick.)
- *Have a secret sex life.*
Masturbation. Fantasies. A flirtation-and for some people, even a fling or affair. I am not advising extramarital sex; I am simply reporting what I have heard in interviews: An affair, especially a brief and discreet one, improves marital sex for some people. The compulsion to tell your partner everything is annoyingly American and can be erotically counterproductive.

Point Four: The Loss of Desire Point Desire Drop Off

Sometimes lovers' disappointment at the fall of NREU is so intense that desire goes below the Set Point. They blame themselves or each other. Many people wallow in the valley of Low-Desire Syndrome because they simply don't know how to manage their Desire Curves.

In most cases, low desire is what happens when lovers come back down to their Set Points in a bumpy landing. They compare "normal" desire to what they felt at the height of NREU, and it feels like a terrible loss. Because they haven't been educated about desire, they don't understand that what's happening to them is a natural part of the Desire Curve. So they overreact.

Maybe her (or his or their) spontaneous desire is gone—at least for the moment. Couples who know how to manage their Desire Curves can get the high back again and again in their relationship and ride it like undulating waves of ebbing and flowing desire because they know how to find their spark and ignite it. Spontaneous desire peaks in NREU, but passive, or receptive, desire does not fade away.

In other words, you might think you *don't* want sex but find that you *do* want it when your lover kisses and strokes you. Because desire is so poorly understood, women don't even consider that receptive feeling to be desire. And the situation is exacerbated when the couple has disparate Set Points.

When one partner has a high Set Point and the other a low one, the drop-off from the NREU high signals the likely pattern of the couple's future sex life: fights over frequency of sexual encounters. One wants more sex than the other does. The high Set-Point partner—and often it is the woman now—feels rejected, while the other feels inadequate. When these couples enter therapy, someone inevitably says, "I don't love him anymore" or "She doesn't love me anymore."

We draw the wrong conclusions when spontaneous desire subsides because we know so little about our own neuroscience.

Low desire or loss of desire also often accompanies critical life changes like bringing home a new baby, beginning a demanding new job, or recovering from surgery, illness, or loss. In those cases, most people realize that what is happening to them has nothing to do with diminished love or desire for their partner. They might want to have sex, but they are too tired for it. While it might feel like the Desire Set Point has been changed, it hasn't—it has just been temporarily disrupted. (If you find yourself at this point because of life changes, don't worry, there are techniques and tips throughout this book to help you to increase desire and arousal and make quickie sex work to your advantage as well as his.)

"I don't understand sexless marriage. How can a couple share a bed and not have sex? I get annoyed with my man too, but at the end of most days, I'd rather have sex than not."

—Carlin Ross, founder and CEO of *newcherrybomb.com*

THE LOW-DESIRE SYNDROME AND THE SEXLESS MARRIAGE

The number one problem couples give as a reason for going into sex therapy is low, or no, desire. Therapists generally concede that it also the least understood and least successfully treated problem in therapy. Sometimes he is the partner with little or no interest in sex. More often she is. When both no longer have desire for sex (at least with each other), they become one of the 20 million couples (under the age of sixty) in America alone that sex and marital therapists estimate are living in sexless marriages. Millions of other couples might have sex just a few times a year.

The numbers are probably even higher than we believe because couples who seek help for desire problems likely only represent a fraction of those experiencing them. Sources from magazine reader surveys to polls undertaken by news organizations and universities come up with the same discouraging results: Couples are losing their desire, women are dysfunctional and dissatisfied, affairs are on the rise, and marriages are on the rocks.

Are so many people really plummeting off the top of the Desire Curve into the pit? And are women really so dysfunctional? Some researchers now believe that the epidemic of low desire is overstated by women, couples, and clinicians, and overreported in the media. Women think they have no desire because they don't understand the difference between spontaneous and receptive desire.

Researchers, psychologists, and therapists don't ask the right questions, partly because they don't know the questions to ask. They might ask, for example, "How often do you want to have sex?" A woman will usually answer that question based on the cultural definition of "wanting sex": spontaneous desire. She might not feel spontaneous desire more than once or twice a month. But the same researchers might get a different answer if the question asked were: "How often do you feel desire for sex while being kissed and caressed?" Then a woman would likely report more instances of experiencing desire.

Is desire loss overreported?

According to Rosemary Basson, M.D., research sex therapist who cites multiple studies in Sandra Leiblum, Ph.D.'s *Principles and Practices in Sex Therapy*, it depends on how you define desire:

Empirical, qualitative, and clinical evidence makes it clear that sexual desire as defined . . . in fantasizing [about the partner], yearning, and looking forward to sexual experiences and spontaneously thinking about sex . . . is infrequent in many sexually . . . satisfied women—especially in established relationships.

But, she concludes, "The true prevalence of low desire/interest disorder in women is unknown" because women are comparing themselves to a mythical woman who always has sex on her mind, can't look at her partner without wanting to jump into bed, or spends time waiting for red lights to change while mentally preparing herself for her next sexual encounter.

Essentially, this is a standard of male sexuality that is also depicted in movies and books as being the norm for most women. Understanding that spontaneous desire is a reality only for some women, most notably with a new partner, would cause [many] women concerned about their lack of spontaneous desire to perceive their experience as normal.

Other Culprits That Dull Desire

Several other factors exacerbate temporary desire loss at various times in our life. As already explained earlier in this chapter, it's normal for desire to ebb and flow based on our life situation, emotional state, and so on. Some of the factors that can dull desire include the following:

- Physical or psychological/emotional illness.
- Life-stage situations, such as being the mother of young children or a woman caught in the Sandwich Generation dilemma of caring for her own children and her aging parents.
- Hormonal fluctuations, including those induced by some birth control pills, which lower testosterone levels.
- Substance abuse.
- Prescription medications.
- Habitual repressed anger (directed at partner), the kind of inner rage that is never released through confrontation or discussion.
- Other chronic relationship issues, ranging from arguments about household chores to repeated infidelities.
- Chronic stress, which lowers testosterone levels.
- Undiagnosed depression.
- Weight/body issues that affect how desirable you feel.

RESEARCH

More than hormone balance alone influences the complicated female libido.

Some studies show that hormone replacement therapy with testosterone or a testosterone patch alone can increase desire in post-menopausal women or women reporting birth-control or postchildbirth desire loss.

But a study of women who have undergone cancer treatment, conducted by Debra L. Barton, M.D., of the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, showed a less direct corollary between desire loss and testosterone treatment. Giving women testosterone cream did raise the level of that hormone in their bloodstream, but it did not necessarily affect desire. For these women, body image, mental health, and their relationship with their partner were the critical factors in determining whether testosterone therapy would help.



“One of the great tragedies of our time is that now they’re trying to find a Viagra for women, and the latest effort is testosterone—the same hormone they used to give the female Olympic athletes of the Soviet bloc.”

—Paul Joannides, author of *The Guide to Getting It On*

THE DESIRE CONUNDRUM

Men move more easily back and forth from desire to arousal than women do. And they are less conflicted about their desire. For men, sex might be the only way they can connect emotionally to a woman. It opens the door for them. Yet women still need desire more than men do. Why?

The male arousal symbol, the erection, can be translated as desire or arousal and also defines men sexually. Myths are built around the erection. A man is virile if he has a large penis that gets a hard erection. A good lover is the man who can make that hard erection last a long time. Myths swirling around women are based in more ephemeral fairy tales grounded in attracting or being receptive to male desire. A woman is desirable if her beauty attracts a man. And she is a real woman if that man can arouse and satisfy her beyond her wildest dreams. We need our own desire to prove that our sexuality exists independently of men. And surely we also need it more because arousal is less obvious in us than it is in men.

He’s Not the One Who Usually Gets Bored First

Paradoxically, women lose sexual desire in relationships faster than men do. (So much for the myth about women needing emotional security to open up sexually.) A 2006 study of 530 men and women at Hamburg-Eppendorf University in Germany found women lose interest in sex far more rapidly than men—within four years of being in an established relationship (far sooner than the seven-year itch). Men might complain about the lack of variety, but they still want sex. Other subsequent studies drew the same conclusion. Again, these studies, conducted independently, support the conclusions of Nan Wise’s Desire Curve research.

When NREU subsides, many people, especially women, believe that love is gone. (And could that explain “lesbian bed death,” the popular phrase describing the sexless relationship that lesbian women often lament falling into after a few years together?) Without the feeling of spontaneous desire, women might not initiate sex or be receptive to their partner’s attempts to do so. Consequently, the frequency of lovemaking declines.

RESEARCH

Frequency of sex benefits women

Aside from boosting your desire, boosting frequency of sex has other interesting benefits for women. In her book *Love Cycles*, Winnifred B. Cutler, M.D., cited studies showing that women who had intercourse two or three times a week had more regular menstrual cycles, probably influenced by higher testosterone levels. Other benefits of regular intercourse: better fertility, stronger bones, better cardiovascular health, less depression, and fewer menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes. And women realized those benefits whether they reached orgasm regularly or not.

Reaching orgasm regularly, however, surely encourages women to have more frequent intercourse.

When sex is infrequent, male desire increases. Men are more easily aroused, need less stimulation than normal to reach orgasm, and experience stronger orgasms. Women, on the other hand, report decreased desire with infrequent sex. They become less easily aroused, take longer to reach orgasm, and find it less pleasurable when they do. For women, low desire leads to less frequent sex and to even lower desire accompanied by arousal difficulties.

And here we have the frequency conundrum: The less sex men have, the more desperately they want sex. BUT the less sex women have, the less they want sex. Is there a better argument for boosting your own desire?

When I was researching the science of desire, my lover asked me if “putting desire under the microscope” would not take the romance out of sex for me. Oh, no. Quite the contrary: When our sexual responses are not mysteries to us, we can operate them. We know where our erotic buttons are. There’s nothing romantic about desperately hoping someone else is going to figure that out for us.

You can’t really stop and inhale the flowers or bask in the glow of candlelight if you’re worried about whether you will feel desire, become aroused, and reach orgasm. And think about this: Some of the most romantic people I know are neuroscientists.



Chapter 3

THE REAL STORY ON AROUSAL

T*hough it is also marked by increased heart rate, faster breathing, flushed cheeks and chest, and sometimes sweating, sexual arousal is focused mainly in the genitals.* Your clitoris and labia swell and your vagina lubricates—all part of the vasocongestive response. Suddenly you are more exquisitely sensitive to genital touch.

There are many oral and manual techniques for eliciting, increasing, and sustaining female arousal. (They are included in a later section of this book.) Employing these techniques has long been called the “foreplay” part of sex, the actions leading to intercourse, The (main) Act. In less rigidly defined, heterosexually goal-oriented sex, those activities are called “sex play,” and they can take you straight to orgasm, bypassing intercourse altogether.

If you and your lover know what you’re doing, arousal can become so intense that it is almost unbearable right before orgasm.

YOUR AROUSAL—AND HOW IT COMPARES TO HIS

Your genital lubrication and swelling correspond to his erection.

But women’s genital arousal does not necessarily reflect an immediate interest in sex, particularly intercourse, the way men’s arousal generally does. It can be more ambiguous, more nonspecific than a man’s arousal. (But it can also mean: *I want it and I want it now.*)

Women also become aroused to some degree by different kinds of stimuli. For example, straight women experience arousal from watching explicit films of sex between lesbians, while straight men don’t become aroused watching films of gay men. And this will surprise you: Women become aroused by stimuli as quickly as men do. The conventional wisdom that women become aroused more slowly than men do is just wrong. But why should that even be a surprise? We’ve layered so many social constructs over women’s desire and arousal that their lust is corseted.

YOUR SEX NERVES

New views on women's sexuality are based on research being conducted in universities, not by drug companies. The drug companies are searching for the female Viagra. The university researchers, including prominent neuroscientists, are studying female sexual response with the goal of understanding both response and dysfunction more clearly. Among other things, they have given us more information on the nerves that lead to genitals, creating sexual sensations. Your genitals are connected by four nerves:

- Hypogastric nerve, leading to the cervix and uterus
- Pelvic nerve, leading to the vagina (including, of course, the G-spot)
- Vagus nerve, leading to the cervix and uterus
- Pudendal nerve, leading to the clitoris, a complex organ, rich in nerve endings

These are the major nerves connecting the genitals to the brain, but there are other, smaller nerves too. The vagus nerve bypasses the spinal cord as it winds from the brain to the uterus. Research conducted by Drs. Barry Komisaruk and Beverly Whipple through Rutgers University has shown that women with spinal-cord injuries can experience orgasm via stimulation of the vagus nerve.

This research makes you wonder: Does this nerve bypassing the brain produce stronger, more direct impulses and sensations, and are those sensations more intense? There are no answers to these questions thus far, as it is only recently that researchers have even realized the phenomenon. But these discoveries are intriguing, nevertheless.

There are many paths to arousal and orgasm for women. Culturally, we assume that men are more easily and intensely aroused than women. But we assume that because male arousal is obvious and their permission to be sexual equally obvious. Women are just as easily aroused, though often in denial of their arousal.

RESEARCH

Man meets his thermal match

In October 2006, researchers at McGill University in Montreal released the results of the first arousal study to use a noninvasive thermal imaging system designed to measure genital heat. Researchers didn't expect the male and female subjects watching explicit films from The Kinsey Institute to become aroused at the same speed, but that is exactly what happened, as revealed by state-of-the-art equipment measuring body temperatures to within a 100th of a degree. Both men and women began showing arousal via temperature elevation at thirty seconds. Maximum arousal was achieved by men in about sixty-seven seconds and women in seventy seconds—a statistically negligible difference.

“Comparing sexual arousal between men and women, we see that there is no difference in the amount of time it takes young men and women to reach peak arousal,” says Irv Binik, Ph.D., director of the research, which has been published in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*. “Hopefully, this will be useful in helping diagnose and treat sexual dysfunction in women, which is poorly understood.”



Men have one path to orgasm: friction to the head of the penis stimulating the pudendal nerve. That's why a male paraplegic can't reach orgasm but a female paraplegic can.

Ten Answers to One Question

I asked ten women gathered for a wedding shower in Center City, Philadelphia, one simple question:

What arouses you?

"Having my breasts sucked and nibbled." —Jennie, 29

"Vibrators!" —Claire, 36

"Fantasizing sex with my man." —Kimberly, 26, the bride

"We have so little time for sex since the twins were born that I get turned on when he puts his hand inside my pants and wiggles his fingers around my clit,—as long as both babies are sleeping." —Chris, 33

"It takes a lot—kissing, stroking, cunnilingus. I don't get aroused that easily anymore, but when I do, I'm hot." —Carol, 39

"Sucking his dick. I am a fool for dick." —Angie, 44

"I don't care how bad this sounds—having a man spend money on me turns me on. I am tired of taking care of myself." —Janet, 42

"Good porn turns me on. Sex toys turn me on. I am into the marital aides part of married life." —Kelly, 37

"My guy has the best touch. He runs his hands, or sometimes a finger or two, up and down my body, in all the right places, and that arouses me. I can get turned on by having him stroke my inner thigh as we're sitting side by side on the sofa." —Megan, 40

"You know what really turns me on? Flirting with the young tennis or golf pros at the country club! Those boys pay attention to me. They notice that I still have great legs. Sometimes I go home and masturbate." —Jessica, 59, mother of the bride.

RESEARCH

Why hysterectomy has sexual side effects for some women

For years, doctors have been telling women that loss of sex drive after a hysterectomy is "all in your head." However, research on the sexual nerves has led to a new conclusion about the surgery: Yes, it might impair sex drive.

Jennifer Berman, M.D., and Laura Berman, Ph.D., said in a recent article published online, "We believe that trauma to nerves and small arterial branches supplying the vagina, uterus, and clitoris has the potential for causing sexual dysfunctions."

Most surgeons performing hysterectomies (and even cesarean sections and other pelvic surgeries) don't know enough about the location of these nerves to spare them in surgery. The Bermans are strong voices for the development of "nerve sparing techniques." It is interesting to note that nerve-sparing techniques are routinely used on male prostate surgeries.

RESEARCH

More on nerve zero

As I reported in *The Orgasm Bible*, a little-known cranial nerve, dubbed “nerve zero,” may be the route for pheromones into the brain. (Previously the olfactory nerve was considered the only transmitter of pheromones.) These chemicals trigger your arousal for a particular person, playing a significant role in your choice of a mate.

Continuing research shows that nerve zero is not connected to the olfactory bulb where smells are analyzed. Rather, it connects directly to parts of the brain controlling reproduction, where it acts to release a powerful sex hormone (GnRH) into the blood. Scientists speculate that nerve zero might establish a mysterious and instant sexual communication between two people.

Could this be more proof of the power of lust at first sight?

When women complain that they aren’t aroused by lovemaking, they are often told, “It’s all in your head.” That can sound like a patronizing comment. Now that you’ve read this chapter, you can see how much truth there is in the statement after all. We can shut down our own arousal simply by disconnecting our minds from the signals going back and forth between our genitals and brain. But it’s also true that a woman sometimes doesn’t get aroused because her lover’s technique is leaving her cold. If you are in touch with your own arousal, you know what turns you on—and how to get that.



Chapter 4

ORGASM EXPLAINED

O*rgasm is a powerful, pleasurable physical and psychological response to intense stimulation—usually genital stimulation.* During orgasm the vagina, sphincter, and uterus contract simultaneously as the blood that has congested in the vaginal area suddenly rushes back into the rest of the body. The contractions generally last from three to twenty seconds, with intervals of less than a second between the first three to six contractions.

Within that standard definition, there's a lot of room for variation among individual women—and among each woman's different orgasm experiences, depending on her libido, her partner, and other factors. In fact, women may experience any of the following:

- Single orgasms lasting a minute or more.
- Postorgasmic contractions (sporadic erotic aftershocks in the genitals) lasting one or more minutes.
- Multiple orgasms.
- Extended or whole-body orgasms.

Along with his coauthors and neuroscience coinvestigators, Dr. Beverly Whipple and Dr. Carlos Beyer-Flores, Dr. Komisaruk has conducted fMRI scans that show women reaching orgasm in the ways described below in Straight Talk. Some women were able to “think themselves off” by using my technique, The Orgasm Loop (O Loop) (page 67). Flexing and releasing the PC muscle (also known as doing Kegel exercises) are critical parts of the O Loop. And this was the first time that women used the PC muscle on fMRI scans. Other women with spinal-cord damage, who had been told by their doctors that they would never have sexual sensation again, also reached orgasm. Most doctors are unaware that the vagus nerve bypasses the spinal cord to connect the brain and genitals in women, allowing this situation to occur.

This is all just one more reason to question the theories about how and why women reach orgasm—theories that were, until recently, never tested in a lab.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Masturbate to Orgasm

You should be more familiar with your sexual body than your lover is. And it makes sense, because if you can't please yourself, who can please you? Women who masturbate to orgasm are more likely to reach orgasm with their partners too. These are the classic ways that women pleasure themselves:

- Stroking or rubbing the clitoris and surrounding area with fingers in a circular motion or using the palm in a rhythmic pressing motion (with or without a vibrator).
- Inserting fingers (or a vibrator) into the vagina to stimulate the G-spot.
- Directing the flow of water to the genitals while in the tub or shower.
- Lying face down on the bed, usually straddling a pillow, and rubbing against the pillow or mattress.
- Standing up and rubbing against a hard surface, for example, the corner of a dresser or nightstand.
- Crossing legs tightly and clenching them together while flexing the pubococcygeus (PC) muscle.

Most women reach orgasm with the vibrator by pressing it against their clitoris and circling the clitoral area—often through silky panties, not via vaginal penetration. Experiment by varying the pressure and speed as you move the vibrator over your vulva, labia, clitoris, and surrounding tissues. If the vibration is too intense even at low speed for direct clitoral contact, move it to the side of the clitoris. Prolong the excitation phase by moving the vibrator back and forth between spots that are hot and those that are not. Tease yourself to a stronger orgasm. (Read more about vibrators starting on page 233.)

STRAIGHT TALK

Expanding the definition of orgasm

In *The Science of Orgasm*, Dr. Barry Komisaruk answers the question, “What exactly is an orgasm?”: Almost everyone would agree that orgasm is an intense, pleasurable response to genital stimulation: penile physical stimulation in males and clitoral or vaginal physical stimulation in females. Although orgasm characteristically results from genital stimulation, there are many reports that other types of sensory stimulation can also generate orgasms, stimulation perceived as both ‘genital’ and ‘con-genital.’ For example, there are documented cases of women who can reach orgasms by ‘thinking off’ and women with spinal-cord damage reaching orgasm.

FEMALE ORGASM—IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

We’ve come a long way, babes!

Thoughts about the concept of female orgasm have evolved significantly over time. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychiatry, said that clitoral orgasms were “immature,” an adolescent stage preceding the “mature” vaginal orgasm experienced during intercourse. In the groundbreaking 1940 book, *The Function of the Orgasm*, Wilhelm Reich broadened the definition of orgasm beyond the genitals. He was both the first sexologist to say that a person’s emotional health was related to his or her capacity to experience orgasm—and to say that orgasm could be a whole-body event, a belief he shared with Eastern sexologists. He was ahead of his time.

STRAIGHT TALK

Orgasm takes the long road

Dr. Beverly Whipple, who acknowledges crying for joy when a paralyzed woman experienced orgasm in her lab, says, “‘Vagus’ means ‘wanderer’—the nerve wanders through the body. Previously, it wasn’t thought that it goes as far as the pelvic region. But our research and that of other laboratories is showing that it does, in fact, go to the cervix and uterus, and probably the vagina. It carries the impulses from those regions, travels up through the abdomen, goes through the diaphragm, through the thorax (chest cavity), up the neck, outside the spinal cord, and into the brain.”

In the 1950s and 1960s, Alfred Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, and Helen Singer Kaplan put the politically correct orgasm firmly into the clitoris. With the G-spot, Whipple brought the orgasm back into the vagina, igniting the big clitoral/vaginal debate of the 1970s and 1980s—though she clearly said that finding the G-spot didn’t take away from the importance of the clitoris. However, Shere Hite, among other prominent sexologists, disputed the existence of the G-spot. Also in the 1980s, Gina Ogden, Ph.D., author of a seminal work, *Women Who Love Sex: An Inquiry into the Expanding Spirit of Women’s Erotic Experience*, moved the orgasm into the brain with her discovery of women who could reach orgasm via fantasy alone, with no touching. At the close of the twentieth century, Dr. Ian Kerner, author of *She Comes First*—a manifesto for giving a woman her orgasm first via cunnilingus—reaffirmed the superiority of the clitoris.

The good news for women today: Most authorities recognize that there is more than one path to female orgasm and that any path is a good one.

RESEARCH

The G shot

Invented and trademarked in 2005 by the same California gynecologist and plastic surgeon who launched the vaginoplasty craze—the G shot, or G-spot amplification, is a small dose of collagen injected directly into the G-spot. The procedure costs around \$2,000, lasts four months, and might keep you in a state of arousal until the collagen wears off—the hyposexual equivalent of the Botoxed forehead. Some women who have had the shot report reaching orgasm during spinning class at the gym.

In the absence of a peer-reviewed study, many doctors, including Dr. Laura Berman, say do your Kegel exercises and get your orgasms the old-fashioned way.

THE TYPES OF FEMALE ORGASM

There are several types of female orgasms:

- *Clitoral*, which occurs primarily through stimulation of the clitoris and surrounding area.
- *Vaginal*, which occurs primarily through stimulation of the vagina (including G-spot) and cervix through intercourse, masturbation with an internal vibrator, or manual stimulation. (See photo, right)
- *Extra-genital*, which occurs through stimulation to any part of the body except the genitals, including breasts, inner thighs, mouth, throat, neck, or toes. (See photo, below)
- *Blended*, which occurs through more than one form of stimulation, for example, clitoral stimulation during intercourse or manual stimulation during cunnilingus.
- *Spontaneous* (also called a “no-hands” orgasm), in which women can “think themselves off” or fantasize to orgasm using no external stimulation; this type of orgasm is likely to occur while women are flexing the PC muscle. (You can also come this way using the O Loop.)

Nearly all women can reach orgasm via clitoral stimulation alone. Fewer than a third, and according to some studies only up to one quarter, reach orgasm via vaginal stimulation alone. More women can learn how to do this, especially if they learn the O Loop. Blended orgasms are probably more common than we realize. Many women likely report reaching orgasm from one form of stimulation, typically clitoral, when they were actually receiving vaginal and perhaps cervical and/or G-spot stimulation during intercourse at the same time they were stroking their own clitoris. It’s likely they experienced a blended orgasm without realizing it.



One to three percent of women, and almost no men, can reach orgasm without genital stimulation. When it does occur, extragenital orgasm usually follows one or more clitoral or vaginal orgasms. A highly orgasmic woman, for example, can reach the third, fourth, or fifth orgasm having her breasts or nipples stroked, sucked, pinched, pulled, or massaged. Some women at that point can even come by squeezing their thighs together.

Devotees of the Eastern lovemaking arts are among those who aren't satisfied with one or even multiple orgasms. They want more orgasms or longer orgasms or orgasms that extend beyond the genitals, sometimes into the whole body.

THE BIGGER ORGASMS

There are three types of bigger orgasms:

- *Extended orgasms*, with more contractions that last longer and might have slightly longer spaces of time between them.
- *Expanded orgasms*, with the sensation of orgasm going beyond the genitals into the pelvic region, buttocks, and upper thighs.
- *Whole-body orgasms*, where the sensations of orgasm are both more intense and diffuse, felt throughout the body. These are the orgasms that make you feel like the orgasm is blowing out the top of your head or shooting out your fingers and toes.

Extended or expanded orgasms are most likely to happen during masturbation, at least the first time you have them. Whole-body orgasms are another phenomenon altogether. Women who have experienced them often report that they felt an unusually strong emotional or spiritual connection to their partner, or were feeling a particularly sensual connection to their own bodies.

Men rarely are capable of multiple orgasms, but they can experience extended, expanded, and whole-body orgasms.

MULTIPLE ORGASMS

Less than a third of women have multiple orgasms, with fewer experiencing them on a regular basis. It is theoretically possible for every woman who can have one orgasm to have multiples. Men need a refractory period, a respite between ejaculatory orgasms that varies from less than thirty minutes in young men to more than a day in older men. The refractory period limits their options unless they practice Tantra and learn how to experience orgasm without ejaculating. Some sexologists share the Eastern belief that male orgasm typically includes ejaculation, but that men can learn to separate the pleasure of the rhythmic contractions from the expulsion of semen.

If a woman wants to have multiple orgasms, she can learn how to do so during intercourse, oral, or manual (including G-spot) stimulation or a combination thereof. Multiply orgasmic women typically experience more than one type of orgasm during a lovemaking session. Women who use the O Loop have a higher than average incidence of multiple orgasms—53 percent of the original 500 women studied in a research group were able to do so.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

BLENDED MULTIPLE ORGASMS

Some women can only have multiple orgasms when they receive both clitoral and vaginal stimulation in the area of the G-spot. Your partner can do that for you if he uses his fingers to stimulate the front wall of your vagina while he's performing cunnilingus, or stimulates your clitoris during intercourse in a position that gives you G-spot stimulation.





Multiple orgasms are broken down into four types:

- *Compounded single orgasms*, in which each orgasm is distinct, separated by sufficient time so that prior arousal and tension have substantially resolved between orgasms.
- *Sequential multiples*, which occur fairly close together, anywhere from one to ten minutes apart; there is little interruption in sexual stimulation or level of arousal.
- *Serial multiples*, which are separated by seconds, or up to two minutes with no, or barely any, interruption in stimulation or diminishment of arousal.
- *Blended multiples*, a mix of two or more of the above types.

KEGEL EXERCISES

You can slack off on the belly crunches and leg lifts, but this is the one exercise you must do!

Kegel exercises to strengthen the PC muscle are essential for every woman. Doing them is the absolute bottom-line requirement for good sex.

A strong PC muscle makes orgasm more likely and more intense. It facilitates multiple or extended orgasms. It allows you some control over thrusting and depth of penetration during intercourse, and you will be able to do some amazing tricks simply by squeezing and relaxing your PC muscle around the shaft of his penis. A strong PC muscle also keeps the vagina toned after childbirth, even after menopause.

The PC muscle is a hammock-like muscle that stretches from pubic bone to coccyx (tail bone) and forms the floor of your pelvic cavity. (Men have a PC muscle also and can benefit from Kegel exercises, though not as much as women.) Locate your PC by stopping and starting the flow of urine. Once you have located the muscle, perform the following exercises:

A Short Kegel Sequence

Contract the muscle twenty times at approximately one squeeze per second. Exhale gently as you tighten only the muscles around your genitals (which includes the anus), not the muscles in your buttocks. Don't bear down when you release. Simply let go. Do two sets twice a day. Gradually build up to two sets of seventy-five per day.

Then add: *A long Kegel sequence*. Hold the muscle contraction for a count of three. Relax between contractions. Work up to holding for ten seconds, relaxing for ten seconds. Again start with two sets of twenty each and build up to two sets of seventy-five per day.

At this point, doing three hundred repetitions a day of the combined short and long, you are ready to add:

The push-out. After relaxing the contraction, push down and out gently, as if you were having a bowel movement with your PC muscle. Repeat gently. No bearing down.

Now create Kegel sequences that combine long and short sequences with push-outs.

After a month of daily repetitions of three hundred, you should have a well-developed PC muscle. You can keep it that way simply by doing 150 sets several times a week.

So much information on female orgasm is available in books and magazines and online that modern women, unlike their grandmothers, can never say they have no access to good information on how to reach orgasm. We have the opposite problem: too much information—and a lot of it dubious. Widely reported studies and surveys are often based on flawed methodology. The researchers don't disclose the actual questions they posed or the demographic information of the women who answered them. An online search of any subject, including orgasm, turns up lists that juxtapose the mindless rant next to the fully constructed research study. And in the case of the female

orgasm, authors who are invested heavily in one theory—like Dr. Betty Dodson and clitoral orgasm or Dr. Beverly Whipple and G-spot orgasm—defend their position, often denying that evidence conflicting with their theory is valid. Dr. Dodson implies in *Orgasms for Two* that women who claim to have vaginal orgasms are probably faking/lying. What expert would unilaterally tell a man his erotic experience was a lie?

Open your mind, play with your body, see what takes *you* to orgasm and don't be content with only one route until you have tried all the others.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

USE THESE KEGEL EXERCISE

VARIATIONS TO KEEP IT INTERESTING:

1. The Kegel Leg Cross

Lie on your back, legs straight. Do a Kegel and hold the contraction as you pull your stomach in. Still holding the contraction, raise one leg, forming a right angle to your body. Open your leg wide to the right, return to center, cross leg to the left of your body. Release contraction. Repeat using your other leg. Do three sets of ten with each leg.

2. The Kegel Crunch

Vary your Kegel routine by doing them while exercising. For example, do Kegels as you perform pelvic crunches. Contract your PC as you pull in your stomach muscles. Release both at same time.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

PC Passion Exercise

This technique is from Dr. Barbara Keesling and is adapted from the one featured in her book *The Good Girl's Guide to Bad Girl Sex*.

Caress your genitals to arouse yourself. When your genitals are swelling and lubricating, insert your finger into your vagina. Tighten and relax your PC muscle around your finger. Do this repeatedly. Additionally, stimulate your clitoris and fire breathe—inhale and exhale deeply, imagining your breath is a circular track of fire coming in through the nose and going out through the vagina and back again. As you feel your orgasm approaching, intercept it with a PC squeeze. Now squeeze your PC as hard as you can and see how dramatically that affects your orgasm. (Thank you Dr. Keesling, this is a brilliant technique and translates beautifully to orgasm during partner sex.)





Chapter 5

HOW HIS ORGASM IS DIFFERENT FROM YOURS

Y*es, there are some similarities in the ways men and women experience orgasms.* Arousal leads to the engorgement of blood vessels in his penis just as it leads to the engorgement of your clitoris and labia. During orgasm, the blood also rushes back into his body. He experiences contractions of his penis and surrounding genital area as pleasurable sensations similar in timing sequence and length to your orgasm.

But he doesn't have the capacity for orgasm that you do.

First, a man might get there more reliably than his woman, but he doesn't have as many potential paths to ecstasy as she does.

HOW MEN REACH ORGASM

Generally, men reach orgasm in one of three ways:

- Stimulation of the head of the penis during intercourse.
- The up/down movement of the shaft during masturbation or manual manipulation by his lover.
- Fellatio, which only need be focused on the first third of the penis to get results.

Many men can also reach orgasm by stimulation of the perineum, that little patch between the anus and the base of the testicles.



Stroke his perineum during sex play. If he is responsive, come back there later—and if not, skip this section. (Perineum massage makes some men crazy, but it has little effect on others and leaves many confused. A few are even repulsed by it, fearing response to that type of stimulation would call into question their sexual orientation.)

Excite him to the point of orgasm via oral and manual stimulation to his genitals. (Don't neglect the testicles.) Stop the stimulation. Repeat.

When you notice him on the brink of explosion, hold his thighs apart and lower your mouth to his perineum. Flick your tongue rapidly back and forth across that area. Now press your thumb lightly against his perineum—gauging the pressure by his response—as you continue flicking your tongue. (Does he like anal play? You can insert a well-lubed finger into his anus and stroke the perineum from inside.)

A perineum orgasm can send powerful vibrations throughout his body.

HOW YOU CAN INFLUENCE HIS ORGASMS

Beyond differences in how they reach orgasm, men have that refractory period—but you don’t. The female capacity for orgasm is much greater than the male’s. You can roll from one orgasm into another without a breather while he has to wait to get hard again.

Also, you can influence his orgasm more effectively than he can influence yours—if you have a strong PC muscle and you know what you’re doing. The trajectory of male arousal to orgasm is more straightforward than women’s. Think of it as a line that you can shorten or lengthen.

Men like to think that they “give” us orgasms, but they rarely do. By manipulating intercourse positions to get the stimulation we need, by strengthening and using our PC muscle, by using our hands or the O Loop (more on this in Chapter 6), we take what we need for ourselves. But we can still (almost always) make him come when we want him to come and last longer when we want that. Timing is a key element in good sex; and you have more control over that than he does.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

PINCH OR BITE HIS NIPPLE AT THE MOMENT OF ORGASM

Make a dramatic pause just as he is ready to come. If he’s on top, grab his buttocks at the moment of orgasm, use your PC muscles to pull him in a little deeper. Make eye contact with him at the same time. Then pinch or bite his nipple at the moment of orgasm

YOU are in charge. Let’s blow up that Sleeping Beauty myth (in which she can’t wake up from her erotic slumber without his help). Your orgasm is not dependent on him. And you can influence his orgasm by delaying it or bringing it on and intensifying the experience. Make him feel like the one who was asleep until you came along.

Never doubt your erotic capacity or power, even if orgasm has been, until now, problematic for you. In the next chapter, you will learn a revolutionary technique that will give you an orgasm any time, every time. A woman who can take charge of her orgasm and his is powerful, indeed.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Make him come when you want him to come

Pay attention to the subtle signs that he is close to the point of ejaculation—the signs are different in every man. But every man does something in exactly the same way before every orgasm. For instance, he might:

- Hold his breath
- Breathe with more intensity
- Make a certain sound—a grunt, cry exclamation—or go silent

Now that you know how to spot his, you can trigger it one of these moves:

- Stimulate his G-spot with your thumb or finger pressed gently on his perineum.
- Insert a well-lubed finger inside his anus to stimulate the G-spot from inside—but only if he is comfortable with having that done.

Make him last longer when you aren't ready for him to come

Sometimes you both want the period of thrusting to last longer. Here are three techniques to keep things from ending too quickly:

The Squeeze Technique

Masters and Johnson modeled their squeeze technique on a more elegant Taoist version, but the squeeze is simpler and just as effective.

Ask him to pull out when he feels ejaculation is imminent but not inevitable. Lightly squeeze the head of his penis for several seconds. Resume intercourse. You can repeat the technique two or three times if necessary.

Alternating Stimuli—or Stop/Start

At a peak of high arousal, ask him to stop thrusting and make love to you manually or





orally. By alternating intercourse with other forms of lovemaking, most men can sustain erection longer.

Get on Top

The female superior position is the best one for controlling thrusting. Lower yourself on to only the head of his penis and pull back. Tease and taunt. Hold his hands over his head and run your tongue all over his body. Take the attention off his penis until his arousal subsides somewhat. Then mount him again.

Be his sex coach:

Help him take your orgasm higher

Men learn fast if you teach the lesson while you're both highly aroused. Don't ask, breathlessly beg for what you want right then. Here are some suggestions:

- Ask him to pinch your nipples as you come if your nipples are sensitive.
- Kiss him with your eyes wide open as you're coming. If his eyes are closed, gently open one with a fingertip or ask him to open his eyes.
- Speak to him the way you want him to talk in bed. If you like rough talk, say, “, how hard you're going to fuck me.” And if tender endearments are more to your taste, ask him to tell you how beautiful you are or how much he wants you.

When you're near orgasm via cunnilingus, take his hand and put it inside your vagina, and guide him to your G-spot. Actively move against his fingers inside you so that you get the stimulation you need—and he sees how to give it to you.



Chapter 6

THE ORGASM LOOP

In the late 1980s, I took a “no-hands, spontaneous orgasm” workshop taught by Dr. Annie Sprinkle, famed sexologist and performance artist. Her method of reaching orgasm without genital stimulation was a combination of fantasy and fire-breathing. Lying on the floor and fire-breathing with about twenty-five other women, I remember thinking, “There is a germ of a good idea here, but this is not working.”

The fire-breathing was hot, but not hot enough. I tried adding PC flexing to fire-breathing, but that still didn’t take me to orgasm without hands. It was like inventing a new recipe. I knew it needed more—but more of what?

I read Dr. Gina Ogden’s book and thought, “I want to have what those ‘thinkers-off’ are having. But I didn’t know exactly how they did it.

THE MAGIC QUESTION

Meanwhile, women were searching for a different kind of no-hands orgasm. They wanted to come during intercourse without additional clitoral stimulation. In fact, the

question they most often asked me and other sex journalists, authors, and editors was, “How can I come during intercourse?”

Other women complained that they lost erotic focus during lovemaking because they were distracted by guilt about things they hadn’t done or concern about children or work or body issues or even anger at their partners. They needed to focus the way men do, shutting out distractions and giving themselves over to the sexual experience, but they didn’t know how to do that. Men do it naturally because the male erection/brain connection is strong. A woman’s genitals don’t always get the message to her brain, in part because the signs of female arousal are more subtle. Compounding the problem, she often has sex without fully tapping into her arousal, making orgasm problematic.

Then I read an interview with Dr. Eileen Palace, director of the Centre for Sexual Health in New Orleans. Her research was on the sexual arousal mind/body connection—the Cognitive Physiological Feedback Loop—specifically on how women could learn to use biofeedback to

strengthen that arousal connection. “A man’s receives cognitive feedback from his erection,” she said. “Women have tingling, throbbing, and lubrication, but it’s very subtle, and you can’t see it. To fully enjoy sex a woman needs something that links what’s happening down below to the brain.”

That was when I had one of those Ah ha! moments, as I realized that women need something more practical than biofeedback. They need an arousal image, a mental focus point as powerful as an erect penis. So I had the arousal image, the fire breathing, and PC flexing. Yet my plan still needed something.

THE MISSING PIECE: ENERGY FOCUS

While visiting my sister, I hooked up with Rick Hasamear, a family friend who has black belts in five different martial arts. I listened to him talk about energy focus, the practice of moving energy within the body. He can stop an arrow from being shoved into his throat using energy focus alone. (He makes his throat as hard as stone. Now that is awesome to see.) I asked him to teach me how to move my energy into my genitals and use it for erotic stimulation. He did—and I had all the pieces of the O Loop in place at last.

The O Loop is designed for the women who want a no-hands orgasm during intercourse *and* for the women who keep getting distracted and losing arousal. It’s been tested on more than five hundred women, and 85 percent of them now use it successfully. Any woman who wants a reliable means of reaching orgasm has one using the O Loop.

The O Loop is a revolutionary technique for reaching orgasm *any time, every time, and multiple times*. It fuses cognitive feedback research on female orgasm and creative visualization therapy technique with Tantric breathing, PC flexing, *and*—a breakthrough concept—an adaptation of the same energy-focus method that allows martial arts black belts to break boards, bricks, and blocks.

Yet the O Loop is a simple technique that any woman can master by using it several times during masturbation before taking it into partner sex. My book *The Orgasm Loop* teaches you how to use the O Loop in every sexual situation.

USING THE O LOOP, STEP-BY-STEP

Here are the basic directions for using the O Loop:

Mental Arousal

Close your eyes, clear your mind of distractions, and visualize your arousal. You need a mental picture that equates to his erection, something you see that says immediately: I am aroused. That image is a highly individual choice.

Some women might visualize their genitalia: lips swelling, moisture forming, their skin color changing to deeper pink. Other women might visualize a flower, perhaps an orchid. (The sensual flower paintings of Georgia O’Keefe can be an inspiration.) Some women might see arousal as a color, perhaps pink or red or saffron yellow, the color of Devi (the mother goddess) in Hindu mythology. A beach at sunset can be an arousal image as well.

Find the image that represents arousal to you and focus on it every time you use the O Loop. This image must become your mental erotic mantra. Focus to the extent that no other image enters your mind. (The first few times you use the O Loop with your lover, keep your eyes closed during kissing and foreplay in general so you won’t lose focus.)

Energy Focus

When you are conscious of nothing but arousal, turn your focus inward.

Focus on a spot just below your navel (your chi). (See photo, right) Breathe deeply and slowly, and imagine that little spot of energy glowing and growing. Move it down into your genitals with your breath.





Hold that energy in place.

Now imagine a fiery coil of sexual energy located at the base of your spine. This is Kundalini, or sexual energy. Uncoil it and move it into your genitals. Feel the undulating, coiling energy circling around and through the spot of glowing energy.

You have moved your body's energy into your genitals, particularly the clitoris. And you are experiencing heightened sensitivity to touch now because you have created a physiological response in your body. Your heartbeat is accelerated. Your body temperature is rising. You feel more alive, more sensuous with the heat. And the blood flow concentrated in your genitals is making them incredibly sensitive.

Physical moves

1. While maintaining your energy focus, use breathing to intensify the mind/genital connection. Imagine you are breathing fire in a circle, inhaling it up from your genitals throughout your body and exhaling out your mouth. Keep doing this in circular fashion.
2. Once you have created a circle of fire, flex your PC muscles in time with your breathing. Tighten them as you breathe in; loosen as you breathe out. The combination of controlled breathing and energy focusing creates heat. You literally move that heat in and out of your body in an exciting circle as you fire breath. Like any form of deep breathing, it increases the oxygen level in the blood. And it forces more blood into your genitals.

Keep up the fire breathing during intercourse. Don't worry if you lose a cycle or two. Just pick it up again, especially at the point of orgasm, because it intensifies orgasm.

3. Apply clitoral stimulation, orally or manually or by positioning yourself in intercourse to make the connection between the shaft of the penis and the clitoris. Very little stimulation will be necessary at this point to achieve orgasm.

You can have more orgasms simply by maintaining the focus and the breathing instead of relaxing after the orgasm.

Don't be discouraged if it takes you a few or even several practice sessions to make the O Loop work smoothly for you. Some of the women in my initial test group made it work quickly. One who had never reached orgasm in any way but "marathon masturbation sessions" that left her chafed and exhausted had almost instant success with the O Loop. On the other hand, a half dozen women who "often" experienced orgasm during lovemaking before introducing the O Loop found that it took as many as ten sessions to "do it without stopping to think about the directions or, worse, checking the print-out."

All agreed that it was worth putting the time into the learning curve because the O Loop delivers what you need to get what you want: focused arousal and reliable orgasm.





PART 2

THE SEXUAL BODY

How you feel about your body—and how well you understand the way it works—directly affects your sexuality. Where bodies are concerned, we women are always measuring ourselves against often impossible standards. And as our bodies change with pregnancy and aging, we compare where we are now to our younger selves and ask, “Am I as sexually attractive as I was?” It’s bad enough that the media constantly barrages us with unrealistic examples of how women are supposed to look. But when we look at ourselves after having a baby one day and think, “I don’t even look like me anymore!” it has a tremendous impact on our self-image and how we see ourselves as sexual beings.

Reproductive cycles also have a big impact on many women’s sexual responses. And as a woman’s body ages, her sexual responses evolve, becoming better in many ways. Likewise, her partner’s aging body and responses change too.

Let’s redefine “normal” in body shape and size and in how we use our bodies sexually. The new normal should be: whatever works for me at this point in time. Normal is different in other ways too. It might not feel normal to me right now because I don’t look or respond the way I used to, but things change in life, and that’s fine. We all feel these ways at different stages of our lives, and yes, that is perfectly normal.

Instead of fixating on the changes in your body and how you feel about those changes, bear this in mind: A sexually empowered woman enjoys where she is *now*.



Chapter 7

DO YOU KNOW YOUR BODY AS WELL AS YOU KNOW HIS?

T*he first step to sexual empowerment is being familiar and comfortable with your own body.*

How can you have a good sex life if you don't know your body well?

Admittedly, the penis is easier to know than the vagina. There are no hidden pockets. But you have a vagina, and there is more to owning it than having it waxed regularly. The female body is rich in sexual touch zones. Our curves are sensuous and we should revel in them.

Discover your sensuality and you will also find your sexuality.

YOUR TOUCH ZONES

Your sexual body extends beyond the clitoris. You have other genital hot zones common to all women, and undoubtedly some private pleasure places of your own. The more you arouse them, the more sensitive they become. Here's a rundown of the main hot-spots:

“For a truly fulfilling sex life, a woman needs to discover the pleasure spots that aren't covered by her undies. Start exploring with a feather, a vibrator, your hands, whatever—and find your five most touchable spots.”

—Hilda Hutcherson, M.D., *Glamour* magazine sex advisor

- *Clitoris*

Nearly all women know that their clitoris is that little pink glans (or head) inside the hood at the top where the labia (vaginal lips) come together. It is sometimes compared to the penis because of its shaftlike shape. But there is a lot more to the clitoris than the small erection you see. It is attached to spongy tissue and connected to an extensive system of nerves curving around the vagina. For the majority of women, the clitoris and the surrounding tissue are the most sexually sensitive parts of the body.

- *The G-spot*

The G-spot is that spongy mass of rough tissue located in the front wall of the vagina halfway between the pubic bone and the cervix and below the opening of the urethra. (Because you feel it through the vagina, the G-spot has been erroneously defined as being inside it.) It was rediscovered by Beverly Whipple and named after the German physician Ernst Grafeberg who “discovered” it in the 1940s—though it was familiar territory to the Indian author of the Kama Sutra five thousand years earlier. And each one of us feels like an explorer when we find our own.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

FIND YOUR G-SPOT

Can’t find it? Place your hand, palm up, at the entrance of your vagina. Insert two fingers and make the “come hither” gesture. Nothing? Try squatting. Some women find it easier to locate their G in that position.

Nothing yet? Use a vibrator, either a special G-spot vibe or an attachment to one you have. That is the simplest and best way of discovering the spot.

- *The AFE Zone*

Across from the G-spot is the AFE (anterior fornix erotic) zone, a small, sensitive patch of textured, but not rough, skin at the top of the vagina closer to the cervix. Stroking the AFE zone makes almost any woman lubricate immediately. Explore the front wall of your vagina with one finger. When you feel moisture forming beneath your finger, you’ve hit it.

A sexologist in Kuala Lumpur rediscovered this area and named it in 1994. But again, the Kama Sutra got there first.

- *The U-spot*

We typically don’t think of the urethra as a sexy place. But the tiny area of tissue above the opening of the urethra (and right below the clitoris) is a separate pleasure point. Many women stimulate their U spots during masturbation without being aware that they are.

Men typically discover it by accident while looking for the clitoris. If you’ve ever thought, “That’s not the place, but wait a minute, it feels good,” he’s hit your U spot with his finger or tongue. And it’s a good place for him to shift his attention between orgasms if your clitoris is too sensitive to the touch for a few moments. Try that after your first orgasm while masturbating.

- *Individual Touch Zones*

Some women have very sensitive breasts, particularly the nipples. Other women are aroused by touch to the inner thighs, behind the knees, hollow of the throat, or back of the neck. Ear nibbling drives some women crazy in a good way and other women crazy in a bad way. Look for your own unique touch zones after an orgasm, when you are most sensitive. Run your fingers along these places and others—or ask your lover to do it. Note what makes you shiver.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SUBTLE SEX COACHING

If you know where your touch zones are, but are shy about asking your lover to touch them, how can you get him (or her) to touch you where you need to be touched without asking?

Buy my favorite sex product, Honey Dust. It comes with a lovely feather duster. Dust your touch zones and ask to be licked. (Offer to return the favor later.)

HIS TOUCH ZONES

Just as you do, he has his own touch zones. You know where the main one is: the head of his penis. But there are more touch zones common to all men, and surely some sensitive places individual to your man. (My lover craves having his shaved head stroked and his beard massaged.) Pay attention to the places where he likes to be touched both sexually and sensually, and you will teach him to become a more sensitive lover without saying a word.

- *The Big H*

The head of the penis is his primary touch zone, as the clitoris is yours. And you knew that. But it's not all about the top of the head. Take in the rest of it, especially the top third.

As most women do, you may be ignoring the corona, the thick ridge separating the head from the shaft. But it is exquisitely sensitive to touch. Run your finger repeatedly around the corona. Then swirl your tongue around it in a move called the "silken swirl," a skill refined by Italian courtesans during the Renaissance.

- *The F Place*

The frenulum is that loose section of skin on the underside of the penis, where the head meets the shaft. In most men it is highly sensitive to touch. Some men reach orgasm more quickly if a woman strums the frenulum with her tongue during fellatio. Another effective move: When you are holding his penis, run one thumb up and down the F Place.

- *The R Line*

The raphe is the visible line along the center of the scrotum, an area of the male anatomy that women often overlook. The skin of the scrotum is very sensitive, similar to a woman's labia. Gently run your fingertips along the raphe or lick it occasionally during fellatio. If you are holding his testicles in one hand while playing with his penis, use your thumb to stroke the raphe.

- *The P Zone*

The perineum, that area an inch or so in size between the anus and the base of the scrotum, is more neglected than the raphe. Rich in nerve endings, the perineum is the second most important touch zone for some men, right after the head of the penis. Stroke it lightly; alternate that with gentle pressure from your thumb and see what happens.

- *The Male G-spot*

His G-spot is located inside the body behind the perineum, which is why pressing his perineum feels good. If he claims he doesn't have one, tell him you can find it for him in one of two ways:

- Press the perineum with your thumb or finger. Ask him if he feels that stimulation inside.
- Insert a finger inside his anus and make that same come-hither gesture you used to find your own G-spot. (Be gentle. This is not a prostate exam.)

Just remember that many men love G-spot stimulation, but some hate it. Don't take it personally if he is one of the latter.

- *Individual Touch Zones*

Like women, men have their own individual touch zones, places of great sensitivity that lie outside the genitals. It's really not all about the penis, unless your guy is about nineteen. Some other sensitive spots include ears, neck, inner thighs, temples, eyelids, nipples, and buttocks. When you're holding him postorgasm, run your fingers along his body and note his responses.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER : *The Erotic Massage with Happy Ending (His and Hers)*



The basic massage works for any lover, male or female:

- Put a little warm oil in the palm of one hand and rub your hands together so they are lightly oiled, not dripping. Begin with gliding strokes. Run your hands smoothly in long strokes that blend seamlessly together over large areas of his body. Don't stop to knead, rub, or fondle.
- Make circular motions with the heels of your hands from the spine upward. Repeat the strokes to the sides of the body.
- Knead gently, not with the vigor a masseuse might use, shoulders and buttocks. Grasp the flesh gently into your fingers, then push it out. Don't pummel.
- Return to the circular motions up from the spine, but this time use your finger pads to make the circles.
- Use single- or two-finger gliding strokes on his inner thighs or the back and sides of his neck and, if your lover isn't too ticklish, underarms.

Now your partner should turn you over and:

- Glide your hand, first two fingers open in a V up her breasts, catching her nipple in the V. Kiss her nipple.
- Take her nipple *gently* between two fingers and pinch.

- Caress her inner thighs from her knees up. Let your thumb or fingers graze her vulva as you reach the top of her thighs.

Or turn him over and try the following:

- Repeat the long, gliding strokes on his chest, stomach, and thighs. Caress his thighs by squeezing in your hands and rubbing with your thumbs.
- Slowly caress the base of his penis, squeezing the shaft and massaging the base. Take his penis in one hand and stroke slowly up and down the shaft with your thumb or fingers from the other hand. Vary the pressure. Circle the head of the penis with the flat of your hand.

Now move to your lover's face:

- Use the single-finger stroke on his face, even the delicate areas like eyelids and ears. Also run your finger down his throat.
- Stroke his forehead with the fingers of both hands from the center to the temples. Press lightly on the temples.
- Now run your hands in broad, gliding strokes all the way down his body to his toes.
- Use a combination of gliding, massaging, and circling strokes back down your lover's body to his genitals.



Now it's time for the happy ending.

Her happy ending:

- Use light circular motions with your fingertips on her genital area. Part her labia. Use your fingers to make long strokes on the outside lips. Then curve one or two fingers, and use the space between knuckle and joint to massage lightly her inner and outer lips in a back-and-forth motion. Massage her labia and work back to her anus.
- Alternate that stroke with using your thumb or first finger alone.
- Rotate your fingers around her clitoris, alternating a clockwise and counterclockwise motion. Stroke down with one finger on either side of her clitoris. Rotate. Stroke down.
- Take her clitoris between two fingers and gently rotate, if she likes direct clitoral stimulation. But, if like many women, if she can't stand the intensity of that stroke, circle your fingertips above the clitoris (at the twelve o'clock point).
- Add the G-spot stroke. While continuing the twelve o'clock rotation, insert a finger or two into her vagina and massage her G-spot. Now circle your fingertip rapidly around her clitoris as you're massaging her G-spot. Don't be surprised if she "ejaculates" (see page 80) during this orgasm.

His happy ending:

- At this point, he probably has an erection. Straddle it, but don't insert it. Lower your breasts to his body and tease his nipples by rubbing yours across his. Or take your nipples in hand and rub them across his.
- In the straddle position, move down his body so you end up kneeling between his legs. Take his testicles between your fingers and thumb gently, one at a time. Then hold a testicle in the palm of your hand and tickle it lightly with the pads of your fingers. Now do the same with the other one.
- Hold the base of his penis in one hand and work your other hand in a circular fashion to the head. Use the palm of that hand to caress the head of his penis.
- As if you were building a fire with his penis as the stick, use a rolling/rubbing motion, starting at the base. Roll/rub up to the head and back down to the base, keeping his penis between your palms. Start slowly. Increase speed and pressure as he gets close to orgasm.
- Lean forward so that he ejaculates on your breasts. To make him come quickly, insert a finger in his anus and press gently.

USING YOUR BODY KNOWLEDGE: TOUCH-ZONE EXPLORATION

Sexual relationships begin with a look and then a touch. At least subliminally, we all know how important touch is. When you meet someone new, the touching is exploratory, a hand over a hand, an arm stroke, hair gently pushed away from your forehead. If the touch feels right, the couple progress to that “can’t keep their hands off each other” phase. Even when a couple is over that phase, they aren’t over the need to touch.

Explore your lover’s body with your hands. You might find he or she has some touch zones you didn’t know existed.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

HAND JOBS

If you give him hand jobs often and want to vary the routine, try mixing in one or more of these strokes:

- The two-hand slow stroke: Use both hands on the shaft to perform the up-and-down stroke in slow motion.
- The cupped hand: Put the flat of one hand over the head of his penis. Use the fingers of the other hand to stroke the shaft. Vary the pressure and speed.
- The squeeze stroke: At the end of an up/down stroke, lightly squeeze the head of his penis.
- The open hand stroke: I like to start with this one sometimes, especially if I am giving a hand job at the end of an erotic massage. Lay his penis in the palm of your hand and close your fingertips lightly around it. Use a slow, light stroke while keeping the hand open, fingers loosely curling around the penis. This feels more like a caress than a stroke, and it can either start him off gently or slow him down if you want to prolong his pleasure.

FEMALE EJACULATION

Some women are “squirters,” at least some of the time, most likely with G-spot stimulation. Many Western sex experts dismiss the “ejaculate” as a myth or a gush of fluid composed of urine and copious vaginal secretions. There is no question that whatever this fluid that some women ejaculate, or squirt, upon orgasm is, it is not the female equivalent of seminal fluid.

If not ejaculate, what is it? Something does happen for many women, though no one has answered definitively the question: What is it?

Men ejaculate sperm from the testicles via tubes that go through the prostate gland where the sperm mixes with seminal fluid. Women do not have a prostate gland. But in some women there is a collection of several masses of tissue strung out along the urinary tract, referred to as the skene gland. This gland produces a fluid that is neither urine nor vaginal secretions, and it might be the source of the fluid squirted.

Female ejaculation isn’t exactly a technique. If you want to try to make it happen, use G-spot stimulation and don’t hold back when you feel the urge to urinate. (But don’t try this with a full bladder; relieve yourself before sex play.)



True, he doesn't need your help to masturbate, but occasionally it's fun to lend him a helping hand. And some women enjoy watching a man ejaculate. If you're naked while giving this hand job, let him come on your breasts.

I worked the following move out from watching porn films—and practice—but the opening move is borrowed from Lou Paget.

The Essential Hand Job

- Clasp your lubricated hands together, fingers interlaced, snugly around the shaft of his penis. Move your hands up the shaft in one long twisting motion. Repeat the move back down the shaft. Now vary that move by eliminating the twist.
- Clasp your hands at the top of the shaft when he has a firm erection. Gently contract and release them around the shaft at approximately one-second intervals. Keep doing this up and down the shaft, stopping at the corona, the rim where the shaft meets the head.
- Alternate the twisting and contracting strokes until he is ready to ejaculate. Then hold him firmly in both hands, gently contracting them in time with his spasms.
- Finish him off by running your thumb from the base of the shaft on the underside up to the head.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Mutual Masturbation

Watching your partner masturbate while you do is a hot experience with built-in sex coaching potential. Couples use their hands (and kiss) a lot in the early days of being together. If you're past the heady stage, close your eyes and remember how good all that hand play felt. Consider touching one another an exercise in heated mutual manual exploration. That makes it sound more important—and it *is* important. Experiment with touch and expand your erotic sensibilities.

Mutual Masturbation Game #1:

Teach him how to make his orgasm last longer

- Challenge him to masturbate without ejaculating for as long as he can. (And make that harder by masturbating yourself as he watches.)
- Suggest the stop-and-start method or alternating stimuli, changing strokes when he feels ejaculation is imminent. (As he is changing strokes to slow down, you speed up.)
- Take his penis in your hand now, while continuing to pleasure yourself with the other unless you have already reached orgasm. As he ejaculates, count the contractions he experiences during ejaculation, normally between three and eight. Can you tell a difference in the intensity of each contraction by the throbbing of his penis in your hand? Typically, the strongest contraction will be the first one. (And you might come yourself on that one.)
- Challenge him again to delay ejaculation as long as possible the next time you play mutual masturbation.





- Take his penis in your hand again. When he ejaculates this time, tell him to flex his PC muscle—while you continue stimulating his penis very slowly while squeezing throughout the ejaculation—effectively pushing his sensations of orgasm on longer.

Mutual Masturbation Game #2:

Show him how you make your orgasm last longer

- Masturbate in a comfortable position using the O Loop. (Directions on page tk. Practice alone before doing it with him.) Let him know that you are using the O Loop and sketch out the steps for him as you go.
- Focus on your arousal image.
- Start fire breathing and PC flexing. Ask him to fire breathe with you if he would like.
- Use your hand or vibrator to stimulate your clitoris and surrounding area as soon as you become highly aroused.
- Use your other hand when you are close to orgasm to massage your vulva, inner thighs, and groin with light, shallow strokes. Imagine that you are spreading arousal throughout those areas. Continue the massage during your orgasm. You will feel the orgasm spreading throughout your genitals and into your body. He will love this lesson.







Chapter 8

THE LOVE-HATE BODY RELATIONSHIP

Y*ou are much more critical of your body than your lover is.* He (or she) focuses on the parts of your body he loves, perhaps your full (or not so) breasts or hips, your graceful neck or long hands, even those sweetly aligned toes and maybe the taut legs you fear are too skinny or the ripe thighs you consider too fat. Your lover is not comparing you to the impossibly beautiful sitcom housewife or even to the prettiest wife on the block. However, you do make those comparisons, nearly always to your detriment, and on a daily basis.

Modern Western culture encourages female self-body-loathing. We never feel good enough, even with body, hair, make-up, and clothing in fabulous alignment. That inner discontent holds us back sexually. Have you ever heard (or made) a joke about a balding man with love handles or, worse, who thinks his body worthy of worship? Male body issues are all about the penis while ours are all-encompassing. Would that we could be more like men and forgive our laugh lines, our puffy mid-sections, and the dimples in our asses.

SEXUAL WORSHIP

If you have been fortunate enough to wander through the crumbling ancient Hindu temples in India, you have surely seen the erotic carvings on walls, pillars, doorways, even ceilings. However, you might have overlooked the symbols for *yoni* (vagina) and *lingam* (penis). The yoni looks like a bowl, and the lingam is an oval-shaped cylinder that fits into it. Sometimes there were individual altars to the yoni and the lingam. The Hindus unabashedly worshipped at those altars where they found the sacred in sexuality.

In another part of the world at that time, the Taoists of ancient China and Japan also practiced phallic worship. In modern times we worship the glossy, electronically altered photos of models and celebrities. Is that really progress?

If you think a modern, independent woman can't worship a penis without losing her power to a man, you're wrong. I adore my lover's penis. In fact, I could write an

erotic tribute to it. He loves that I love his penis—and has no expectation that I will move in, iron his shirts, or become responsible for the morning coffee and bagel. When I stay over, he brings the morning coffee to me in bed. And now that I think about it, every man in my life has brought that first cup of coffee to me in bed.

Worship your lover's genitalia. And encourage the worship of your own.

THE OPPOSITE OF WORSHIP

In an ideal world, to know your body should be to love your body.

However, some people look at their bodies and only see what they don't love or even like—or what they want to change. We live in a (worldwide) culture that exalts youth and beauty and idealizes the celebrity images that don't represent even the reality of the celebrities. Cindy Crawford once famously said that not even she is Cindy Crawford when she gets out of bed in the morning. Jamie Lee Curtis insisted that *More* magazine photograph the before of her as well as the after when they featured her on their cover. Without stylists and the right clothes and flattering lighting and photo-editing, she looked like any attractive middle-aged woman you would see in line at a mall. In the finished photos, she was hot.

VAGINA ANXIETY

Perhaps if we all experienced worship, there would be no genital anxieties—for men or women. But there are.

Vaginal concerns were, until recently, limited to taste and smell. Women worried that they didn't smell good or taste sweet to their lovers. Female Baby Boomers remember when feminine deodorant sprays were heavily marketed on television and in magazines. The sprays were never a good idea because they interfered with the vagina's natural self-cleansing ability and left many women prone to yeast and bacterial infections. Maintaining a clean, healthy vagina requires nothing but soap and water on

RESEARCH

Cosmetic surgery and orgasms

Several studies have shown that cosmetic surgery makes women more interested in sex. According to a 2006 survey conducted by the University of Pittsburgh, 95 percent of women said they had better orgasms after surgeries—with many saying they were having “the best sex” of their lives. Why does cosmetic surgery have such a big effect on sex lives?

A new face or body boosts a woman's sexual self-esteem. Many women get the same effect from losing weight or toning their bodies

STRAIGHT TALK

The case against designer vaginas #1

On August 31, 2007, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists issued a statement calling surgeries labeled “vaginal rejuvenation,” “designer angioplasty,” and “revirgination” “medically unnecessary and not guaranteed to be safe.”

Dr. Abbey Berenson, spokesperson for the group, said, “Many women don’t realize that the appearance of external genitals varies significantly from woman to woman... There are always risks associated with a surgical procedure. It’s important that women understand the potential risks of these procedures and that there is no scientific evidence regarding their benefits.”

the outside, and only occasional splashes of water, no soap, inside. Every woman should be familiar with the smell and taste of her own secretions so that she will recognize an incipient infection right away.

But a clean vagina isn’t enough anymore. We women are always finding new ways to compare ourselves to perceived ideals and feel less desirable. By age thirty, a lot of urban women have had even the smallest lines in their foreheads injected with Botox. In the quest for the perfect face and body, the vagina is the new source of anxiety. Its appearance, not merely taste and smell, is the issue.

If you are over forty, you can remember when adult women had pubic hair—and that was a good thing. Waxing is the least of it now. Blame porn to some extent for the rise of the designer vagina as fetish symbol. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the controversial vaginoplasty surgeries are the fastest growing cosmetic procedure in the United States. A surgeon who does these procedures in Manhattan says that young women come into his office with pages torn from *Playboy* and tell him, “I want a lab trim [labioplasty] so my pussy will look like that.”

Not every candidate for vaginoplasty, however, is on a quest for more shapely (in her mind) labia. Some women want tighter vaginas to improve the quality of the sex for them and their partners. Foreign-born women or women who are going to marry men from conservative cultures overseas get “re-virginization” surgeries, that is, they have their hymens restored.

Other women have medical problems. For example, laser vaginal rejuvenation (LVR) is performed on women who suffer from stress incontinence, have vaginas damaged by childbirth (including bad episiotomies), or have weakened walls between the vagina and bladder or rectum. That surgery might or might not leave the vagina feeling tighter.

As with all surgeries, there are risks. A woman might be left scarred or with less sexual sensation if nerves are damaged. Before you pay \$7,000 or more (that won’t be covered by health insurance) on a designer vagina, do some research, including getting opinions from doctors who aren’t selling the procedures.

STRAIGHT TALK

The case against designer vaginas #2

What does a top women's doctor think about vagina surgeries?

Says Dr. Laura Berman, author and director of the Berman Center in Chicago, a clinic that specializes in women's sexual problems,

Many women who feel they aren't tight enough aren't performing the Kegel exercises correctly. There is an over-the-counter monitoring device to check Kegel performance. I also recommend exercises to strengthen the transverse abdominal muscles.

And it's not just strengthening muscles, it's learning how to use them during sex. Too often women have these surgeries because some jerk told them they were too loose—when, in fact, he might be too small. But if she does her exercises and uses her muscles right, she could squeeze around any size, even a pinkie.

PENIS ANXIETY

Men have a corresponding body issue, and it's not as recent a development in genital history as ours: Penis anxiety. In young men, size is the concern. Is it big enough? they wonder. How important is penis size to women?, they ask. And by the time most men reach forty, they have experienced one or more instances of erectile difficulty. They begin to worry, "Am I hard enough? Will I lose my erection?" And then come the Viagra years.

Women respond to men's concerns in various ways, some more useful (in maintaining a good sex life) than others.

Ten Answers to One Question

I asked ten women at the bar at Tao, a trendy Manhattan restaurant, where a giant statue of Buddha overlooks the scene:

How important is penis size to you?

"It has to be adequate—five to six inches when erect and not too skinny. Aesthetically, I love a large one. But practically, I can work with anything five inches and above. I am turned off by small."—Jocie, 26

"I am a size queen, and I don't mind admitting it."
—Carlin, 34

"Most men, in my not-too-limited experience, are roughly the same size. Small ones grow more when they get erect than big ones do. I like them hard. That is important."
—Gwen, 39

"I remember when men were happy and grateful to see a naked woman.

They liked pubic hair. It separated the women from the girls."

—Joy Behar, comedian and co-host of *The View*





“Overall quality trumps size. Is it shapely? Is it nice and straight? Is the head beautiful? Does it get rock hard?”
—Jen, 29

“I’ve been with two men in my life who had big dicks—I mean *big* dicks, probably 9 or 10 inches and thick. That’s a little too much dick. You can do more with an average-sized one.”—Lonnie, 43

“I like anal sex, so I prefer a mid-size penis and can work with a small one.”—Jamie, 25

“It does matter, but penis size is not the most important thing. A man with a small dick can be a good lover; a man with a big dick can be a disappointment. All things being equal, I would rather have bigger than smaller.”
—Eileen, 38

“Penis size is not a deal-breaker like being inept at cunnilingus is.”—Nan, 40

“I love to perform fellatio—and I prefer a big, beautiful dick.”—Adrianna, 31

“My husband has a perfect dick, a little bigger than average, very hard, curves just a fraction to the left. I probably would love him if he had a less perfect dick, but I’m not sure I would overlook his little character flaws as easily as I do now.”—Lisa, 34

Handling a Penis Issue

If it’s a matter of size, don’t say, “Penis size doesn’t really matter to me.” Men don’t believe that. And if you have to say it, you both know that he’s not very well-endowed. Work with what he’s got. Adapt your lovemaking style to his penis size.

- What you can do with a small penis: Anal intercourse, a showy deep-throat move during fellatio, any intercourse position as long as you have PC strength.
- What you can do with a big penis: Give yourself a pass on the deep-throat move; ditto anal intercourse; let him take charge of intercourse, and lie back any time you want.
- When you’re talking about shape: If he has a curved penis, adjust intercourse positions so that he hits your G-spot!

THE HARDNESS FACTOR

Most women would probably say the quality of a man’s erection is more important than the size of his penis, especially because most erections do fall within the “average” range of five to seven inches. (According to The Kinsey Institute, roughly 2 percent of men are nine inches and over, with another 2 percent being three inches or under.) Hardness matters. If it didn’t, would there be Viagra—now used recreationally by as many men under forty as it is used medicinally by men over sixty?

Modern pharmacology aside, it is still likely that every now and then your man will become somewhat flaccid during lovemaking. Drinking, marijuana-smoking, over-eating, relationship issues, tiredness, and stress are all factors that can weigh the penis down, at least temporarily. Every woman needs a few stand-up tricks in her sexual repertoire just as she needs mascara and lip gloss in her cosmetic bag. (See *Two Last-Minute Saves* page 95).

The fall-back position for resuscitating a failing erection is, of course, fellatio. Occasionally a man will not want your attention turned on his limp dick. Pay attention to his body language. If he seems reluctant to have you go there, then guide his hand or mouth to your genitals, and help him give you an orgasm.

If he does want the oral help, this is my Little Black Dress of Blow Jobs, a perfect oral technique: elegant, simple, and effective. (See *The Perfect Stand-up Kiss*, page 96.)

Sexually alive women are generally happy with their bodies. How can we love sex if we hate our bodies? I am in favor of women making the best of, and then peace with, what they have and maintaining their sexual energy through regular exercise. Living in New York City, I see many beautiful, vibrant women of all ages, sizes, shapes, and colors every day (and men too). Focus on what is beautiful and sexy about you and pay homage to it. A little genital worship never hurts a sex life either.





HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Two Last-Minute Saves

There are two good reasons for doing what you can to restore his failing erection: continuing the stimulation you want to get from his erection and rescuing his ego. Obviously, you can reach orgasm without his erection, but why not have it all?

- **Scenario #1:** He's on top and you are close to orgasm as you feel him losing some of his erection. Clench your PC muscle hard, firmly enough to hold him in place. Grab his hip bones or buttocks, and rock him, side to side or back and forth, flexing your PC in time with the move. You are controlling the direction of his pelvic moments, the speed of thrusting, and the depth of penetration, and you have him where you need him. You can keep him there until you come, and he will likely regain his erection. He will probably have an orgasm too, and it will feel like you are pulling the orgasm out of him in a very explosive way: a sexual win/win.
- **Scenario #2:** You're on top and close to orgasm as he begins to lose some of his erection. Grasp him with your PC, put your hands on his hips, and pull him upward into you. Shift your body weight on your knees so that you aren't bearing down on his hips. Again, you will get what you need from him and he will probably come too.

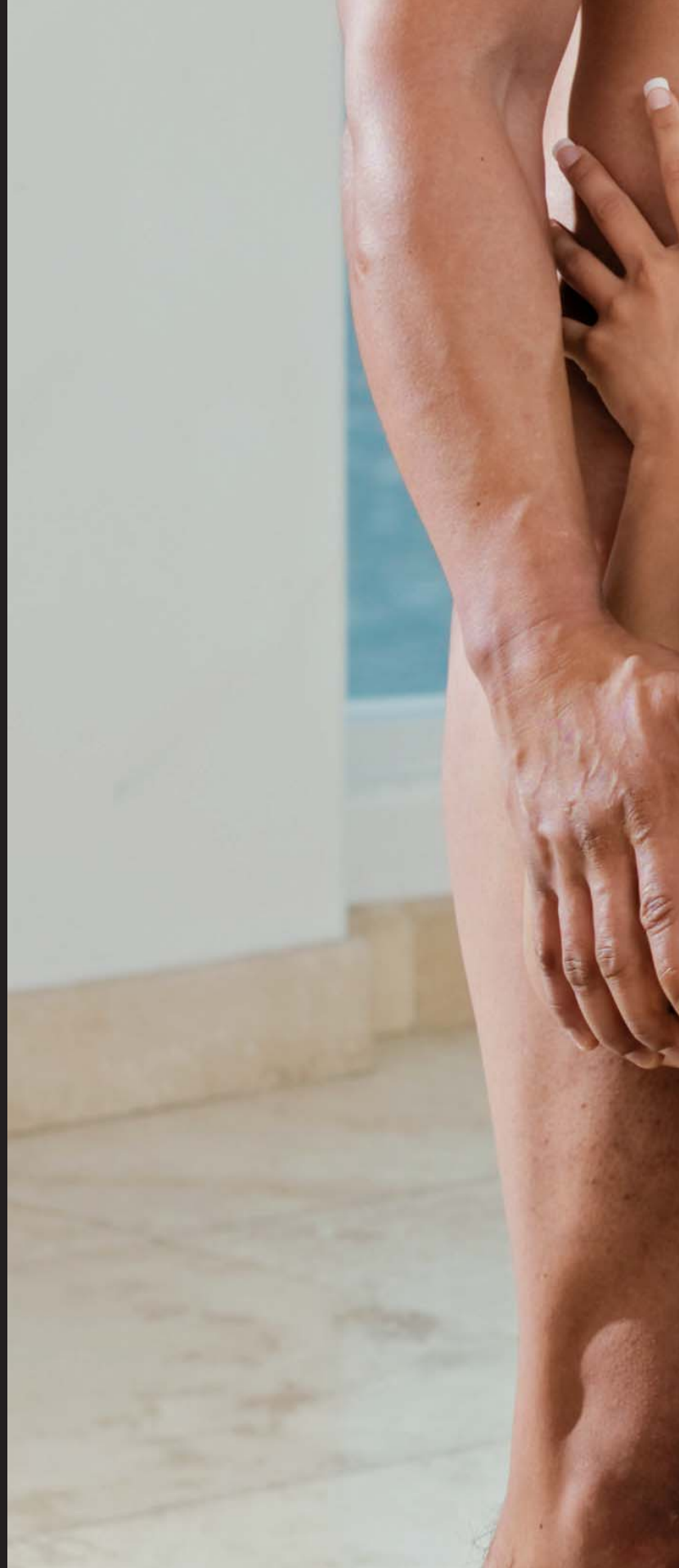
Even if he doesn't get a full erection and reach orgasm with these moves, he will be pleased that you had an orgasm. Men want to give us pleasure in bed.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

The Perfect Stand-up Kiss

The secret to this move: Combine mouth and firm hand action. And it's as close as you can get to a no-fail sex technique.

- Hold his penis firmly in one hand.
- Take it into your mouth, moving the top third of the shaft in and out. (Remember: The top third of the penis is the most sensitive part. If you can't get the bottom two-thirds into your mouth, don't worry about it.)
- Use the fingers of your other hand to stroke his perineum in a light, tickling come-to-Mama fashion.
- Use one hand when he becomes erect in a circular twisting motion up the shaft of his penis (never twist down). At the same time, swirl your tongue around the corona (that ridge separating the shaft from the head of the penis). Pay particular attention to the frenulum (the small piece of skin where the head meets the shaft).
- Alternate the swirl with the butterfly flick—flicking your tongue back and forth across the corona.
- Continue the hand motion while taking his testicles into your mouth, one at a time, and sucking lightly.
- Flick your tongue lightly across his perineum.
- Go back to his penis and alternate swirling, flicking, and sucking. Don't take his penis too far into your mouth or you won't be able to pull off the suction.







Chapter 9

YOUR SEXUAL BODY OVER A LIFETIME

S*exuality evolves over your lifetime.* The average woman loses her virginity at seventeen, has five sexual partners before marrying at twenty-six, gives birth to two children before she is forty, enters menopause at age fifty-one and has outlived her partner by seven years when she dies at age seventy-eight. (Most of us are not “average” in every way.) In a sexual lifetime, she will go through many hormonal phases, some encouraging arousal and desire, some suppressing it. Many other physical (including genetic), emotional, psychological, and practical (like availability of partners) factors will influence arousal and desire.

All these factors coming together create sexual passages that are both common to other women and unique to you. (See Part 4 for more information about sexual passages.)

As a woman moves through her thirties and forties, she likely has greater capacity for arousal and orgasm than she did in her twenties. Some women become more interested in sex during pregnancy. And the years before

menopause might be her hottest, partly due to her surging testosterone levels. Many postmenopausal say they rediscovered sex after they no longer had to use birth control. Don’t lament that thirtieth, fortieth, or even fiftieth birthday. You are not sexually defined by your age alone—and every age has its sexual perks. Often, midlife women, for example, report having more confidence and, thus, enjoying sex more than they did when they were younger.

THE PHYSICAL PROBLEMS—NOT ALWAYS PHYSICAL IN ORIGIN

Sex problems are often “couple problems,” not caused by a woman’s sexual functioning but by what is or isn’t happening between the partners. And couple problems are related as much to relationship issues as they are to age. Until a woman is sixty and beyond, the age of the relationship (unless she has medical problems) has more negative impact on sexual arousal and orgasm than her

biological age has. A fifty-year-old woman in a new relationship, for example, might be having more and better sex than her thirty-year-old daughter who has been with the same man for ten years. New Relationship Euphoria, that Desire Curve high, happens in every new relationship, whether the lovers are teenagers or grandparents.

The primary factors that contribute to a drop in sex drive (at any age) include four conditions:

- Sedentary lifestyles, which lead to energy loss
- Weight gain
- Health problems
- Repressed anger

That last point is significant. Couples often have unresolved conflicts, leading to repressed anger. When you keep having the same arguments over and over again—whether about finances, kids, in-laws, or politics—you create (between the two of you) a stagnant situation. Each makes the same case repeatedly, as the other tunes out and shuts down.

A woman might also be disappointed in her husband's lovemaking, especially if the rut they are in doesn't include regular orgasms for her. Maybe she has faked orgasms and is tired of faking, but she doesn't know how to change the status quo in the bedroom. She might subconsciously get even with him by rejecting his advances.

He can lose interest in sex for all of the above reasons too. Some therapists say that repressed anger is a leading cause of desire loss in men. Maybe he resents her professional success, her spending habits, or any number of other things that have nothing to do with their sex life. Maybe he doesn't feel fully accepted, understood, or appreciated in the relationship, but is afraid to let himself feel vulnerable in sharing that with her. Unable to express his feelings or deal with the relationship issues, he shuts down. Subconsciously, he might be trying to get even with her too.

These are ugly (and all-too-common) relationship cycles that empower no one.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

PILLOW FIGHTING FOR GROWN-UPS

At one time (back in the 1970s and 1980s) relationship counselors handed warring marital partners Styrofoam bats or pillows to bang on a piece of furniture and vent their repressed anger.

Turn that into a home game. Start a playful pillow fight. Mention something your lover has done that repeatedly angers you (“You never listen to me”) and smack the bed with the pillow. Now it's his (or her) turn.

The physical activity, not to mention the venting, works up a light sweat and gets your breathing heavier. That is sexy. You might be surprised at just how sexy it is.



“Certainly I see women of all ages who have lost desire. The reasons are complicated. But for every woman who says, ‘I’m not interested,’ there is a woman who says, ‘My husband is not interested. I want sex, and my husband is not interested.’ This woman can be thirty or she can be seventy.”

—Carolyn Armstong, M.D., specialist in women’s sexual problems

The Reproductive Cycle and Sexuality

Birth control, pregnancy, postchildbirth issues, and infertility treatments wreak havoc with your hormones. Anything that shifts a woman’s hormonal balance can affect her sexual desire, arousal, and ability to reach orgasm. But biology is only part of the bio/psycho/social complex of influences that affect our behavior. How hormone changes affect you is dependent on these other factors too. You are not at the mercy of your hormones, though it might sometimes feel that way. Following are some more detailed examples of how the complex combination of these above-mentioned factors affects women’s sexuality:

- **Pregnancy** increases desire, arousal, and orgasmic capacity in some women. The increased blood flow and vasocongestion, or swelling, of the vaginal tissues can make your genitals feel more engorged, leaving you in a nice state of easy arousal. In other women, desire and sexual arousal decrease during pregnancy. They might be distressed about the pregnancy, stressed by demands on their time at work and with other children at home, fearful of the impending birth, or unhappy with the physical changes in their bodies. A woman’s partner’s responses to her also play a big role in how pregnancy affects her desire.
- **Birth control pills** make some women feel more sexual because they aren’t worried about getting pregnant. They feel liberated, relaxed, and open to desire.

On the other hand, studies have shown that birth control pills can have a negative effect on sexual desire in some women. Those effects can last for a while, even after the pills are discontinued. Researchers are still not sure exactly what it is about the pill that suppresses desire. Hormone balance is a delicate thing: In some women, the estrogen/progestin combination in the pill seems to suppress testosterone; in other women, it can increase it. Some women also become depressed on the pill. The jury is still out on whether that side-effect is biochemical or psychological.

- **Infertility** treatments have a bigger negative impact on sexuality than birth control pills. The potent drugs have side effects that include making a woman feel nauseous, anxious, or moody—or all of the above. Add to that the psychological pressure a woman is under as she copes with frustration, disappointment, and feelings of biological inadequacy. She’s failed to conceive before turning to infertility treatment. What if that fails too?

Understanding the reproductive cycle and its hormonal effects on your sexuality is critical. You can take advantage of the hormonal benefits and manage the negative side effects if you know what is happening to your body. Enlist your lover’s emotional support when you need it. Ask for sex the way you want it, even if that means only sensual stroking, caressing, and kissing.

RESEARCH

Sexual arousal during breastfeeding

Women who breastfeed often have feelings of sexual arousal and a few even reach orgasm while breastfeeding. Because the experience is confusing and sometimes guilt or shame inducing, it has probably been underreported. In a 2005 study of breastfeeding women (reported in *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health* 40 percent of the participants admitted feeling sexually aroused at some point while breastfeeding their babies.

What's going on here?

The baby's suckling causes the breast to produce oxytocin, a hormone that both stimulates milk production and produces feelings of satiation and connection after orgasm. This "cuddle chemical" that bonds a woman to her lover is also responsible for helping a woman feel bonded to her baby. Arousal during breastfeeding is no cause for shame; in fact, the feelings can help a woman reestablish the erotic connection with her man after she puts baby down.

Whether or not women encounter these unexpected feelings while nursing, there is one other nice side effect of breastfeeding: increased breast and nipple sensitivity. Make the most of that increased sensitivity and enjoy it during sex play with your husband/partner. After all of the work you do nursing and caring for the baby, you deserve it!

How Aging Affects the Big Female Sex Issue: Low Desire

Some things do work against women's (and men's) sexuality in midlife and later.

Estrogen and testosterone levels and the adrenal gland hormone DHEA all decline as we age. Declining hormone levels are often blamed for low libido, but the impact is probably overstated.

Women also experience reduced blood flow to the clitoris and vagina in midlife. Less blood flooding to the genitals during arousal, along with those declining hormone levels, causes the vagina to be less elastic and produce less lubrication, making sex uncomfortable. If the dryness and inelasticity are severe, intercourse is painful and can even cause bleeding.

The hormones aren't racing, and sex hurts—so why bother?

It really is true: If you don't use it, you will lose it. The nerve endings leading into vagina atrophy with age if not used regularly. Do you want thinning, shrinking vaginal walls and dead nerve endings? No? *Lubricate and masturbate, using internal vibes.*

“Ten percent of women experience an increase in desire post-menopause. Some lose sexual desire. For most women, the amount of desire remains about the same. But in general, spontaneous desire decreases over the life cycle.”

—Sandra Leiblum, Ph.D., author, therapist, and researcher

Beat Desire Funks

You know what happens when you get into any kind of funk: Sometimes it's so hard to pull out that you just want to stay here. Think how difficult it can be to get out of your sweats on a rainy November Saturday when you have a head cold. Low desire can be just like that. Here are eleven things you can do to stay in the game at midlife or in postpregnancy desire funk:

- **Have sex!**

Regular sexual activity (even masturbation with vibrators) is the key to sustaining a good sex life over the decades. The more sex you have, the more you will want. And regular sex helps relationships.

- **Lubricate.**

Frequent use of lubricants, especially the long-lasting varieties, takes care of many physical problems associated with aging.

- **Get a makeover.**

A new hair-do, great make-up, and more flattering clothes—everyone needs a change sometimes. These things will give you a jumpstart and make you feel great. Numerous surveys have shown that aging women who rate themselves as “still attractive” have better sex lives than those who don't.

- **Masturbate.**

Masturbate whether you have a partner or not. Masturbation fuels your desire for sex with your partner—and keeps you alive if you don't have one. (In that case, use an internal vibe to help your vagina regain and sustain elasticity.)

- **Talk to your doctor.**

Be specific about your sex issues. Don't count on your doctor to ask, “How's your sex life?” The majority of doctors, even therapists, won't do that. A sexual health survey conducted in May 2007 by The Women's Sexual Health Foundation found that less than 8 percent of women were asked about sexual functioning. The message is clear: It's up to you to initiate the dialogue.

- **Investigate hormone replacement therapy and herbal remedies.**

Before beginning any of these treatments, learn as much as you can about them, and do as much research on your own as possible. Then discuss your options thoroughly with your doctor to be sure any new treatments you are considering are right for you. (Be aware that there continues to be controversy over the safety and desirability of using hormone replacement therapy.)

- **Pay attention to your diet, sleep, and exercise.**

Remember that a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and regular vigorous exercise will do more for your libido than anything you buy in a bottle. If you need to lose weight, lose it. And exercise does not have to be anything fancy or complicated—it can be as simple as regular walking. Get moving. Do something.

- **Make a lifetime commitment to Kegel exercises.**

Get your PC muscle in shape and keep it toned. This is the single best thing a woman can do for her sex life at any age.

- **Take more time for foreplay.**

Sometimes couples think they aren't interested in sex because they don't get as aroused as quickly as they once did. Men and women need more foreplay at midlife and beyond.

- **Use vibrators, vibrators, vibrators!**

I am such an enthusiastic proponent of vibrator use that women sometimes ask me if I have stock in a vibe company. (The answer is no.) Frequent vibrator use (to orgasm), combined with regular Kegel exercises, maintains a healthy vagina, provides the physical and emotional benefits of orgasm, and leaves you feeling more youthful than Botox ever could.

- **Make other necessary adjustments.**

Remember, just as you change and grow over the years, so does your sex life. As such, it's important to make individual changes to your lovemaking routine when needed: Vary the way you stroke one another's genitals, alter intercourse positions to accommodate body changes, and have more oral sex. Being open and receptive to these individual changes will only make your sex life get better with age!

WAKE UP YOUR VAGINA

These two sexercises will help to stimulate the sexual nerve endings in your pelvic region. They are good for any woman, at any age:

The Sexy Squat

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and slowly lower your butt as if you were going to sit in a chair. Squeeze your PC muscle and muscles in your buttocks as you rise back up. Do three times daily.

The Seat

Sit back on your heels and reach your arms forward. Hold one minute, then sit up and lean back as far as you can, hands on the floor behind you for support. Hold one minute. Do three times daily.

LIBIDO BOOSTERS

You really can't buy a new, highly charged libido at the drug or health food store, but you can get a little help:

- Aphrodisiacs, such as certain foods and herbal teas, only boost your libido if you are absolutely convinced they will. (The placebo effect kicks in.)
- Yohimbe, made from an African tree root, does get the blood racing, and some of it races into the genitals. The accelerated heartbeat accompanying all that can be a little scary. Do your research on the side effects before trying yohimbe.
- Creams and gels applied to the clitoris to stimulate arousal do generate heat—and sometimes allergic reactions. Zestra is the best of these products, effective for many women who have tested it.

Be skeptical of health-food-store remedies like DHEA (a hormone said to boost testosterone), ginseng, ArginMax, and others. They are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and might vary greatly from one brand to another. And reliable independent studies (not paid for by manufacturers) on their effectiveness don't exist anyway. Of all the sex boosters, ArginMax has the best press and does come with a money-back guarantee.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Slow Play

At midlife and beyond, lovers need more direct and focused stimulation to become aroused and reach orgasm. These techniques address those needs. They also work for younger couples who are tired and stressed from dealing with work, home, and children. If you often feel you don't have time to unwind before getting into sex, try slow play:

Slow Play #1

She lies on her back. He sits between her legs with his penis at the entrance of her vagina. He slowly caresses her vagina with his fingers until she is very wet. Then he gently inserts the head of his penis into her vagina. He stimulates her clitoris with his fingers as he strokes her vagina with the head of his penis.

When she is on the verge of orgasm, he thrusts deeply and rapidly while continuing the clitoral stimulation if she needs that.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Slow Play #2

She lies down and draws her knees to her torso. Her vagina is pushed forward. (He will find that view exciting as he kneels before her.)

He teases her to the point of madness by inserting and withdrawing his penis. (He will probably need to add clitoral stimulation, either with the head of his penis or his fingers, to really drive her mad.)

She has limited range of motion, and that helps him to maintain his erection longer.





Slow Play #3

She lies on her back. Again, he kneels in front of her, but this time at her feet. He raises her legs until only her head and shoulders remain on the bed or floor. He moves closer to her vagina. After he enters her, she puts her legs around his head. (A graduated stack of pillows will make this a doable position for more couples.)

She gets G-spot stimulation. He can (as always) stimulate her clitoris. And the bonus: The position is good for a man whose erection lasts longer.

(See Chapter 18, The Commitment Passages, on page 197, for more tips.)

THE EVOLVING ORGASM

Orgasm leads to elevation of the hormone prolactin. In fact, orgasm during lovemaking elevates the prolactin level 400 percent more than orgasm via masturbation.

Prolactin affects the central nervous system centers controlling sexual desire, in part by regulating dopamine, the sex-drive hormone. This is why we say, “The more sex you have, the more you want to have.” And the more sex you have, the better orgasms you have.

Women sometimes say their orgasms aren’t as strong or as good in middle age. That is true for them largely because they aren’t having regular orgasms to keep the prolactin/dopamine production up. Oxytocin also comes into play here. When we are young, women produce more oxytocin at orgasm than men do. That profusion of oxytocin makes a woman want to have sex again soon with her man. As her oxytocin levels decline in midlife, she is not in a hurry to do it again—even if she has a good time in bed once she gets there.

Interestingly, oxytocin levels are more evenly balanced among men and women after age forty. At that point, having orgasms with a woman now bonds a man more closely to her than it once did. And that helps to explain why old guys like Warren Beatty finally meet their match.

TEN ANSWERS TO ONE QUESTION

I asked ten women at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC:

What is sexually normal?

“Heterosexual sex.” —Allison, 42

“Intercourse, oral, anal—anything short of kink is normal.” —Ginger, 34

“It’s normal to love one man and then to do whatever it is the two of you want to do in bed.”—Catherine, 44

“Normal? There is no normal anymore.”—Chelsea, 19

“I don’t know about ‘normal,’ but the norm is probably a monogamous sexual relationship with a little cheating here and there.”—Cynthia, 45

“Normal is whatever I want to do in bed—and *not normal* is what my husband wants to do because he saw it in a porn film.”—Rachel, 29

“I want my mother to have a normal life. She has too many boyfriends, and they are not age-appropriate. And she crosses racial lines like other people cross the street.”—Jennifer, 30

“Normal is sex two or three times a week. I want to be more than normal. When I read sex surveys, I think, ‘Okay, I can beat that.’ ”—Jillian, 41

“Normal depends on your age. In my age group, it is normal to have girl flings, fuck buddies, guys you would blow but not fuck, and guys you are keeping on the short leash because they are commitment material. I don’t think all that was normal in my mother’s youth.”—Christina, 27

“For me, normal is always having two lovers. I need the diversity and the balance that you get when you have to divide your time between two men. That might be normal for a lot of women but they are afraid to admit it.”—Wendy, 38

FORGET NORMAL

What gets in the way of your sexual pleasure? What disconnects you from your body and your lover's body? What is right for you?

A lack of knowledge about your sexual body and your partner's can disconnect you from pleasure. Often, what shuts us down is a false idea of "normal," a set of impossible standards and unrealistic expectations like "hot monogamy" and "perfect labia," and "sixty is the new forty."

At every stage of the life cycle we compare ourselves to other women—their bodies, their relationships, and their numbers. Do our numbers compare with theirs? How many partners *should* we have had? How much sex *should* we have every week? How many orgasms *should* we have? Incidentally, these sorts of comparisons can go a lot of ways. If all of the studies cited earlier in this text are any indication, it appears women seem to be concerned constantly about their number of sex partners being too high. But the opposite, having few partners or very little sexual experience, can also be a source of anxiety and self-consciousness. Those numbers can be troublesome also, making it uncomfortable to meet someone new in social situations, for fear of broaching the topic.

There's a weird and damaging sexual standard that is set up in our society for women these days: On one hand, women are afraid as being perceived negatively if they have too much sex/too many partners, but on the other hand, everything we see in media and pop culture tells us that young, intelligent, attractive, single women are supposed to be sexy/overtly sexual.

Basically these days, no matter what her choices, a woman is always second-guessing herself any way you slice it—damned if you do, damned if you don't.

Forget all those questions about what *should be*—and forget about what everyone else is or isn't doing. Redefine normal as who you are, what you want, and where you are right now.



Chapter 10

THE PATHOLOGIZING OF FEMALE SEXUALITY

The cultural definition of “normal” when it comes to sexuality has a particularly ugly side. Normal has more often been used to define and confine women than men. Female sexuality has been pathologized in one way or another throughout history.

WOMEN AND SEXUALITY: THE VIEW OVER TIME

From sinner to personality-disorder sufferer, women with high or atypical sex drives have always worn the Scarlet A of their times. They have been referred to in the following terms:

- *Nymphomaniac* was the Victorian designation for women who expected to get sexual pleasure in their relationships with men. That was replaced in modern times by the more pejorative term:

- *Slut*, applied largely to women who had sex with more than one man or lost their virginity before marriage. (In the twentieth century, it was finally okay for a wife to have a little fun in bed with her husband.) By the late twentieth century, a lusty woman was labeled as having:
- *Borderline personality disorder* and therapy became the new voice in place of the patriarchal church.

I know several women involved in sex journalism, sex research, and porn-film production who have been told by a female relative, “My therapist says you are obsessed with sex and have borderline personality disorder.” Only in a judgmental and Puritanical culture such as ours would a psychiatric professional make that kind of broad diagnosis of someone they’ve never met based on their own patient’s complaints or comments about this “sex-obsessed” relative.

Feminist writers from Betty Friedan through Susan Faludi and Laura Kipnis have argued against the pathologizing of female sexuality. Their arguments are actually backed by science that tells us women have a greater sexual capacity than men, are more likely to be bisexual, and are *not* more naturally monogamous. They refute the common held knowledge that if a woman is not interested in long-term monogamous partnership, according to everyone from her friends to the visiting shrinks on *Oprah*, she has an intimacy disorder. Because if you are a woman who doesn't want to commit, the current wisdom tells us you have an intimacy disorder. Never mind the fact that determinedly single women usually have strong family and friend ties, and often long-term lovers. Doesn't that show an ability to form intimate relationships? Sadly, girlfriends, sisters, mothers, and other women support the system that validates pairing off with a man over every other lifestyle choice.

But really, the judging doesn't stop there. Aren't we women our own worst enemies in more ways than just judging each other on who decides to pair off with a man in marriage or not? Sure, there's always that married versus single judgment. But then there's the having kids versus not having kids judgment. Or if you're married, there's the pressure to have a kid even if you're just not yet ready. Once you do have one kid, there's pressure to have another. And after kids, the fun really starts. Next, there's women judging each other about mothering issues—breastfeeding versus bottlefeeding, working mothers versus stay-at-home mothers.

RESEARCH

A high (or low) sex drive might be in your genes

Evolutionary psychologists and anthropologists have long theorized that there is a genetic component to sex drive.

A 2006 study conducted by researchers jointly at Ben Gurion University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem concluded that differences in the dopamine D-4 receptor gene (DRD4) contribute to differences in sexual desire, arousal, and sexual function. Specifically, they found that certain genetic variations corresponded with low desire, while others corresponded with high desire.

More research needs to be—and certainly will be—done on this receptor gene, but the research does bolster the contention that we all have natural desire Set Points. The researchers concluded that “low [or high] sexual desire might be a normal biological condition rather than a psychological problem.”

Historically, there has always been a double standard when it comes to sex drives: Men, of course, have been admired for high sex drives, while women have been pathologized.





“Women are labeled as dysfunctional whether they have what is deemed too much spontaneous desire or not enough of it. A woman with too little spontaneous desire is labeled frigid. A woman with too much is called a slut. Any woman who wants sex—not with a specific man, just sex with some man—is a slut.”

—Nan Wise, therapist and creator of the Desire Curve

Why can't we women be okay with doing our best to make our own informed choices that feel right for us, and then let everyone else do the same? Why are we so insecure that we have to take it out on each other? Men just don't treat each other like this. We should take some tips from our male counterparts. (For more on validation of your life choices, see Part Four.)

What does the public flogging of female sexuality do to an individual woman's sexuality?

It can suppress her desire and repress her arousal. In lying, hiding, and denying her true sexuality, she can become more detached from—and even fail to recognize—her own desire/arousal process. And some women act out defiantly, having sex they don't want to have with men they don't like, which can, in some instances, be dangerous to their physical and emotional well-being and damaging to their self-esteem.

Becoming sexually empowered is not easy in a climate of shame and guilt.

THE OVERMEDICALIZATION OF SEXUALITY

Viagra launched a revolution. Before Viagra, researchers like Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, Kaplan, and others conducted sex research. After Viagra, sex research has been largely conducted by big pharmaceutical companies hoping to find the next big pill that cures a sexual problem. In particular, they are aiming to solve female sexual dysfunction (FSD), which is, as I said earlier, mainly low or no desire.

Viagra and Cialis, its younger brother, do work to increase blood flow to the penis, resulting in erection. That doesn't mean these drugs have been an unqualified success. First, they don't work for all men. Second, many of the men who used them successfully didn't renew their prescriptions; drugs can't cure relationship issues or turn the sex around for a couple who have problems with one partner's desire level or sexual technique.

For the past several years, pharmaceutical companies have been trying without success to develop a female version of Viagra to solve the problem of FSD—likely an over-reported problem. There is no crisis in women's sexual functioning. Our understanding of how women's desire and arousal work is a problem.





PART 3

SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

How many ways are there to have sex?

That question has a two-part answer dependent on the sexual activities you enjoy and the gender and number of the sexual partners participating in those activities with you.

In your grandmother's day, nice girls enjoyed kissing, manual foreplay, and intercourse—and the wild girls indulged in oral sex. The Baby Boomers first espoused the concept that he should give her an orgasm via cunnilingus before he had his. Generation X girls have oral sex before intercourse—and perform fellatio as easily as Grandmother French-kissed. And Generation Y girls expect to give themselves over physically early in a dating relationship. Influenced by the porn explosion, women from the Baby Boomer age and younger play kinky with a little bondage, some spanking, and maybe more. Nipple clamps and floggers are routinely sold at sex toy parties in the suburbs all over the country, not just on the coasts.

Now sex for the average couple involves manual and oral stimulation, with oral sex being sometimes an act unto itself. Sometimes intercourse includes anal sex and a dollop of kink.

STRAIGHT TALK

Am I Normal?

Oral, anal, kink? Orgasms—one or several?

San Francisco-based syndicated sex columnist, author, and therapist Dr. Isadora Alman says,

Twenty years ago, people wanted to know if oral sex was normal. Now it's S/M. People worry that their bodies, their sexual responses, and their sexual activities are not normal.

Who says what is normal? Is size two the new normal? Is it normal for a woman to be able to separate love and sex? Love more than one man at a time? Be bisexual? Have sex for more than ten minutes? Sexual variations are more acceptable now than they ever have been in modern times—but everyone still wants to know: Am I normal?

Straight, bisexual, and gay people enjoy most of the same sexual activities: oral and manual play and intercourse. And like straight couples who have been together a while, gay couples in long-term relationships grow increasingly “kinky” and also prone to affairs. While the majority of the population is heterosexual, approximately 10 percent (maybe less, depending on which group commissions the survey) are gay men and lesbian women. An increasing number of straight women (especially younger women) have experimented sexually with other women; some surveys report that more than a third of respondents have had sex with a woman at least once.

A significant and growing minority of people participate in group sex, swinging, or polyamory, loving more than one regular partner.

Women might still have difficulty reaching orgasm in their sexual encounters, but at least now they can be disappointed in a variety of sexual situations.

Some studies do show that women are more likely to have an orgasm with a woman than a man. Jennifer Baumgardner, author of *Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics*, says that bisexual women have higher expectations of sex with men because of their affairs with women. To be fair, each gender has its complaints.

Surveys, including my own, report that both sexes want more foreplay. Women typically say they would like twenty minutes of foreplay, men say fifteen. (Doesn't that make you wonder why the average sexual encounter is only ten minutes?) Both complain that the sex is “boring,” with women wanting “more romance” to spice it up and men wanting more spice. Women wish men were better kissers and didn't stop kissing after they got comfortable in a sexual relationship. Men wish women didn't turn fellatio into a lick and a promise once we are comfortable in a sexual relationship.

Yet we say we still want to drive each other wild in bed.

“One thing a woman could do to improve her sex life is ask her man whether he wants his blow job before or after dinner. The blow job diet always works to make a man a more grateful and giving lover. No man on the planet is immune.”

—Nan Wise, author, neuroscientist, and therapist

After “How can I come during intercourse,” the question women have most often asked me over the years is, “How can I drive him wild in bed?”

The answer are straightforward:

Have orgasms—your orgasms.

Learn how to give a really good blow job.

Know his body, find his touch zones, and play them.

You didn’t expect the answer to be that simple, did you? I’m always surprised at how many women think they have to be sexual acrobats or possess the skills of a famed courtesan to make him crazy. Any woman is capable of driving her man wild in bed. (Think of it as a companion maxim to “Any woman can fake an orgasm that fools any man.”) It’s almost as easy as faking an orgasm and much more fun.

THE ESSENTIAL SEXUAL SKILLS

There is an ongoing debate between sex therapists—who deal almost exclusively with relationship issues and little with sex technique—and sexologists or “sexperts”—those of us who put high priority on the science of sex and sex technique, and make derogatory remarks about “intimacy pushers” behind their backs. The debate revolves around intimacy versus technique. Therapists tend to say that women care more about being close than reaching orgasm. And we say, “Oh, yeah?”

A rather famous male therapist/author once told me that technique doesn’t matter. (I won’t shame him by mentioning his name.) But yes, it does. No, you don’t have to be a virtuoso, but you do need to master a basic set of skills. As does your lover.

If you play a recreational sport or knit or bake, you know that some skill is necessary in addition to the joy and enthusiasm you bring to the pursuit. Why should sex be the one physical activity exempt from any standards of practice? Essential sexual skills are necessary.



Chapter 11

FOREPLAY

With all of the focus on sex in this book (this is *The Sex Bible for Women*, after all), let's not lose sight of the fun that leads up to those moments of sexual intimacy. Sex play isn't just a means of getting to the end of the line and cutting straight to the chase. It's a worthy pursuit in and of itself. In fact, sometimes the anticipating, chasing, and teasing are part of what make it all so sexy. Enjoy the whole ride, from the very first spark.

THE ART OF FLIRTATION

Before you get to sex, or even kissing, you need to know how to flirt and tease. (I devoted an entire section to those arts in *The Sex Bible*.) If you have ever watched a skilled flirt work a room, you know that she possesses the following traits:

- Is not necessarily the most beautiful woman, or the youngest, but she is self-confident
- Uses eye contact and touch effectively
- Is charming to both men and women
- Makes people feel like she has eyes only for them at the moment
- Exudes sexuality

Eye contact is so important when it comes to flirting. Go to a nice bar, a neighborhood place, an after-work bar, a jazz bar, a bar with food—any place that is not a “boozier” bar. Observe the action. Inevitably, you will see a man watching a woman. She will make eye contact with him. What happens next is only the map to hooking up. If she holds his gaze, he will approach her. If she looks into his eyes, then looks away, he probably won't.

Men don't like to fail. They wait for us to signal that we are approachable before they make a move.

AND THEN YOU KISS

If a woman's flirting catches a man's attention and he does, indeed, approach her, that much-anticipated first kiss might be on the horizon. Science tells us that the kiss is where we first test sexual chemistry, exchanging biological signals with our saliva. The sensitive nerve endings on the lips, on the tongue, and elsewhere inside the mouth react quickly to delicate erotic stimulation by the tip of another tongue. The olfactory nerve cells in the nose are near the mouth. We really do taste, touch, and smell each other in a deep kiss. A good kiss is a good start.







HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Teach Him How to Kiss

Yes, you can teach him how to do this well, even if his idea of a kiss is pushing his wet, flabby tongue full-on into your mouth. Hold his face in your hands and kiss him the way you want to be kissed. Use the tip of your tongue. Outline his lips with it.

Explore the tip and the edges of his tongue.

If he gets impatient and tries to ram his tongue into your mouth, gently, but firmly, push his face back

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

The French Kiss

Inserting your whole tongue into your lover's mouth is not a French kiss. That is a tongue sandwich.

A French kiss is the most delicate interplay of the tips of your tongues. Use the tip of your tongue to play with your partner's lips and tongue and the inside of his mouth. Lead with the tip. Pull back. Circle your lover's tongue with the tip of yours. Pull back. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

When you are both very aroused, thrust the tip of your tongue in and out in a rhythmic, stabbing movement. Your lips are passionately locked, but your tongues are not wrestling for control of the shared oral space. Only tease one another with the tips of those fast-moving tongues.

As you're kissing, don't let your hands be idle. Run your hands up and down one another's bodies. Let your caressing and stroking heat up as the kisses do.

If you want to play with your partner a little longer, pull back from the deep French kiss, the one that signals your desire for intercourse. Use the tip of your tongue in circles just inside his lips. Tease those lips again and again with the circling tip of your tongue—the way you tease the head of his penis in the silken swirl. Stop. Suck his lips gently, one at a time.

Now try to disengage.

Women's number one complaint about the way men kiss: too much tongue.

The French kiss is the ultimate kiss. Mutual full exploration of lovers' mouths used to be a prerequisite for moving on to intercourse. That is not so true anymore, but maybe you should go there anyway. You can learn a lot about a man's lovemaking style by the way he French kisses. And the corrections you subtly make here might pick up his game all around.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

THE OTHER SIDE

Men's number one complaint about the way women kiss: Their mouths are not relaxed and open enough.

With lips parted and mouth relaxed, pay attention to his lips, one at a time. Lightly suck first his bottom lip, then the top. With the tip of your tongue, lick each lip. Now give him a full-mouth kiss with relaxed, open lips and a little tongue. Again, you are holding his face and you can pull back from him if he introduces too much tongue.

TEASERS

These games need not lead directly to intercourse. Fore-play can be open-ended, something you do, for example, in the morning to rev your sexual engine. The charge can last all day.

If you have limited time for sex, foreplay in the morning and speed-sex at night is the one-two erotic punch that keeps you in the game. The following are sure-fire ways to make sure he's thinking about you all day long:

Kiss, kiss

Never mind the “good-bye, dear” kiss. Put your lips anywhere but on your lover's lips. (See **photo, right**) Kiss the neck, collar bone, between the breasts, the place over his heart. Wrists are under-valued kissing spots. Hold your lips to her (or his) wrist until you feel the pulse beating in your lips. That feels surprisingly intimate and erotic.

Touch—but not on the genitals

Excluding the genitals, touch any part of your lover's body. Run your fingertips lightly up and down her inner thighs as she puts on (or takes off) her make-up. Stand behind him, put your arms around his waist, and massage his chest as he shaves. Rub one another's back or shoulders as you are cooking together. Hold hands the way you did when you were first together, and rub the back of his hand with your thumb or make circles inside his palm.

His move

Rub your penis on her body, especially her inner thighs, buttocks, and breasts.

Her move

Rub your breasts against his body. Take his erection between your breasts and simulate intercourse.

Dry off

Be waiting with body lotion or oil and a big fluffy towel when your lover comes out of the shower. Apply the lotion or oil and dry him or her off.

Licking

Or you can skip the oil and lotion, and lick him dry.

Dress up

Pick out each other's clothes in the morning. Then dress one another.

Lingerie show

Buy sexy new pieces, put them in the drawer, and pull them out as a surprise. Hand him the digital camera and let him click away while you catwalk the bedroom in lingerie and heels.

Talk

Talk about sex when you are out to dinner with other couples. The conversation will spark desire—and maybe give you a new idea or two.

Talk two

Make an audio tape of you reading erotica or erotic poetry. Give it to lover and say, “Listen to this on the way into work this morning.”

As you can see from these tips, there are plenty of creative games you can try out to make the most of your foreplay time. Don't always worry about setting the perfect mood or even having enough time at all for foreplay—just jump into it whenever you can, and have fun!

Foreplay is an old-fashioned word, no longer used by some sexologists who refer to every sexual act or activity as a part of *sex play*. I like the term *sex play* and sometimes use it. But the classic foreplay concept—the play that is meant to arouse—is still a good one. Kissing, teasing, and game playing don't have to lead directly to intercourse. Sometimes they are part of a process that goes on between a couple for days or weeks.





Chapter 12

ORAL SEX

A*nd where do we go from the kiss?* After all of that great kissing, manual or oral play is the next step—or maybe it's straight to intercourse. Sometimes you just have to go there. But we'll get to intercourse later ...

CUNNILINGUS

Both the giving and receiving of oral sex are essential skills. Some of you have female lovers; some of you are exclusively with men. Share this section with your man.

If your lover is a woman, tenderly undress her. Place one hand over her genitals so she will know that something special is coming. Then take that hand away.

- Start at the top of her body. Stroke, massage, nibble, suck, kiss, lick, and otherwise tease and tantalize her body, avoiding her genitals until she is aroused.
- Pay special attention to her breasts. Massage her aureoles with flat, open palms, then play with the nipples as you lick and kiss slowly down a line from her navel to the edge of her pubic hair.
- Lick the line of flesh between her pelvis and thighs. Kiss and lick up and down one inner thigh to the area behind her knees. Now do the same to the other thigh. Kneel before her. You are now ready to worship.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Cunnilingus

Some women say they don't like receiving cunnilingus. That usually means they haven't experienced oral lovemaking the way it should be done. Or they might be self-conscious about their bodies, or afraid to let go with a lover this way. Don't insist that she submit and surrender. Give her time to want it on her own. But if she's ready to go, this is the way to rock her world:

- She should be in a comfortable position with legs open, knees bent, and feet flat or with legs outstretched and open to a V. You can lie or kneel between her legs or come in from the side and wrap a leg around your shoulder. Or she can straddle your face and lower her clitoris to your mouth. A lot of women love this position because it puts them in charge.
- Gently part her labia. Holding them open, lift the clitoral hood. If her clitoris is well back inside the hood, gently run your fingers along the side of the hood to expose the clitoris. (You might have to keep one hand in this position until she reaches orgasm.)
- Lick the delicate tissue along the sides and above and below her clitoris in long, broad strokes of the tongue. Don't forget her U spot (just above her urethra).
- Experiment with your tongue strokes. At the same time, insert two fingers of one hand into her vagina. Stroke her AFE Zone until she is wet with lubrication.
- Put your lips around the sides of her clitoris. Hold them in a pursed position as you gently suck. Alternate the sucking with licking of the surrounding tissues. With your fingers inside her vagina, stroke back and forth from the AFE to the G-spot.
- Lick and suck her clitoris if she likes it. Some women do not like direct stimulation of the clitoris, but others do.
- Cover the clitoral area with your mouth when she is nearing orgasm. Suck around the sides of her clitoris. Stimulate her G-spot by pressing repeatedly and lightly against it with one finger pad. Or pull your fingers out and stimulate her labia with your hand, stroke her inner thighs, or tease her nipples. You can alternate these stimuli and drive her wild. But do not remove your mouth until she has reached orgasm.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

FANCY STROKES

Add some fancy strokes once you have mastered the basic technique.

- **Light Flick**

Using only the tip of your tongue—no broad strokes—flick back and forth rapidly along the clitoral shaft. When she is approaching orgasm, flick back and forth across the top of the clitoris.

- **Velvet No**

Use this technique on a multi-orgasmic woman who likes a stronger touch after her first orgasm. Put the tip of your tongue against the shaft of her clitoris and hold it steady. Move your head back and forth as if you were saying, “No, no, no.” The key to this move is holding your tongue steady while you move your head.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT

Some women will only have multiple orgasms through prolonged and expert cunnilingus. Here’s one way of doing it for her: Pretend the tip of your tongue is a candle flame. In your mind’s eye, see that flame flickering in the wind. Move your tongue rapidly around the sides of her clitoris, above and below it, across the tiny shaft, as the candle flame moves.

When she starts to orgasm, lick the sides of her clitoris in slow, even strokes. As you feel the orgasm subside, go back to the flame until she begins to come again.

Spice It Up

Are you looking for ways to create new sensations for her?

Don’t rely entirely on your tongue. Introducing sensuous items like fabric and flower petals into oral play creates new textures and sensations for her. You can even use your nose to good advantage if your tongue is getting tired. Here are some sure-fire ways to drive her wild:

- Perform cunnilingus while she’s wearing a pair of wispy panties. Lick through and around them, but don’t put your tongue on her clitoris.
- Put rose petals on your finger pads and, as you are licking her through her panties, use your rose-covered fingers to press her inner thighs and labia.
- Bring her to orgasm by using the bridge of your nose to massage her clitoris and the surrounding tissue.
- Alternate your tongue with The Tongue, a small vibrator that feels like the real thing.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER: *The Basic Black Dress of Blow Jobs*



- Kiss and lick his inner thighs while pulling down ever so slightly on his scrotum. With your finger pads, scratch his testicles. Put his balls carefully in your mouth one at a time. Roll them around. Then, ever so gently, pull them down with your mouth.
- While you're attending to his balls, run your fingers lovingly up and down the shaft of his penis.
- Get into a comfortable position, either kneeling at his side on the bed, at a right angle to his body, or kneeling between his legs. If none of those is comfortable, bring him down to the edge of the bed and kneel on the floor. Wet your lips and be sure that your lips cover your teeth. Run your tongue around the head of his penis to moisten it.
- Hold the base of his penis firmly in one hand. With the other hand, you can form a circle with your thumb and forefinger—what sex expert Lou Paget calls “the ring and the seal” to elongate your mouth and prevent him from going in further than you would like. Maintain a twisting motion with that hand as you fellate him. Or, if his erection is not firm, use both hands (wrapped around the shaft) in an upward twist stroke.

- Circle the head with your tongue in a swirling motion, then work your tongue in long strokes up and down his shaft. Now back to the head.
- Follow the ridge of the corona with your tongue while working the shaft with your hands, the penis sandwiched between them—unless, of course, you want to keep that ring and seal in place.
- Strum the frenulum with your tongue. Lick the raphe.
- Make eye contact with him from time to time.
- Do this showy move for at least ten to twenty seconds: Repeatedly pull his penis into your mouth, then push it out, using suction—while keeping that tongue in motion.
- Go back to the head. Swirl your tongue around it. Tongue the corona. Suck the head. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
- Follow his lead if he pulls back from stimulation. He knows that he will reach orgasm sooner than he would like if you don't stop. Take his hand and put it against your vagina. Let him stimulate you until his excitement subsides a bit.

- Apply gentle pressure with your thumb or finger to his perineum if you want him to come.

Don't feel badly that you can't deep throat his penis without gagging. Concentrate attention during fellatio on the head of his penis and the first third of the shaft while not neglecting his perineum. He won't notice or care if you don't take the entire shaft into your mouth. (Lou's ring-and-seal trick fools him into thinking you are taking in more than you are.)

And if you want to give him something really special, fellate him to orgasm. If you can do this comfortably, when he's near ejaculation, take his pelvis in both hands and rock him toward you so that he goes deeper into your mouth. If you want to, add a pearl choker to that basic black dress by letting him come on your face or breasts—or swallow.



THE REAL WAY TO A MAN'S HEART

If your lover is a man, you know that a good blow job is really the way to his heart. Women too often perform fellatio as if it were a means to an end: keeping him happy, getting what she wants in return, raising his penis up from a low point. But that type of thinking is really a missed opportunity. Worship his penis. If you can get into doing that, you can have an orgasm while giving him a blow job—and he will worship you.

When I began researching sex techniques, I tested blow job directions in many books. Some didn't give enough information. Some gave too much. As the years went on, sexperts gave more elaborate directions for every technique, including blow jobs. (The idea was that books had to promise twenty-four-hour orgasms, 1,001 sex techniques, and five pages of directions for a basic hand job to outsell the competition.) I developed my own technique, the basic black dress of blow jobs. It meets my criteria for elegance and simplicity. You can also dress it up to suit your taste and his.

Swallowing

Swallowing is not difficult—and he will love you for doing it. A man feels totally accepted and loved when a woman swallows his semen. You can control the depth of oral penetration via the ring and seal and influence the timing by pressing his perineum.

Position yourself so that his ejaculate will shoot straight down your throat. An easy way of doing this: Lie on your back with your head off the bed. Your mouth and throat will form a smooth line. Have him straddle your face for the elegant finish to a perfect blow job.

Oral sex is such an important part of our repertoire that it's hard to believe fellatio was something nice girls didn't do back in Grandma's day—and forget about cunnilingus. That was really perverse. Don't you wonder how women had orgasms back in the day? From the extensive surveys I did for my earlier books and the interviews I've conducted for books and magazines, I've learned that both men and women enjoy the giving as much—and often more than—the receiving of oral sex. (I joke that the penis is a pacifier for women—sucking it is very soothing after a stressful day. If you don't believe me, try it.)

The Baby Boom generation is credited with giving oral sex deal-breaker status in a relationship. As a member of that much maligned demographic, I say it's our proudest accomplishment.



TRUE TALES FROM THE PATH TO SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT

Confessions of a dick-matized woman

I have an on-again/off-again, love-him/hate-him relationship with Big D. He is cosmopolitan, sophisticated, chauvinistic, virile, stylish—a complicated man. My type. We never exactly “met.” I know that I noticed him—and later he told me that he watched me—at a jazz bar in our neighborhood. In one year he’d said one sentence to me: “You’re trouble.”

One Saturday night in October I was at the bar with friends, a couple visiting from L.A. It was 2:30 a.m. The couple was tired and ready to go back to their hotel room. The temperature in the bar was uncomfortably hot. I took off my cashmere cardigan, glanced over at the bar, and caught Big D’s eye. He smiled and came over to me.

“Would you like some champagne?” he asked—doubling the number of words he’d ever spoken to me.

He put out his hand. I took it and walked out the door with him to his apartment. There was no champagne that night.

While kissing me, he unzipped his pants. In his hand he held that dick, the one I sometimes think I dreamed into existence, so badly did I long for it. Long, thick, and proud, with its wide head rising like a nobleman separated from the powerful shaft by the ridge of the corona that was in my fantasy a rich gold necklace, the tribal emblem of the king. He had me.

“I don’t know your name,” I mumbled.

He laughed and said, “Of course, you do,” and took my hand and led me back to his bedroom.

No, I didn’t know his name at the time. But the sex! Naked, he was beautiful, as he needed to be to possess that dick. He massaged my clit, parted the lips of my labia, licked the moisture to the surface. And then he entered me. He fucked hard and fast, slow and easy, alternating positions—him on top,

then rolling to his side to pull me on top of him, finally half on our sides, one of my legs up in the air—until I was dizzy, crazy. Then he drove it home.

“Suck my dick,” he said when he could breathe again.

I took it into my mouth for the first time and felt it throb thrillingly to life again.

“That’s your dick,” he said. “Suck it.”

And I did.

I lost a necklace in his bed that night, a necklace he never found. The push/pull dynamic started right away—on both sides. We came together, we pushed apart. But his dick. It is my fetish object. It is the life force. I’m thrilled by its contractions in my mouth, the taste and feel of his sperm shooting into me. I come when I suck his dick. Sometimes I hump his leg as I suck, like a bitch in heat, and my moans are as loud as his.

We have booty calls with champagne and strings where there weren’t supposed to be strings, but yet they stick to us like that stuff children spray out of cans.

He called one night. I put on black lace-topped thigh highs and high heels. We drank wine and kissed and caressed on the leather sofa. He pulled my breasts out of the black lace push-up bra and sucked my nipples. I caressed his dick and held it in my hand.

He reached his arm behind me, tossed a big pillow down to the floor between his legs, and pointed with one finger: down.

And I went down.

When I was finished with him, I put my breasts back inside my bra. Leaving him limp with his pants still around his ankles, I went home that night, never having removed my panties. I felt like I owned him, at least for one night.



Chapter 13

INTERCOURSE

E*ven women who only reach orgasm via cunnilingus enjoy intercourse.* We do want to be penetrated—to feel the man we crave inside us. And men do want to penetrate—to “take” or “possess” the woman they crave. Intercourse satisfies deep and primal needs for men and women.

In recent years “sex” has been redefined to mean “Intercourse not required.” I endorse the theory that sex shouldn’t be limited to foreplay followed by intercourse every time. Nonpenetrative sex is often touted as the female preference, but I doubt that’s always true. Sex can be whatever meets your needs and desires of the moment. Intercourse will likely always be one of the main courses on most of our sex-play menus.

THE POSITIONS

There are six basic intercourse positions, and nearly infinite variations on them:

- Woman on top (female superior)
- Man on top (missionary)
- Side by side, sometimes called “spooning”
- Rear entry (“doggy style”)
- Standing
- Sitting

Every couple should be fluent in the basic positions. You probably have a favorite position with your partner, likely based on the way your bodies fit and move together. Every position, however, can be adapted to meet your needs—and one of those needs is variety. Bodies also change with injury, pregnancy, illness, weight gain or loss, and age. What worked for the two of you in the past might not work as well today.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

The Basic Female Superior Position

A good piece of general advice when changing bodies make intercourse less comfortable: Use pillows. Experiment with how many and where to place them.

On the other hand, some positions you didn't like a few years ago could be in the "oh, yes" column now. As women pass age thirty and become more sexually confident, for example, they might love being on top in a position where they had formerly felt too exposed. And as men age a bit, they are more relaxed about letting women be in charge some of the time.

Any intercourse position can be an orgasm position for a woman. To be sure that happens for you, use the O Loop. (Directions on page 70.)

Woman on Top (Female Superior)

This is widely considered the most favorable position for female orgasm, because she has the freedom to stroke her clitoris during intercourse while controlling the angle and depth of penetration and the speed of thrusting. Men like it because of the visual stimulation—and the fact that it allows them to lie on their backs and let her do most of the work. When he is much larger than she is, couples often use this as their fall-back position.



Squat or sit astride him as he lies on his back. Bend your knees, one on either side of his body. Lean forward or backward, using your hands for support, or sit upright, keeping both hands free. The forward movement generally gives you better clitoral stimulation while the backward movement gives you G-spot stimulation.





ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

Mix it up by straddling him facing his feet, not his head, in the “reverse cowgirl” position. (See photo, left)

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

FEMALE SUPERIOR VARIATION #1

In this variation, straddle him, facing his feet, not his head, as in the reverse cowgirl. He raises one leg, bent at the knee, foot on the bed. Angle your body so that you are riding his penis and grinding your pelvis against his raised thigh at the same time.

An added benefit: You should reach orgasm faster because of the increased clitoral stimulation.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

FEMALE SUPERIOR VARIATION #2

This move looks good to him and feels hot for you.

Facing him, move in an oval track rather than a straightforward up-and-down pattern. Imagine circumscribing an oval with your body, with the down stroke at one end of the oval and the up-stroke at the other. Lean slightly forward as you push down on his penis, stimulating your clitoris. Pull up and move slightly backward on the upstroke, stimulating your G-spot.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

FEMALE SUPERIOR VARIATION #3

Sit on top of him, insert his penis, and lean forward, lifting yourself three-quarters of the way up his penis. Put your hands on his shoulders for balance. Then move your pelvis to the right and push yourself down at the same time. Pull back up and move your pelvis to the left as you push down again. Go back and forth like this for several cycles.

Add a PC flex to the move. Tighten your PC muscle on the downward push, then relax while coming up. Or, if you are flexible, do the twist while bending backward with your hands resting on his knees.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

FEMALE SUPERIOR VARIATION #4

When he is semi-erect, get on top and add a hand trick. You won’t necessarily bring him back to life, but you will get your own needs met.

Straddle him. Grasp the base of his penis firmly in one hand—as if you were going to give him a hand job. Use the head of his penis to stroke and stimulate your genitals. When you are ready, lower your body onto his penis without letting go of the base in your hand. With your PC muscle, grasp the first third of his penis. Flex your PC muscles to simulate thrusting. Lean forward, supporting yourself on one hand resting beside his body, and work his penis up and down as you flex your PC to bring yourself to orgasm.

You can also alternate thrusting with the head stroke: using the head of his penis to stimulate your clitoris.

Man on Top (Missionary)

The missionary position has an unfortunate name—after South Seas missionaries who apparently only had sex in one position—but it is a favorite of women. In fact, surveys show we actually like it better than men do. This is a great position for hard thrusting and emotional contact. Penetration and intimacy—what could be wrong with that?

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

One disadvantage to the missionary position: He might come faster than either of you would like. Can you slow him down without losing your own momentum toward orgasm?

When you sense that he isn't very many strokes away from that point of ejaculatory inevitability, adjust your body so that only the head of his penis remains inside your vagina. Put your hands on his hips to signal him to thrust more slowly.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

MISSIONARY VARIATION #1

Whenever you make a variation to a basic position, you change the angle of penetration and sometimes affect the speed of thrusting in a different way too. Small changes make big differences in stimulation. In this one, he can hit your G-spot.

Lie on your back. He kneels between your legs. Now put your legs over his shoulders, wrapping them around his neck if that is doable and comfortable.

He can thrust from the kneeling position or lean forward, putting his weight on his arms, once he has entered you.



ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

MISSIONARY VARIATION #2

This is really a reverse missionary. He is on top, but you're lying on your stomach. It's nice for deep penetration, and for giving you a rest.

Keep your legs straight and closed. He puts his legs straight and outside yours, balancing his weight on his arms and enters you. If you need a pillow beneath your pelvic area, use it.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

MISSIONARY VARIATION #3

Another reverse missionary—with a little more room for maneuvering.

Lie on your stomach with legs spread open and knees bent, feet in the air. He straddles your legs or enters from between your legs, whatever is most comfortable, and supports his weight on his arms. To change the angle and depth of penetration, he can rise to a semi-kneeling position and raise one of your legs.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER: *The Basic Missionary Position*



Lie on your back with legs slightly parted. He lies on top of you, supporting his weight at least partially with his hands or elbows.

Lessen or increase the depth of penetration by putting pillows under the small of your back and/or by making any of these easy adaptations:

- Wrap your legs around his waist.
- Place your feet on his shoulders.

- Pull your knees up to your chest.
- Place your feet flat against his chest.
- Have him hold your legs with his forearms under the knees.

An added benefit: You should reach orgasm faster because of the increased clitoral stimulation.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER : *The Basic Rear-Entry Position*



On a bed or the floor, get on all fours with him kneeling behind you. He enters from behind.

To get a different angle of penetration, lower your chest to the bed. You can put your arms straight out in front of you and flatten out your chest entirely. Or try arching your back.

If one of you doesn't use a hand to stimulate your clitoris, you're missing a good opportunity for blended orgasm — clitoral and vaginal.

Rear Entry (Doggy Style)

This is no longer the position women love to hate. In surveys, women repeatedly rate this position high, usually as one of their two favorites, behind either missionary (more popular with her than him) or female superior (more popular with him than her). Porn has probably helped to popularize it. And rear entry does facilitate deeper penetration and more vigorous thrusting than the other basic positions. Women who experience G-spot orgasms are more likely to do so in this position than in any other.

The vagina narrows so that intercourse can feel tighter, which is more satisfying to both partners.

Bonus: It makes your ass look smooth and rounded.

Added bonus: The lack of face-to-face contact makes it easier for one or both partners to fantasize—something we all need to do now and then—or to make love when angry at one another.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

If you don't want to use your hands or the Orgasm Loop, wear a small vibe, like The Sweetheart, over your clitoris.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

REAR-ENTRY VARIATION #1

Raise your legs.

You are on all fours, either with chest lifted or flattened against the bed. Raise your calves so that you are balanced on your knees. It reduces your ability to thrust back but gives you a different sensation.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

THE ANAL INTERCOURSE ALTERNATIVE

If you don't want anal intercourse and he is begging for it, here's a doggy-style compromise: Let him insert a finger or two into your anus as foreplay. During rear-entry intercourse, either talk him through a hot anal intercourse scenario or play a DVD or video featuring anal intercourse. It's almost like the real thing.



He faces your back. Your buttocks are angled against him as he puts one leg between yours.

You can also lie half on your back, half on your side, drawing up the leg on which you are lying. He faces you.

Side by Side (Spooning)

Penetration is more limited in the spoon position than in any other. That makes it nice for the weary couple who want to have sex anyway. One or both of you might not even care if you reach orgasm. Sometimes a couple fall asleep spooning and wake up ready for a hot quickie. Side by side also works late into pregnancy, when almost nothing else does.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

ANOTHER WAY TO USE A SOFT MAN

In the spoon position, his front to your back, insert his semi-erect penis into your vagina. With fingers splayed downward, use one hand to hold the penis in place between your thumb and first finger, forming a V around the base, the flat of your palm caressing the shaft. Massage his perineum. A perineum massage will give many men an erection. Use the other hand to stroke your clitoris. Maintain a slow but steady intercourse motion.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SIDE-BY-SIDE VARIATION #1

Add a leg lift:

Lie on your side. Facing your back, he enters you, and he lifts up one leg. If you are both limber, you can adjust the position so that your leg goes over his shoulder.



ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SIDE-BY-SIDE VARIATION #2

This position sounds complicated, but is worth the trouble you might have in figuring it out the first time. (See photo, above) It's a purely genital connection. You can even use it as a quickie since it doesn't strictly require nudity.

Start out lying on your back. (You will roll onto your side after he has penetrated you.) He lies on his side facing you, but with his feet at your head. He lifts your top leg and moves between your legs to enter you. Imagine that your bodies form an X with the connection at the genitals. You are one straight line, rolled over on your side now, one leg raised, with him between your opened legs. He is another straight line sandwiched between your legs.

You can use your thighs to leverage thrusting movement, giving you more control than you would guess until you try it.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER: *The Basic Sitting Position*



He sits in a chair or on the bed, and you sit astride him.

Straddle him face to face with your legs resting over the sides of an overstuffed chair or with your feet on the floor on either side of a straight backed chair.

You can also face outward, allowing him more freedom to reach around your body and play with your breasts and clitoris.

Sitting

A more versatile position than most people realize, the sitting position is too often slighted by many couples. At least one variation of the sitting position deserves a place in your repertoire. Yes, penetration can be shallow, but there are ways of making it deeper and hotter.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

He's tired or has a less-than-firm erection. Climb on his lap, open your legs, and stroke your clitoris with the underside of his penis. Even if he doesn't get sufficiently aroused for intercourse, you can still have an orgasm.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SITTING VARIATION #1

If you've been kissing and fondling on the sofa, this is an alternative to doing it in that confined space.

He kneels on the floor, supporting himself with his arms behind him. Sit back onto him in a squat position, facing away from him. Try to do it so that only your feet touch the floor.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SITTING VARIATION #2

Turn the basic sitting position into a vigorous quickie. As he grasps your buttocks, lean back, hold onto chair arms and thrust energetically so that you get the maximum clitoral and G-spot stimulation.

As with all quickies, a theatrical touch is good. Make more noise than you usually do.



ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SITTING VARIATION #3

In this one, he squats against one side of a door frame. (**See photo, above**) You sit on him, facing away from him, leaning forward and bracing yourself against the opposite side of the door frame.

This unusual variation, which a *Cosmopolitan* magazine editor suggested to me, gives you the power and the leverage to get the thrusting exactly the way you want it—hard and fast or slow and easy. And he gets to watch your ass in motion: a win-win situation.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

The Yabyum

Sit in the center of the bed facing each other.

Wrap your legs around his so that you are sitting on his thighs.

Place your right hand at the back of his neck and have him do the same to you. Place your left hands on each other's tailbones. Now stroke each other's backs, using upward strokes only. Look deeply into one another's eyes as you kiss.

Put his semi-erect penis inside your vagina so it exerts as much indirect pressure as possible on your clitoris and makes G-spot contact. (You can sit on pillows rather than his thighs if necessary to get the angle of penetration right.)

Kiss deeply.

Rock slowly together while continuing to rub each other's backs and sustaining deep eye contact. Maintain this position until you both reach orgasm.

The One Tantric Sex Position Everyone Should Know (Yabyum)

The classic *yabyum* is a variation on a sitting position, a variation that requires the lovers be reasonably flexible. The embodiment of the Tantric principles of lovemaking, the yabyum encourages her arousal and orgasm, prolongs and delays his orgasm, and promotes intimacy.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

THE YABYUM FOR THE REST OF US

By popular demand, I adapted this position to make it easier for those who are less than limber, knee-injured, pregnant, overweight, bloated with PMS, or no longer as young as they used to be. You still get the same effect.

Sit on pillows in the center of your bed facing him. Wrap your legs comfortably around his body. His legs can be splayed straight out or bent at the knees, whatever is more comfortable. Place your right hand at the base of his neck and your left hand at the base of his spine. Have him do the same to you. Caress each other's necks. Stroke each other's backs, using upward strokes only. Look into each other's eyes and kiss with eyes open. Continue kissing and stroking until you are both are aroused.

Insert his penis into your vagina so that the shaft exerts as much indirect pressure on your clitoris as possible. Rock together, slowly rubbing each other's backs now, and kissing deeply with eyes open for several strokes. Then open up the position (before it gets uncomfortable).

In variation 1a, have him sit on the bed with his legs crossed. You lie back on the bed, facing him, with your body between his legs. Put your ankles up against his shoulders so he can enter at a comfortable angle. Keep your thighs close together, creating a tighter grip on his penis. **(See photo, top)**

In variation 2a, lie on your back, again between his legs, but with your legs bent at the knees and pulled back against your body until your heels touch (or approximately touch) your thighs. He sits close to you. You pull him closer until he can comfortably insert his penis. **(See photo, bottom)**



Standing Position

Having intercourse while standing—the classic quickie position—satisfies a need we all occasionally have for dramatic, urgent lovemaking. It's also a hot way to begin intercourse, even if you and your lover can't sustain it for long. Start pulling at one another's clothes, wrap a leg around his waist, and ride him.

The basic standing position

With his back against a wall, he squats slightly while you, facing your partner, lower yourself onto his penis. Wrap one leg around his waist. He holds your buttocks as he thrusts. You can also do the standing position with your back against the wall. That allows you some leverage in thrusting against him because your back is supported.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

STANDING POSITION VARIATION #1

You stand against the wall on a staircase; he stands in front of you (one stair up or one down from where you are) and faces you. Prop one leg up on the banister directly behind the your man—it's a very sexy-looking move. And if you use your out-stretched leg for leverage by flexing the knee, you can get more friction against your clitoris. Try flexing the knee and the PC muscle in time. He'll pick up your rhythm.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

STANDING POSITION VARIATION #2

In this variation on the standing-against-a-wall position, you wrap your leg around his waist. You both have more room to maneuver, and the position is easier to sustain. **(See photo, opposite)**

And you can also flex that leg and your PC at the same time. But this variation works best for couples who are approximately the same height.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

STANDING POSITION VARIATION #3

The mirror gives this variation its kick. You can watch his face, and your own, as you come.

Stand in front of a dresser with a mirror. Facing the dresser, lean forward placing weight on your hands placed on the dresser. Holding your waist, he enters from behind.









ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

STANDING VARIATION #4 BANG YOUR CERVIX

There are a lot of nerve endings in the cervix, and this variation hits them.

Standing away from the wall, bend over forward as if you were trying to touch your toes. He holds you firmly around the hips. **(See photo, opposite)**

To make it hotter, ask him to slap your buttocks several times.

Now go down to the floor on your hands and knees (without losing genital contact, if possible). Balance your weight on your forearms as he lifts up your legs by holding you beneath your thighs. (Tantric aficionados will recognize this as a variation on the wheelbarrow position. If this one sounds like a challenge to you, don't worry—it's definitely not a novice move!)

This is a showy move that requires some strength to maintain, so after a few strokes, move into a classic rear-entry position to finish.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

This variation is a twist that combines sitting and standing in one position.

Sit on the washer or dryer, the kitchen counter, a desk top, or any surface that puts your vagina at the right height for him to penetrate you. (He can always stand on a step stool if necessary.) Grasping your buttocks, he pulls you to the edge of the surface as he enters you.

To vary it, wrap your legs around his waist or his neck. Or he can hold your legs straight up in the air



HOTTER INTERCOURSE

You can make intercourse in any position hotter by adding any of the following:

- **Ensuring touch-zone connections**

Connect your touch zones with your lover's during intercourse. Go back to pages 75 and 77 to review the touch zones if you aren't familiar with them now. By adjusting your positions so that, for example, the head of his penis and your clitoris connect, you'll both experience more intense arousal. Making sure that your touch zones are rubbed the right way for you also increases the likelihood that you will reach orgasm.

- **Using the Orgasm Loop**

The O Loop helps you to stay focused on your arousal. It also teaches you to focus energy into your genitals, intensifying arousal. And it adds physical techniques, fire breathing, and PC clenching to get you to orgasm every time.

- **Adding vibrators**

Many small and unobtrusive vibes are compatible with intercourse. Get the extra clitoral stimulation you need by using a pocket rocket, finger vibe, lipstick vibe, or contour vibe. For mutual pleasure, put a vibrating cock ring around the base of his penis.

While the female superior position has long been touted as “best” for a woman's orgasm because it naturally gives her more control over the angle and depth of penetration and the thrusting, any intercourse position can be a female orgasm position. Intercourse got a bad rap as being a sex act designed strictly for men in a time when women thought their job was to lie there and fake a good one. We know a lot better now. And there's no reason to denigrate a sex act that is so deeply satisfying and fulfilling for most of us just because we have to modify a position to make it pay off.



Chapter 14

ANAL INTERCOURSE

Heterosexual anal intercourse is much more commonly practiced, especially among couples under thirty-five, than it was a generation ago. According to the most recent data available from the National Survey of Family Growth, 37 percent of men and 35 percent of women report engaging in anal intercourse at least once. And heterosexual men in growing numbers are submitting to anal penetration by their female lovers. A spokesperson for Babeland, a chain of retail and online sex toy stores, said sales of strap-on dildo kits and the DVDs in the Bend Over Boyfriend video series keep climbing. And two women lovers commonly use penetration in sex play, simulating intercourse with dildos.

The pervasive influence of pornography, in which anal sex is a standard sex practice and double anal penetration isn't exactly rare, has surely contributed to the new status quo. Some women balk at anal intercourse. Other women tolerate it, especially for the right guy. And some women love it.

If you're in a long-term monogamous relationship with a partner you trust, you almost have to give it a try or two. Yes, it will probably hurt, especially the first time. And you might not like it at all. But don't make up your mind after only one experience.

With the right man in the right moment, anal intercourse is an incomparable erotic experience. Like caviar, it isn't an everyday thing. Read *The Surrender* by Toni Bentley for a taste.

ANAL FOREPLAY

There are no anal quickies. Anal intercourse is preparation sex, not a zipless fuck. If you have never been penetrated anally, start so slow that foreplay begins one day and the act commences on another. The same directions apply if the partner who will penetrate you (with a dildo) is a woman or if you are going to penetrate a man.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

First, Bring in the Toys, Fingers, and Tongue

Before you jump right into anal sex, try a few time-honored techniques. Ask him to massage your buttocks using firm strokes. After a while, he can use light, teasing strokes—even gentle pinching-down the crack between your cheeks. Separating your buttocks slightly, he can massage the innermost parts with somewhat less firm strokes than he used on the outer buttocks.

He should arouse you by stroking the sensitive tissues surrounding the rectum with well-oiled fingers or his tongue (analingus). He can insert one, then two (again, well-lubricated) fingers. Use an anal vibrator, a vibrating butt plug, or a string of anal beads—firm rubber beads on a flexible stem—to get you accustomed to anal penetration in an exciting way.

Ask him to bring you to orgasm via a combination of anal and clitoral stimulation; but he should be careful not to take a finger or toy from your anus and put it in your vagina or on your clitoris, as that can cause infection.

Second, Safely Enjoy Your Special Treat

More so than any other form of sexplay, the secret to success lies in the preparation.

Always use a specially designed anal condom and PLENTY of a lubricant like Astroglide. (The anus, unlike the vagina, is not self-lubricating.) The condom is essential to keep bacteria away from your urethra. Using a finger protected by a disposable “finger cot,” he should insert copious amounts of lube into your anus. (Use the same directions to do him with a strap on.)

Start very slowly. As he presses the head of his penis against your anus, relax the sphincter muscles in your rectum. He shouldn’t force his penis inside of you. You should bear down on the head of his penis until he gets past your sphincter muscles.

He should then follow your lead and thrust slowly and carefully. You should control the depth of penetration and the speed of thrusting.

While he is thrusting, either you or he should be stimulating your clitoris. With any luck, you will reach orgasm.

Afterward, he should not insert his penis in your vagina until he has removed the condom and thoroughly washed his penis and hands. You both risk contracting a urinary tract infection if the cleanliness rules are not scrupulously followed.

MOVING BEYOND ANAL SEX PLAY

Sex play should include cunnilingus and manual stimulation of her clitoris and, of course, the anal foreplay techniques above. You need to be intensely aroused before he goes near your anus. Again, the same directions apply to a woman using a dildo on her female or male lover.

Assume a comfortable position. For many women, the rear-entry position with chest flat on the bed and ass elevated is the best position. However, there are other options. For example, you can lie on your back with legs straight up or ankles resting on his shoulders while he kneels between your legs and enters you.

Anal sex is the most controversial commonly practiced sex act. Even anal play that doesn’t lead to intercourse can push the panic or disgust button for many people. And there are some valid reasons for concern, including spread of bacteria if the lovers are careless. Without lube and suitable restraint, anal intercourse is painful and potentially damaging. All that said, you can safely and deeply enjoy anal sex as a special treat if not an everyday occurrence.

Don’t be held back by the thought that nice girls don’t do this. Even in Grandma’s day, nice girls didn’t do a lot of things that you do now.



Chapter 15

SEXUAL VARIATIONS: THE SEX ACTS

Only some mainstream advertisers, some women's magazine editors, and too many politicians pretend that "normal" or "average" is a heterosexual monogamous couple who enjoys only foreplay, oral sex, and intercourse. Real life is more varied than that. The heterosexual monogamous couple who never (in a lifetime) have any kind of sex outside their marriage will very likely play with a pair of fur-lined handcuffs or engage in spanking games—activities considered outside the norm only a few decades ago. Many others will have a one-night stand during a business trip; indulge in kissing, stroking, or oral sex with someone outside the marriage; or have an affair. A small, but growing, cadre of couples over age forty or fifty turn to swinging, polyamory, and other "controlled cheating" experiences that protect the marriage and its property but allow bored partners a chance to experiment.

The sexual behaviors we call "variations" are now proliferating rapidly as ordinary people try what they see on cable, in videos and DVDs, and online. Over a decade ago, I wrote a book titled, *Kink: The Hidden Sex Lives*

of Americans. Sophisticated and urban "vanilla" couples were quietly experimenting with "kink" in average Middle American bedrooms, often with toys purchased at suburban sex toy parties. The twist on this "old news" story is that women are just as likely as men to be pushing for a little bondage, a bit of spanking, and some S/M games. Today she might be the one asking, even insisting: Will you tie me up? Spank me? Whip me with your belt?

Take a look at kink by the numbers:

- One out of ten people has experimented with S/M (short for sadomasochism), a broad general category that ranges from light spanking, bondage and role-playing games like master/slave as a form of foreplay—to serious power exchanges involving real humiliation and heavier pain. Few people will become heavy players. Most will re-create the kind of games we all see played out on cable channels Showtime and HBO. It's like heroin addicts and marijuana users—the few are hardcore, the many just want to get high.

- The statistics vary widely depending on the source, but estimates put the number of married people who have had affairs at anywhere from 25 percent to well over 50 percent.
- There are no reliable statistics on what percentage of the population participates in group sex, including threesomes, swinging, or polyamorous relationships. But sexologists believe that 5 percent of the population probably have experimented within one category at some point, with the numbers being higher among aging Baby Boomers.
- A 2005 survey conducted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 11 percent of women have had at least one bisexual experience. Bisexuality among women is so common on college campuses now that about a third of college women report having a sexual experience with another woman.

SADOMASOCHISM

Basically a power exchange between consensual partners, S/M is a game in which one partner plays the dominant (top) role to the other's submissive (bottom) role. The exchange is acted out through mutually agreeable games. Sometimes the participants explicitly spell out the rules; sometimes they don't. Whichever the case, some rules are implied because there are limits beyond which every good top realizes their bottom will not go.

Some people enjoy surrendering power now and then, just as others find pleasure in assuming that power. Professional dominatrixes say their clients are generally powerful men in positions of prominence who make a lot of money. Being sexually submissive—especially when they are paying for the service—is a safe way of relaxing from the burdens of power. In the same way, powerful women seek out a man who will dominate them in the bedroom.

Many couples like to switch—that is, take turns playing the dominant and submissive roles. Playing the role of dom or sub helps many people escalate their own personal erotic experience and the sexual relationship to a new level. The experience wouldn't be complete for them if they didn't have it from both sides.

From the psychological standpoint, S/M allows some men and women to act out repressed feelings of guilt and shame about their sexuality in a safe and healthy way.

But for many couples, light S/M is just a new and different way to play sexually. These types of couples like a lot of stimulation and variety in their sex lives. S/M gives them something new without having to switch partners. "Spank me" can jump start a stalled sex life.

"What is kink other than a wider range of turn-ons than those prescribed by our culture?"

—Abby, an adjunct professor and part-time dominatrix in New York City

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER



What if you and your partner are so turned on by that S/M porn flick, or some scene you saw on cable TV, that you really want to play? S/M is not spontaneous sex, something you fall into like a good quickie position. And, unlike chess, S/M doesn't come with a game board and instructions. But the planning is a form of verbal foreplay. Establish your own ground rules. In working out those rules, you will quickly learn what each of you finds acceptable (and sexy).

The Games

While other forms of sex play can be spontaneous and free form, S/M play works better within a game structure. Each player might have his or her own idea of what will be arousing and satisfying. They both need to agree on a game plan so that the game goes far enough, but not too far. Get a sense of your partner's preference for the following:

- Bondage games involve the use of restraints, from ties and silk scarves and Velcro cuffs that loosely bind wrists to leather collars and cuffs with metal rings attached to enable one partner to tie the other spread-eagle to the bed.
- Pain games involve the use of belts, paddles, floggers, whips, kitchen spatulas—whatever your creative mind can conceive as a hitting implement.
- Humiliation games often don't include pain, but they can. He might, for example, like to be verbally humiliated or forced to kneel before her and beg for orgasmic release. She might, for example, want to be tied and lightly whipped on her inner thighs as she is verbally assaulted with names like "slut" and then allowed to masturbate for release.

There are endless scenarios, many incorporating bondage, humiliation, and the use of spanking and whipping instruments and other sex toys.

The Rules of the Game

S/M play is structured sex play, with rules devised by the players. You wouldn't play Monopoly without the game board, would you? Likewise, make sure you review the rules with your partner:

- Decide who is going to be the top and who is going to be the bottom. Are those going to be the ongoing roles each of you wants to play, or do you plan to switch?
- Agree to the basics: For example, you will allow no real pain and nothing that leaves marks.

- Set a limit on the amount of time you will "play."
- Designate your roles and responsibilities. Does the master or mistress make the slave orgasm? Or is that forbidden?
- Select a "safe word" that signals an immediate stop to the play. Most couples select something other than "no," because saying "no" while meaning "yes" is part of the fantasy. Choose "peanut butter" or "roses," anything that tells your partner: "Stop, this is not what I want now."

If You're Not Quite Ready to Go There

You don't have to head full-force into S/M. If going over-the-top is not your thing, just incorporate a little rough play into your lovemaking.

Start with love bites, slaps, and pinches. Hold his (or her) nipples between your teeth and bite down gently. Administer little biting kisses to your lover's inner thighs. Slap his buttocks during intercourse. (Or ask your partner to bite, slap, or pinch you.)

We can all endure a little more pain—we might even crave it—before orgasm when arousal is high. Escalate your slaps, bites, and pinches as your partner's arousal increases.

If this kind of rough play turns you both on, move to the next level. Rent a video or DVD featuring S/M. Start a dialogue with your lover. Are you in agreement on what is hot and what is definitely not? If you need more inspiration, go online together. Or visit a sex toy store and see how you each respond to the leather and rubber, the nipple clamps and floggers. If you're both still into the game, it's probably time to draw up your own rules.

RESEARCH

Responsible flogging

“S/M clubs, nude parties, porn, x-rated romps rule at Columbia.”

—The *New York Daily News*, November 26, 2006

In fall 2006, one of the city’s tabloid newspapers investigated reports of wild sex on the campus of New York’s Columbia University, where tuition is more than \$33,000 a year.

Scheduled campus events included, among many other activities in a similar vein, a workshop titled, “Sex Toys 101”; naked parties; an erotic cake-baking contest; and Sexhibition, the annual campus sex fair, held in April, featuring orgasm-for-beginner workshops and the “Tent of Consent.”

But the *News* was most concerned about *Conversio Virium*, the university-sanctioned S/M club, which, on the day the reporter visited campus, was offering a class in flogging.

“Educating people about the safest flogging techniques so they don’t accidentally strike the kidneys is responsible behavior,” said spokeswoman Susan Wright.

STRAIGHT TALK

STD Reality Check

There is no completely safe sex, only “safer sex.” If you are not in a monogamous relationship, use condoms, get tested annually for sexually transmitted diseases (STD), and don’t be embarrassed to ask your doctor for information about symptoms and treatments.

Chlamydia is the STD you are most likely to contract. It is rampant on college campuses and among people in their twenties. Easily cured by antibiotics, it is typically asymptomatic, but, if left untreated, it can lead to scarring of the fallopian tubes. Many doctors think that untreated Chlamydia might be partly responsible for the fertility problems of women under thirty-five. Regular testing would eliminate much of this.

The average age of women with infertility problems keeps declining, yet doctors aren’t speaking up. Unfortunately, most doctors don’t bring up the subject of STDs with patients. They should be telling women to use condoms and get tested annually. And if a woman and a man agree to a monogamous relationship, they should make mutual testing the next step, before tossing the condoms. (Typically, couples stop using condoms after they’ve been having sex for a month, and with no discussion usually—and no testing. This is unwise.) Inspect his penis before you put the condom on it. If it looks, feels, or smells like something is wrong, something IS wrong.



HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Bondage 101

Get into a comfortable position. For most people, that's sitting up in bed with their back against the headboard, arms outstretched to the sides, wrists lightly fastened to the headboard.

Use gentle restraints, such as Velcro handcuffs or loosely tied silk scarves or ties. Don't use metal handcuffs or tight knots. The bound person should be able to work his or her hands free. It's a game, not an arrest—and you don't want to cut off your partner's circulation!

Tease your partner with light kisses and touches. Use oils and lotions. Run a feather lightly up and down his or her inner thighs. Fondle nipples through a silk scarf. Be creative in your use of sensual materials.

Vary the pattern of teasing strokes, from passionate kisses now to gentle caresses later.

Focus on the pleasure points: nipples, inner thighs, backs of knees, ears, the neck, the line from the navel down to the pubis, and the genitals, including the perineum.

Bring your partner to the brink of orgasm, pull back, tease again.

Finally, unleash the orgasm(s) manually, orally, and/or via intercourse.

Can You Play a Power Game without Pain?

The answer is decidedly yes, and here is where role-playing comes in. Role-playing involves no bondage, discipline, or pain. It's all about acting.

The couple in the popular yogurt commercial—the one where she is the French maid, and he is her wealthy employer—are role-playing. She sits on his lap, spooning yogurt into his mouth and making suggestive comments. Isn't it interesting that the concept of role-playing is so mainstream it's used to sell yogurt?

For some couples, dressing up in leather or vinyl is exciting in itself. No pain is required. Another exciting role-playing game involves couples pretending to be strangers meeting in a bar. The bar scenario feels sexy because it takes them back to the early days of their relationship when they were drunk on chemical love. In general, role-playing works in two ways:

- It connects us to who we were when we were new to one another.
- It helps us to be who we never were but long to be.

Doing the bar pick-up with a partner is safe and it reanimates desire.

BONDAGE

In bondage, one partner restrains the other's movement by binding wrists and sometimes ankles with scarves, belts, fur-lined or Velcro handcuffs, or other items. The dominant player sexually teases the submissive (and bound) lover, prolonging high arousal as long as possible. Psychologists say that the appeal of bondage for the submissive lies in having all responsibility for sex removed. People who have deep guilt or shame about their sexuality might also find relief in bondage. (It's also nice for the tired and lazy lover who wants some fun without any responsibility for reciprocating.) For the rest of us, it's an opportunity to let somebody else do the pleasuring.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

Never leave your lover bound, gagged, and alone.

The use of gags will push many people past their limits anyway. If your lover is amenable to a gag, you have to monitor his or her responses even more carefully.

And never leave the submissive bound and unattended. He or she could panic and hyperventilate, choke, or get hurt trying to undo the bonds. Besides, it's mean. Being tied without an attentive lover to watch you writhe is torture, not a sex game.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

If you want to receive, not give:

Hand this book to your lover with the relevant text highlighted and say, "Please do this to me. I want it."



Warm up your lover's bottom with light slaps until her cheeks flush. Stop. Caress his buttocks. Repeat the slaps with a slightly firmer touch. Stop. Caress and massage the warm flesh.

Using your hand or an implement, maintain a steady but not too intense pace. Never exert too much force. You have to be more careful with an implement because you can't feel the pressure being exerted in your own hand. Remember, the quantity of slaps, not the force, creates the erotic excitement.

Where you direct those light blows makes a difference too. The lower buttocks, along the crease where they meet your lover's legs and the full sides of his bottom are very sensitive.

And whatever you do, don't strike the tailbone.

EROTIC SPANKING

Erotic spanking has been a popular game for centuries, particularly during the Victorian era. And erotic spanking is exactly what it sounds like it would be: spanking for the sexual gratification of both lovers. Some people regard spanking as one of several S/M games to play, while serious devotees don't play any other games. They only spank.

But you don't have to be a serious spanking enthusiast to enjoy the practice. Almost everyone has received or administered a few swats to the buttocks during intercourse.

You can spank with your hand or use an implement such as a ruler, hairbrush, paddle, belt, kitchen spatula, or—for the serious spanker and spankee—a cane or crop. Sometimes the blows are delivered to the bare buttocks, and sometimes the spankee wears her panties or his bikini briefs. And just as there are many implements with which to spank, there are also many positions from which to choose:

- Bending over the knees or across the lap
- Lying face down on a bed
- Stooping over the back of a chair
- Bending forward, hands on knees
- Kneeling on a bed or ottoman, stooped over with hands on the floor
- Getting down on all fours

Many couples combine spanking with role-playing. The naughty schoolgirl (or boy), the Daddy (or Mommy), and teacher and pupil are favorite roles. In these role-playing games, couples might use spanking as a form of erotic punishment. Costumes are often part of the play. The schoolgirl might wear knee socks and a miniskirt while the maid wears stockings, garter belt, and a sheer apron.

Erotic spanking requires skill and a measured hand. Deliver a blow felt as too hard, and you'll kill the mood. So before you even start to spank, lay your partner across your lap, lift her skirt or slide your hand inside his briefs, and gently caress the quivering flesh.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SPANKING VARIATIONS

Spread your lover's bottom cheeks with one hand and softly spank the anal area with two or three fingers of the other hand

- Relax your wrist so that your hand works like a paddle
- Spread your fingers when you smack rather than holding them together as you probably have been doing.

These moves create different sensations. Vary your strokes by incorporating these moves.

SEXUAL FANTASY

Some people fantasize sexual variations but don't explore these fantasies outside of their own minds. If you fantasize about S/M, bondage, spanking, or other variations to arouse yourself during masturbation or lovemaking, that doesn't necessarily mean you want to act them out. Sometimes a fantasy is just that.

Shame or fear of being considered abnormal keep some people from acknowledging, sharing, or enjoying their fantasies. Fantasizing a sexual act—such as a homosexual encounter, violent sex, or group sex—doesn't mean that you want to do it. Many people, for example, fantasize homosexual encounters without wanting to have sex with someone of the same gender in real life. Unless you have nothing but violent fantasies and can't be aroused any other way, your fantasies are normal, whatever “normal” means.

Use them, enjoy them, and don't take them too seriously.

Recent studies indicate that men and women now have fantasies that are more alike than they were twenty years ago. According to Nancy Friday, author of *Women on Top*, women's fantasies have become more graphic and overtly sexual and aggressive. Don't be afraid or ashamed of that.

Men especially, but women to a lesser extent, have become dependent on porn for fantasy lives. That means we are all fantasizing the same scenarios. But you could probably have a richer sex life if you turned off the porn on the screen and brought it to the bedroom.

Fantasy as Mental Foreplay

Create interesting mental scripts for your secret life using these tips:

- Keep a fantasy notebook and jot down erotic ideas or scenarios that excite you. Don't censor yourself. It's okay to fantasize anything.
- Develop a story line—something as basic as sex on a tropical island or as complex as an S/M scene set in a dungeon—and use that fantasy to arouse yourself during masturbation.
- Conjure up the fantasies you've been enjoying before having sex with your partner, and use them to jump-start arousal. If they worked during masturbation, they will work now.

If you want to share—but not act out—your fantasies with your partner, present them as erotic short stories. Gauge your lover's reactions. They might be as arousing to him as they are to you.

If he is creative, develop some fantasies based on memories of your shared erotic past together. Go back to the first time you made love or a particularly thrilling encounter. Write down these fantasies together. You will probably both use them in masturbation or as mental foreplay.

Ten Answers to One Question

I asked ten women at In-and-Out Burger in Los Angeles:

What is your favorite sexual fantasy?

“Food and sex fantasies. I am smearing hot fudge sauce and whipped cream on my lover and eating it off his body. Women are covering me with honey and licking it off. That sort of thing.” —Leanne, 25

“Group sex. Big dicks, big fake plastic breasts. Condoms flying. Women on their knees sucking cock.” —Angela, 31

“Celebrity fuck fantasies. I’m way over Brad Pitt. Now it’s mostly hot TV studs.” —Carmen, 40

“Sex with an ex-boyfriend. He was the best sex I ever had. I fantasize doing everything with him, especially anal sex, which I didn’t like all that much at the time.” —Christina, 33

“Celebs. Male and female. For a long time, I fantasized me in a room with Jennifer Aniston and Brangelina, and they are all servicing me. Now it’s me and Patrick Dempsey.” —Beth, 49

“Beach sex. Always beach sex. Sometimes my dog is involved.” —Jessie, 32

“In my casting couch fantasy, I am sipping champagne on a turquoise leather sofa with a prominent director who has his hand in my blouse, pinching my nipple. He is bald and a little thick in the middle and I am not attracted to him. But he tells me to get up, hold on to the desk and bend forward. I do. He fucks me hard from the rear and slaps my ass the whole time. I am humiliated and hot and wet and I get the part.” —Sara, 23

“I am tied up and blindfolded. A man alternately flogs me and kisses me. He brings me to orgasm, takes off his mask, and I discover he is my high school boyfriend.” —Leah, 41

“I am on a bare stage, dressed only in heels and a pearl necklace. A light is shining on me so brightly that I can’t see the audience. A man’s voice tells me to masturbate and I do, and I come and come and come.” —Natalie, 35

“In my favorite fantasy, I am having sex with a man I don’t know in a Manhattan apartment. It’s snowing outside. And the only sound in the apartment is the sound of his tongue lapping my pussy.” —Marsha, 50

In the history of the world, there have always been people who pushed the erotic envelope. Most often they were the rich and powerful with free time. It’s hard to imagine that peasants in the fields or slaves building pyramids had the energy to tie up their sex partners and drip hot candle wax onto their nether parts after a hard day. However, the relative comfort and security of life for many now affords them more play time. Add increased life spans to that motivation for acting out sexually and you get a higher likelihood of falling into a boring sexual rut. The abundance of porn, soft and hardcore, gives us the erotic ideas for climbing out of ruts and shows us how to execute them.

We are living in the golden age of kink.





TRUE TALES FROM THE PATH TO SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT

Things to dream about when you're bored

This is how I fantasized David coming to me:

A little angry at being vulnerable to an affair, he kissed me roughly at first, then opened his eyes, looked into mine, moaned, and softly probed my lips and the edges of my tongue with his. Pride in tatters, like the shredded knees of old worn jeans, we clung to one another. He put his hand between my damp thighs, his mouth on my breast. I buried my face in his hair, knowing we were going there at last . . .

This is what really happened: Back home visiting family, I ran into him at a party for his brother Brian's engagement held in the same old Italian restaurant we'd all been going to since high school.

"Are you happy going into your fourth marriage?" I asked, laughing.

"I'm not happy, but I am content," he said, one of the more honest and insightful remarks I'd ever heard a man make about marriage. We flirted briefly, then talked about working out.

"Touch my thigh," I said. "I am proud of my strong thighs."

"If I touch you, you'll never get out of here," he said. That would have been good with me.

David and Brian are old school friends, part of a family I've known for most of my life. And David had been the object of fantasies and flirtations years ago when he was in marriage number one and I was married too. More surprisingly because I only knew him as the "younger brother," now Brian became my Fantasy Lover for the duration of the visit home. Brian projects a confident, coiled sexuality that I could imagine opening up into one of the drawings in the Kama Sutra.

He first came to me in a powerful erotic dream. We lay in one another's arms exchanging lavish, drawn-out caresses and kisses. With the tip of his tongue, he outlined my lips, traced a path down to my nipples, and then investigated further. Kissing my mouth again, he

pulled me close to him. I felt him grow harder, pressing almost inside me. I wanted it so much I could barely breathe. Suddenly he sat up and pulled me onto his lap.

The classic Yabyum position. If you've ever done it with someone who knows how, you'll understand why I woke in the middle of an intense orgasm.

I have always had Fantasy Lovers, even when they were competing with the real lovers. Ah, but do not think me depraved or sex-obsessed. Fantasy Lovers are every woman's dirty little secret. Some of you won't just admit it unless you've had too much wine.

Fantasy Lovers are so satisfying because they give us what we need and not just in our sexual daydreams. When I was unhappily married, Fantasy Lovers helped maintain the distance and space between me and him. Sometimes my Fantasy Lovers were the ethereal extensions of the men I took to bed and the encounters I daydreamed were more or less playbacks of the real thing, only with better story lines. I remember weaving elaborate romantic and carnal fantasies around my extramarital lovers, men I neither expected nor wanted to stay long in my life. That kept me from crying about the mess I'd made of marriage—or hitting him over the head with a blunt object for seducing the baby-sitters.

The unattainable (Russell Crowe or Brad Pitt) or unavailable (David or Brian) lover is a safe haven for displaced desire. He is a better distraction than television when things are really bad. Or he can fill in the emotional blanks. And how many of our intimate relationships are rife with those blank spaces?

Back in New York, I threw myself into reorganizing my life. I thought I left David and Brian tucked in the corners of my sister's guest bedroom. But I decided it was time to end the relationship with P, the perfectly acceptable art dealer I could take anywhere. Maybe I really wanted to go out alone. I summoned my back-up lover, a limo driver I met when he'd picked me up at the airport, and I had my sex life in order again.

Yes, he comes whenever I call him. And he's down with the program: sex at my apartment, a rare sleep-over, and affection, but no trappings of domesticity like buying his favorite juice or scrambling his eggs. He is a sweet man who always brings me a single rose or a bag of M&Ms. But he drives the sex the way he drives the cab: with my ultimate satisfaction as his goal, he plans the route, expecting little or no direction from me. He is almost a Fantasy Lover come to life. And you know what they say about wishes coming true.

Before I fall asleep alone, sometimes after my lover has gone, I conjure one of the brothers.

One night I called David. He was driving from St. Louis to his home in southern Illinois. At one point he said, "I make you laugh." A little later in the conversation I realized that I felt more emotionally connected to David during this phone conversation than I had felt to many of my lovers during the act of sex. "I'm going through some hills," he said. "I'm losing you."

He did lose me and he did not call back. And I didn't call him either. But in real life, we had lost one another, of course. We don't live in the same place and he's married and my life is more or less artfully arranged in compartments like an art box by Joseph Cornell. He is not a man one could put into a compartment in a corner of a box. I did not sleep well that night. Tossing and turning, I imagined him making love to me with exquisite tenderness and passion. Or maybe it was his brother I dreamed. I am no longer sure.

I slept very well the next night and the nights after. I can't really say that I want to be anywhere else with anyone else. These two men—they just belong in my fantasies.



Chapter 16

SEXUAL VARIATIONS: THE PARTNERS

Some people shake up their sex lives by adding kink-variations in the sex acts they perform together. And others want something besides, or something in addition to, having sex with the same person. Maybe they aren't experiencing enough pleasure in their primary relationship, but they don't want to leave it, so they agree to look outside for more stimulation. (Or they make that choice independently of one another and keep their affairs secret.) In the case of disparate desire levels, the partner who always wants more sex might decide to get some of her (or his) needs met elsewhere.

However they work out the logistics and from whatever motivation they make their choices, more people are choosing to stay in the relationship but expand their sex lives to include other partners.

BISEXUALITY

Madonna kissed Britney on camera. Showtime's *The L Word* was *Sex and the City* with lesbians. And Rachel's mother on *Friends* was titillated by the attention she got from other women at a lesbian wedding.

Bisexuality is a growing trend among American women, though not among American men. Interestingly, in the 1970s male bisexuality was more acceptable. In the midst of the feminist revolution, women were expected to choose sides, straight or lesbian, while rock stars like Mick Jagger and David Bowie blurred the gender lines, and the androgynous male model was the object of unisex desire. (Remember the New York Dolls led by David Johanssen in full drag?)

The AIDS crisis made the androgynous or openly bisexual male look like someone a girl shouldn't trust. That was followed by the AIDS epidemic among black women, with media attention focused on closeted gay black men hiding in relationships with women as the culprit.

It has always been okay for women to play with one another. Men like to watch. But girl on girl is so cool now that a new term, "bi-curious," has been coined to describe women who haven't done it yet but feel the alluring pull.

There are a handful of reasons why women opt for feeling out this fantasy:

- **The emotional bonding**

"Women often long for an emotional connection that they're not getting from the men in their lives," says Dr. Gina Ogden, author most recently of *The Heart and Soul of Sex*. "That longing translates into erotic desire."

- **The cool factor**

Young women in college and graduates starting their lives in urban environments, sometimes lonely and insecure, find validation and a sense of belonging in doing what is considered cool.

- **The shared anger at men**

Aware of the infertility issues their older sisters have experienced, young women feel more pressured to find a mate and procreate. But boys can still be boys—for ever longer periods of time. Who understands that better than another girl?

- **The nature of female sexuality**

Kinsey was the first to say that women are more naturally bisexual (or ambisexual) than men. Whether influenced by cultural homophobia or biology, men do not have the wide range of desire and arousal response that we do. Researchers note that straight women can become aroused by "nonspecific" stimuli, while straight men need the specific stimuli of heterosexual acts.

RESEARCH

Who's doing it with other girls?

According to demographic research provided by the Kinsey Institute, 3 percent of all women consider themselves bisexual, but 30 percent have had a same-sex encounter. The percentages increase dramatically when younger women only are surveyed. For example, a survey of 1,700 college students conducted in 2006 by the Sexuality Information and Education Counsel of the United States (SIECUS) found that 43 percent of undergraduate women surveyed reported at least one bisexual encounter. The recreational lesbian fling has become so common that it has inspired an acronym: LUG, lesbian until graduation.

Celebrities flaunt their own girl flings. Britney Spears was photographed topless kissing a girl in a pool. Jolie has admitted to playing with girls, while rumors swirl around many young female stars. And an online survey of 10,000 men and women conducted by *straight.com* found that bisexual women chose Angelina Jolie two to one over their second choice, Johnny Depp, as the celebrity with whom they would most like to have sex.

*“I had a typical lesbian affair. My boyfriend broke up with me.
I cried in my girl roommate’s arms and we had sex.
We were both down on men and became lovers for several months,
but the sex was kind of boring. We advertised on craigslist for
guys to participate in threesomes.
Now I am back with men.”*

—Bethany, 29

MULTIPLE PARTNERS

Serial monogamy with a side of infidelity is the most common mating pattern, as sexual anthropologist Dr. Helen Fisher has often said. But infidelity is generally considered grounds for divorce in the Western world. Does that make sense? Maybe if infidelity weren’t considered a deal-breaker, many couples would keep the marriage, enjoy the affairs, and learn new ways of relating.

Or maybe not.

But there are always people willing to give open multiplicity a try.

Threesomes, Group Sex, and Swinging

There’s more than one way to expand your relationship. The influence of porn and the availability of like-minded sex partners via the Internet have made multipartner sex a conceivable option for more people. Whatever you want seems to be available somewhere out there:

- **Threesomes**

They are sometimes spontaneous—two girl roommates with one boyfriend, that sort of thing. More often, however, threesomes are arranged, for example, by two people placing an ad on *craigslist* or another

online venue. The most common threesome now is two women and one man. Two female lovers might see it as a safe way to experiment with heterosexuality. For a heterosexual couple, a threesome with another woman can satisfy her curiosity and fulfill his fantasies of girl-on-girl action.

- **Group sex**

Yes, it could be a spontaneous event. These things do happen, especially to younger people. Just read the letters to *Penthouse Forum*. More often, group sex happens at discreet and expensive sex clubs or in private homes. The invitation is usually specific about what is and is not acceptable behavior. S/M and bondage are typically on the menu. Unprotected sex is not.

- **Swinging**

Swinging is a lifestyle, not a spontaneous experience. Couples belong to loosely formed groups or more structured clubs. The rules are clear: Don’t force your partner to play, don’t partake in any unsafe sex practices, and don’t try to break up another couple’s marriage. “Soft swingers” agree to watch one another having sex; “swappers” trade partners and go off to separate rooms; “open swingers” do it in an open space, in groups, trading partners, whatever works out.

Threesomes are popular with young couples from college age through their mid-thirties. Group sex aficionados tend to be urban singles and childless couples in their twenties and thirties. Though spokespersons for large swinger associations try hard to give the impression that a lot of young couples are swinging, these couples aren't doing so in large numbers.

Swinging is more popular with older married couples in their late forties and beyond. These couples are sexually bored but happy enough with their marriages. Splitting the property is not appealing. And they don't want their partners at risk in affairs that could become emotional relationships and threaten the marriage. Instead, they swing.

Polyamory

Polyamorous people have multiple sexual relationships with people they love. While swingers keep emotional involvement to a minimum, poly people turn lovers into family members. In the Netherlands recently, a trio became the first legal poly marriage. Poly is as much about relating as it is about sex, and it appeals to people who just can't get enough of those relationship talks. Say the word "intimacy" and their eyes light up.

RESEARCH

Online Cheating

The majority of respondents to a 2007 MSNBC/iVillage survey "Lust, Love and Loyalty" passed harsh judgment on Web interaction between people married to others.

Fifty-three percent of men and 73 percent of women said that sending a sexually flirtatious email to a coworker is cheating. Add online chat or webcamming, and the numbers go up a few more points to 57 percent of men and 77 percent of women turning thumbs down to such behavior.

The survey did not ask whether virtual affairs were cheating. But surely this group of respondents would vote yes.

VIRTUAL PARTNERS

How great is the influence of the Internet on women's sex lives?

On the positive side, you have access to a wealth of information, some of it even accurate and reliable, online shopping for quality sex toys, your own porn, and opportunities for meeting potential lovers, no matter what your sexual preference.

On the negative side, your husband has access to all of this too. Your man masturbating to online porn while you fall asleep in a state of sexual frustration is just a piece of it. Married or single, men and women enter chat rooms under aliases and carry on long flirtations without removing their disguise. Some people exchange real (or partly real) identities, have sex online, talk on the phone, even meet. All the while, they have breathing, responding human beings sleeping in beds next to them—human beings who are often unhappy about the lack of sex in the relationship. It can be puzzling to someone with a high-sex/low-tech drive.

But the most unsettling online sex experience is the virtual affair between two 3-D graphic characters (avatars) in an online video game that seems to be as addictive as crack for some of its players.

The virtual world Website Second Life had, in September 2007, eight million registered “residents” who have jobs, mortgages, businesses, friends, lovers, and sometimes spouses in this alternative world where they shop at the mall and take their pets to the vet. And “let's pretend” world is not a cheap fantasy either. (Imagine your Monopoly money had to be backed by a percentage of real dollars, and ask yourself: Would I ever have played that game?) The nearly half-million “active users” spend between twenty and forty hours a week in Second Life, and hundreds, in some cases thousands, of dollars a month on purchases like an exclusive island that costs close to \$500.

Writing in *The Week* magazine, August 31, 2007, the emotionally, psychologically, and intellectually abandoned wife of a man who has an avatar wife in Second Life, said, “This other life is better than real life. Nobody gets fat, nobody gets gray... [but] he's having sex with a cartoon character.”

The other “but”: Not only do most people create an avatar younger and more beautiful than their real selves, they also sometimes make the avatar another gender.

Behind that hot blonde babe on screen might be a middle-aged man with a beer gut. It's possible that the avatar couple having outrageous sex were created by two dorks who couldn't get a date in the real world.

What makes someone literally buy into that fantasy?

“Here, in this world, I am in total control,” one big spender explained.





PART 4

THE SEXUAL PASSAGES

How can women comfortably explore their own sexuality while navigating the sexual culture?

I hope the first two parts of *The Sex Bible for Women* have given you insight into female desire, arousal, and orgasm, as well as a more clear understanding of hormonal influence during reproductive cycles, pregnancy, and menopause. That biology is the foundation of your sex life. Your sexual passages are charted by the marks along this foundation line, like the marks your parents put on a door frame to measure your height as you were growing up.

But there are other primary factors that shape your sex life and determine how you will react to each passage, such as your individual make-up and the culture in which you mark those passages. Your individual make-up consists of your genetics, psychological profile, sexual history, and experiences, including how educated you are about sexuality.

In modern urban culture, young women have more sexual choices and opportunities than previous generations of women have had. And that is true even in some less-free societies. The wrath of each culture's own version of Puritanism is felt most keenly by women outside urban areas, women with less education, and women with little or no money of their own.

You do have the freedom and the power to shape your sexual passages. The women's stories you will read in this section (and elsewhere in the book) are not meant to define the particular passage they represent. Rather, they are snapshots in a sexual history.



Chapter 17

THE EARLY PASSAGES

F*emale sex life really begins in the womb, when those two X chromosomes come together and define gender.* Then a sonogram technician says, “It’s a girl,” and the gender projections begin. From developing breasts and growing pubic hair through experiencing first masturbation and losing virginity, your body directs you on a path toward sexual womanhood.

How you explore that young woman’s body and find the pleasures in it is up to you.

DATING AND MATING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Married couples might have more sex (approximately ninety-eight times a year versus singles’ forty-nine times a year), but singles have *better* sex—or do they?

According to a 2005 survey published in the *British Medical Journal*, married women are significantly more likely to report problems with their sex lives than single women. Is that because they have more problems or because they feel more comfortable talking about them?

On balance, single women *might* have hotter sex because they ride the big high of NREU on the desire curve—then, theoretically, get off that ride and onto another one when the high of the existing relationship wears off. But what many single women don’t have is a traditional dating life. In fact, dating among young professionals might be an endangered practice. Instead, they hook-up, call a “friend with benefits,” go online to arrange a power-sex encounter, and check the profiles on *match.com*.

So do many young women have a dating life or relationships at all, or are they just moving through a series of disjointed sexual encounters? And exactly what does it mean that singles have “hotter” sex? Kind of makes you wonder whether all these notions of better single sex are true, and whether young women are ultimately getting what they need during sex. Okay, so maybe young single women today can go out and get casual sex any time they want it. But suppose they aren’t able to find boyfriends who are interested in being with them or giving them what they need sexually and emotionally—let alone have guys take them out on multiple dates. That doesn’t

exactly seem very liberating. And anyway, are young women even having *good* casual sex? Is orgasm any easier for them to come by just because they are continually in the thrill of the initial encounter? While there is no certain answer to any of these questions, they are certainly intriguing.

HOOKING UP

It's typical today for young men and women to "hook up," meaning they go out alone or in groups to bars and clubs and then pair off for sex without the question of who will pick up the dinner check. The sex is often a blow job and sometimes intercourse with minimal foreplay. Hooking-up begins in high school, goes through college, and still prevails in many urban groups.

And it has created a lot of debate among women, including feminists.

When the subject is female sexual behavior, the debate is framed like this: Those who defend some aspect of traditional morality versus those who champion a woman's right to give it up whenever, wherever, and however she wants. But the truth is, in between the extremes of those two camps, there is a lot of gray area, and it's tough to navigate.

The book *Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love, and Lose at Both* by Laura Sessions Stepp provoked a round in that debate in 2006. A *Washington Post* reporter old enough to be the mother of the high-school and college girls she interviewed on the hook-up culture that defines their sex life, Stepp is cast by her critics as the alarmed and censorious mother figure. Though exaggerated for the sake of polemic, the criticism is not altogether unfounded. Journalists such as Meghan O'Rourke (writing for *Slate*) and Nona Willis-Abonowitz (*New York Observer*) insisted girls are just having fun

and chastised Stepp for her prudery, a position not without its own inherent flaw. How are young girls defining fun? Does the definition include orgasm or not?

I read every round of that debate and wondered why no one asked the question that seems to be the central issue: Are young women in hook-up sex situations having orgasms?

What's in it for young women if they are not having their needs met? Are they just, at the end of the day, being used by young men, all in the name of being "sexually uninhibited"?

Unfortunately, all of this is uncertain. Stepp's book doesn't even have an entry for "orgasm" in the index. Her critics don't talk about orgasm either.

But here is what we know from sexual behavior studies of young women: Mostly, they don't have orgasms in casual-partner sex—especially when alcohol is consumed, as it typically is when young people hook up in bars or clubs.

Girls are savvy enough to know that a blow job is less risky (though not entirely without risk) than intercourse in terms of STD transmission. Maybe 25 percent of women reach orgasm via intercourse alone, and far fewer come while giving a blow job. If you think girls are giving themselves the direct clitoral stimulation they need to come with strangers in hook-ups, get them alone and sober and ask them. They're not.

“When a hook-up is as likely to mean ‘he went down on her and she came but he didn’t’ as ‘she gave him a blow job, score one orgasm for him, nothing for her,’ then we can say, ‘yes, a hook-up is a liberating experience.’”

— Carlin Ross, CEO and founder of *newcherrybomb.com*

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

HOOK-UP ACCOUTREMENTS

You can carry along orgasm insurance in a small evening bag. The tools you need won’t take up much more room than your condoms. If you’re going to give an orgasm, you should be getting one too.

Pack these goodies for a good time:

- A vibe that looks like a tube of lipstick
- A disposable vibrating cock ring
- A finger vibe
- A little case (like lip gloss) of passion gel to heat your clitoris (Buy the good stuff at Babeland.)

The point is: Get yours.

That will empower you to tell the next man to go down on you and give you an orgasm. Let’s come up with a catch phrase for getting cunnilingus that is the equivalent of “blow job.”

FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

People who have been single a while usually have a friend with benefits. Some women in their twenties blatantly refer to these partners as “fuck buddies.”

What exactly is a friend with benefits? It’s an ongoing sexual relationship with no complications, no promises, and no commitment: Sex with no strings attached. A booty call with no obligation to stay the night. No dates, no flowers. Sounds like a male wet dream, doesn’t it? But what’s in it for women?

We don’t always want the promises and flowers either. Sometimes we’re just horny. A friend with benefits is reliable sex with lips to kiss you and arms to hold you. In other words, sex in a dimension other than the one that includes your vibrator every night.

And you can tell this guy what you want and need in bed.

You get to set the rules. Guys know that. Make the rules clear. No sleepovers, no calls after midnight, clean sheets every time—whatever you want. Spell it out.

POWER SEX GODDESSES

Do-Me—and Do-Me-good—feminism has arrived.

Like the young hellcat on the Showtime series *Californication*, today's power sex goddess lap dances, strips, bites, slaps, and can leave a man's nipples and ass stinging. Her lingerie is seriously hot, her sex-toy collection impressive, her nightstand drawer holds condoms in various styles and sizes. She is a real live flesh-and-blood embodiment of an avatar.

Is she the latest incarnation of the “new woman”? She's certainly a role model for young women who dress the part when they go out. But every generation of young women has had its own version of the “new woman.”

And how many among us truly embodied the ideal, even though we dressed the part?

A male friend in his thirties contends that young women who are experimenting with everything from bisexuality to S/M will end up in Scarsdale, married with children, “and desperately hoping the husband and kids never find out about Mommy's wild youth.” He might be right. In the commitment years, women “work” on their marriages and bear and begin to raise children—and are more sexually conservative than they were or will be later on. Still, it's hard not to believe (and hope) that the girls will hold onto their sex toys and the habit of occasionally slapping a naked male ass.

“Sexy 9.0 is a new brand of female hotness—it’s a take-control, ‘I-am-woman-watch-me-pole-dance’ vibe that a lot of women are putting out... and if I had to point to one thing that’s responsible for this new sexual attitude, it would be the Web—that great, sometimes sordid bastion of exhibitionism.”

— “Jake,” *Glamour* magazine's male opinion columnist





Chapter 18

THE COMMITMENT PASSAGES

L*ife during your thirties (and into your forties) are often regarded as the married-with-children years.* Most women do get involved in a long-term relationship, marry, or have a child during this phase of life. It's not likely that you will get through this life passage without making some kind of commitment. Although these are the commitment years, don't automatically assume your sex life is passing its peak as you move past the excitement of young singledom. When considering the question of who has better sex, I would actually guess its young married couples (along with older singles, but more on that in the next chapter.)

Married or single, mother or not, many women feel like they come into their own sexually after their thirtieth birthday. Increased self confidence might be the biggest libido booster. By their thirties, many women are more self-assured, they are more comfortable with themselves, and they are unapologetic for who they are. This often translates into greater confidence sexually. Some other shared experiences that mark this life passage: the three-

year itch, trying-to-conceive sex, the "mommy" factor, and affairs.

This sex-life stage has its ample rewards as well as its frustrations.

THE THREE-YEAR ITCH

As you've already learned in the first part of this book, the surge in hormones that a new relationship brings usually dies down after a few years. When the initial thrill is gone, some people leave. Surely a lot of failed starter marriages (no kids, no property) have fallen victim to the myth that love means never having to say you're not in the mood. Other people quietly stray. And many come to regard the three-year itch as the real beginning of their commitment to each other and a chance to take their relationship to the next level-both sexually and emotionally.

Does the assumption that sex in a long-term relationship inevitably gets boring necessarily have to hold true? Sure, after the newness of the relationship wears off, and

certainly after several years of marriage, the rush of sexual excitement wears off too. But then there is a trade-off that comes with its own benefits: It is at this point in life—and in relationships—that couples forego the rush of newness but gain the opportunity to learn what turns each other on and build a richer dimension to their sexual life together. That seems to be something that only happens over time.

Nevertheless, somewhere around the three-year mark, you will discover that you're not living at the top of the Desire Curve anymore. You don't yearn for sex as often as you used to. But it's still good when you have it. To keep your momentum, try these suggestions:

- **Don't wait for spontaneous desire to overtake you again.**

Just do it. Your desire is below the surface. Stroke your skin, and find it.

- **Don't panic.**

At this stage of the game, some women go into relationship crisis mode. They look for signs that he does/doesn't love them anymore, that he is/isn't cheating. And they cling when they should relax, let go, and be confident that their desire and their man will be there.

- **Put time and energy into yourself.**

Enroll in a course. Work out. Take up a sport. Read a literary novel.

- **Learn new sex techniques.**

And don't learn them because you are desperate to hold, please, or impress him. Do it to expand your sex life.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

SPEED SEX

Finding the time to have sex can be a big problem during the commitment years. Sometimes you want to have more sex, but you just aren't able to because you're so busy dealing with work, home, and kid commitments. If this sounds like you, it's time to speed things up! There are two keys to making speed sex work:

1. Get your foreplay whenever and however you can.
(Remember how we talked about that in Chapter 11?)
2. Wear a finger vibe and use it on your clitoris.

Not to mention:

The best speed sex position is bending forward: It's the easiest variation of the classic standing-sex position. He approaches you from behind and holds on to your hips as you lean forward. If you are flexible, you can bend over at the waist (as if you were touching your toes in calisthenics). Or you can lean forward onto a bed or chair.

Mutual hand jobs: Hand jobs don't get the respect they deserve—they can be great fun and very satisfying. They're also a good, easy way to shake things up a bit and add some variety to your sexual repertoire, in case you're feeling like you and your partner are stuck in sex a rut (something else that can also happen when you're tired and burnt out during the commitment years). Combine passionate kissing with manual stimulation to orgasm. A vibrating cock ring for him and a finger vibe on any finger for her will get you there faster.

Take turns: In this scenario, you fellate him to orgasm tonight. He returns the favor via cunnilingus tomorrow. And don't forget your new best friend: the finger vibe.

VIRTUOSO SEX TECHNIQUES

Falling into the less-frantic rhythm of a long-term relationship at this stage of your life does not have to mean boredom and dissatisfaction are givens. Instead of thinking your desire levels have waned or settling for less sex, make the most of your situation by taking your sexual experiences—and your techniques—to the next, deeper level. Throughout history, there have been women who possessed extraordinary sexual skills. Take some tips from these ancient techniques and learn why the women who possessed these skills were so revered!

Karezza

An Italian word that means “caress,” *karezza* is a technique that was adapted from ancient erotic Taoist and Tantric teachings by two Americans, a minister, and a physician. Dr. Alice Bunker Stockham was heralded in 1883 for developing a “new technique” to “promote a happy and tranquil sexual union in marriage.” Stockham later admitted that she borrowed the technique from a pamphlet on birth control written by a founding member of the Oneida community and gave it the sensual new name.

Karezza prolongs intercourse and encourages extended orgasm. If you are interested in learning Eastern lovemaking techniques, start with this and the yabyum intercourse position, explained on page 154.

Kabbazah

Thousands of years ago in the Middle East, a woman who had mastered the art of *pompoir*, control of the PC muscles during intercourse, was called a *Kabazzah*, or “one who holds.” Because Kabazzahs were so skilled, they were valued. Their lifestyle was equivalent to that enjoyed today by the most expensive Western call girls.

An extended orgasm for him, Kabbazah (the technique) has long been an Asian specialty from the temple prostitutes of India to Japanese prostitutes in modern times.

The requirements for Kabbazah are as follows:

- He must be in a relaxed and receptive state of mind and body. His passivity is crucial.
- She must have a talented vagina. A woman can’t perform Kabbazah unless she has achieved mastery of her PC muscles through Kegels for at least a period of three weeks to a month.

The female superior and sitting positions are better than other positions for Kabbazah.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

Add the O Loop to Karezza or Kabbazah. You won’t lose your arousal focus and your orgasms will be more intense

CONCEPTION SEX

More women have fertility issues now than in the past, and there are several reasons for that. Biologically, a woman is most likely to conceive during her early twenties. Culturally, she is most likely to be ready to conceive several (or more) years later. The media tends to cover fertility issues as success stories, downplaying or leaving out entirely the painful details and the failed attempts to conceive. The result is that women in their late thirties or younger are shocked to discover that creating a baby isn’t something that they can always make happen without too much trouble. Suddenly sex is another chore, but one that weighs especially heavy on both partners because the outcome is so important to them.

Is it possible to have hot sex under these circumstances? Probably not, unless you get really mad at each other. Then the adrenalin boost can amp up the sex. But failing that, it is possible to have a tender, loving sexual experience, the kind of sex you will treasure in your memories for the rest of your life, when there is so much pressure on the outcome of each session.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

The Art of Karezza

Some skills are so special that you will only want to use them as treats: his birthday, your anniversary, moments when he defers to your mother in the most gracious way. Here's how to perform one of those skills:

- Limit his genital movement dramatically by having sex either in the female superior or side-by-side position. Don't let him move inside you unless he becomes flaccid, and then he should only execute a few shallow thrusts to revive his erection. Ask him to stroke your breasts and clitoris.
- Be in charge of all movement. Thrust your hips against him and flex your PC muscle around his penis as you do.
- Limit his movement, even when you are close to orgasm. Only let him thrust enough to sustain his erection.
- Insist that he hold you in this lovemaking embrace until you have experienced at least one orgasm—preferably more.

The Art of Kabazzah

This is another special skill that you will want to use sparingly so he will dream about it happening again and again.

Stimulate him manually or orally until he is erect, but not highly aroused. Then try these moves:

- Insert his penis.
- Do not move his penis at all .
- Confine your movement as much as possible to PC flexing—and no thrusting for him.
- Have him caress you, as long as he doesn't thrust.
- Flex your PC muscle in varied patterns until you feel his penis throbbing-indicating an intense level of arousal-which should occur approximately ten to fifteen minutes into Kabbazah.
- Time your contractions to the throbbing of his penis, clenching and releasing in time with him.
- When you use this technique, he will experience a longer, more intense orgasm than normal. And, after his orgasm, flex your PC muscle until you come.

THE MOMMY FACTOR

The magazine articles and books aimed at women who are supposedly too tired and too stressed for sex are talking primarily to mommies. Whether maintaining a career or staying at home, these are the women who are most overloaded, exhausted, and short on energy for sex at the end of the day. The granddaughters of housewives and daughters of feminists have inherited a double load of expectations. They really are having/doing it all—and then some. Motherhood is as competitive as the workplace now. Take your baby to a Mommy and Me group on Saturday afternoons, and the other mommies will be ready with a count how many words their diapered darlings can say. It's tough out there.

What can you do about that lack of energy for a highly active sex life?

- **Don't get out of touch with your man.**

You might be too tired for sex most nights, but even so, touch, caress, and kiss. Both of you need the tactile stimulation, the emotional connection. Women sometimes avoid touching because they believe they have to follow through and have intercourse. You don't.

- **Let him masturbate.**

And don't make him feel guilty about it. Some of those men masturbating to cyber porn in the middle of the night would do it in their wives' arms if they had that option.

- **Keep a high-powered vibe or two in your nightstand drawer.**

You can come in sixty seconds with a Hitachi magic wand or pocket rocket. Give yourself a quick orgasm while he's in the shower or making the coffee. You need those orgasms. And no guilt, please.

- **Do your Kegels!**

You can do them in the car while you're driving. There's no excuse not to do them. Without a strong PC, orgasm takes longer.

- **Master the art of the quickie.**

If you wait to have sex "when there's time," you will be lucky to have sex once or twice a month. Quickies are not for men only. With the help of your vibe, you can come too.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

Here's how to have sex when you are weepy, bloated, nauseated, pissed-off, and scared—and you are doing it with the guy who has been injecting hormones into your ass:

- Start with tenderness. You know that old soul song, "Try a little tenderness"? Program it into your MP3 player.
- Remember the mission statement: He must ejaculate; you don't have to come. Therefore, he is responsible for his erection and ejaculation, and also for making you feel cherished and valued. If you want candles, incense, flowers, or anything else, he should provide it.
- Relax: Now that you have remembered the mission statement and turned the responsibility over to this mission's captain, you can let go. If you get nothing out of the sex but holding and stroking, that's okay.
- Close your eyes as he runs his hands over your body, kisses you, and tells you how much he loves you. When you are feeling warm and loving toward him again, open your eyes. Make eye contact with him as you kiss him and stroke his face.
- Enjoy the moment: That tenderness—his touch and the declaration of love—will feel good as it washes over your body tormented by an onslaught of hormones. Hold on to him. This is sacred sex.



TRUE TALES FROM THE PATH TO SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT

Are you looking at us?

A young black woman crosses the lines and finds love.

Growing up, I saw my father date white women, but I married and divorced a black man before I was thirty. I continued to date black men, never finding what I really wanted. One day, on a whim, I accepted my first date with a white guy, a Jewish jeweler I'd met at the gym—a gym outside my neighborhood in Brooklyn. (Maybe I was secretly hoping something exactly like this would happen when I joined that gym.)

After several dates we spent a weekend upstate in the country where we made friends with an interracial couple on their honeymoon. I remember returning home and telling my father that I was not going to date another black man again. My Jewish lover treated me like a princess. He made me see: There is so much more to experience and learn and have and do.

At first when I was with him on the street, I looked at people and wondered: Are you looking at us? Do you care what we're doing? Black men were looking, and they don't like it when the sisters stray. Was that electrical charge I felt when our skins touch based partly on the shared thrill of violating a societal taboo?

Are you looking at us?

I look good, younger than my age, 36. Do you think the white man only wants me for sex? He thinks I am the most beautiful woman in the world, and he wants the baby I am carrying—his baby—to be a girl who looks like me. My man shows me off with pride.

He gives me pleasure just holding my hand, with his arm around me, walking side by side.

In bed, he rhapsodizes about my skin color, the darker pigmentation of my nipples, my lips, and I revel in the praise. The black man's familiarity with my skin color and body type might have limited his ability to appreciate me. This white man gives me what I want, what I need. He is the most exciting lover I have ever had.

Our black and white bodies merging together, skin on skin—it is a beautiful piece of erotica.

The brothers have always told me that the white man's dick is too small, right? Wrong. Statistics show that a black man's penis is only a fraction larger on average than a white man's. Personally and professionally—I am a nurse—the largest penis I have ever seen was white. So was the thickest. And so was the smallest.

My man never had it like I give it to him. I don't think he ever had a woman on top before. He said that I made love like no white woman could. The "other" is always the exotic or forbidden fruit. The brothers have been enjoying this same experience with white women. Now it's my turn.

How is the sex different?

He knows what he wants in bed, is willing to give back with interest—and thinks he has to prove to me that he's as good as a black man. Yes, he performs oral sex. He expects to perform cunnilingus to bring me to orgasm, and he loves doing it!

He puts his mouth to my pussy like a man seeking his soul.

The day he asked me to marry him, I could taste myself in his mouth when he kissed me after I said Yes. Yes, Yes, Yes.



Chapter 19

THE MIDDLE AND LATE PASSAGES

T*he forties are considered the new sexual peak years for women.*

By this time, you know what you want sexually and you aren't embarrassed to ask for it. Your shifting hormonal balance allows testosterone, the sex drive hormone, to be in charge. And our culture no longer puts forty-year-old women on the sexual shelf. You are celebrated.

On the other hand, the middle passages are marked by affairs, divorce and break-ups, re-entry into the dating scene, and, of course, menopause. For many modern women, these are also the late child-bearing and child-rearing years. You might be postpartum and perimenopausal at the same time.

It's a heady mix. No wonder so many of you are finding your inner cougar.

“I’m very good with getting older. Like, great, now I’m 40. Great, now I’m 50. Aging always made me feel more substantial, as if I had more to offer.”

—Ellen Barkin, actress

COUGARS

A cougar is an older woman dating a younger man, usually ten or more years younger. To get even more specific, a woman under forty playing with twenty-something boys is a puma, and a woman over fifty is a jaguar. Older women/younger men are the new hot thing. Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher are the poster couple—but not every cougar wants to marry her catch. Some big cats just want to have fun.

Twenty years ago, the older/younger dating game advantage belonged to the older man, that white-haired guy pushing the baby stroller. Today, you are the power player. Younger men say they like older women's sexual confidence and their lack of agenda. In other words, they aren't ready to become fathers, and you aren't interested in having more babies.

You've still got it, Babe-enjoy it!

Ten Answers to One Question

What is so sexy about older women?

"They are sexually self confident. That means they aren't going to transform into whatever person it is they think you want them to be. That is sexy." —Alan, 39

"Older women take care of themselves. They might be high maintenance, but they're paying people to do their maintenance. Young women want you to do it." —Geof, 28

"They are more sexually skilled. Girls put on this mask of sophistication, but they lay there in bed and wait for you to do it for them. Older women take charge." —Jim, 33

"They have their own money, and they are only interested in you for the sex."
—Greg, 27 "Everything! They are toned, successful, sophisticated, and very interested in sex." —Michael, 25

"It all gets down to the sex. They like men's bodies. They know what to do with them." —Keith, 33

"It's not all about rules and ultimatums and baby hormones!" —Kyle, 30

"Older women really like sex, with no strings attached."
—James, 32

"They take charge—in their lives, on dates, in bed."
—Ben, 30

"They don't take a cell phone call from a girlfriend in the middle of a date with you and report on your qualifications while you're sitting there eating breadsticks."
—Joel, 34

AFFAIRS/DIVORCE

It's not just the older crowd; people in their twenties and thirties have affairs and get divorced too.

And affairs don't always lead to divorce. Some people have them without getting caught. Other people get caught or confess and discover that the pain and trauma are the birth pains of a renewed and stronger marriage. And other couples choose to have their affairs openly.

Divorce is more prevalent in years three, seven, and twenty of marriage than in other years. Early divorces aren't typically as traumatic. There might be no children or property. Sometimes the "divorce" is actually the dissolution of a living-together arrangement, not a marriage. (This is one reason why the soaring divorce rates have leveled off; living-together arrangements aren't counted in with marriages.) If a divorcing woman does have small children, she has, in addition to a lot of responsibility, a built-in structure and purpose in her new life, the thread continuing from her old one.

Midlife divorce is different. Your children are grown. You haven't dated in decades. And your income is going to decline.

This might not look like a great new start in life, but trust me, it will be.

RESEARCH

Why people cheat

According to a study published in the Archives of Sexual Behavior in 2007, people have affairs most because they were “attracted to the person and the opportunity presented itself.”

Affairs probably happen more often than they did in the past because more men and women have the opportunities now. Between business travel and the Internet, what married person doesn’t have the option?

But there are other reasons for affairs: Partners get angry, become dissatisfied with the routine of married sex, and long for something—or someone—new and different.

Men are more likely to say they cheat for sexual variety; women usually do it for romantic attention. Whatever the reasons, interestingly, love was not mentioned.

It’s not over ‘til it’s over

The first comprehensive national survey of the sexual attitudes, behaviors, and problems of U.S. adults age fifty-seven and older was conducted in 2007 at the University of Chicago. The results debunked some myths about age and sex and told us something we already know: Men are more likely than women are to have sex partners in later life.

Overall, 73 percent of respondents between ages fifty-seven and sixty-four, 53 percent of those ages sixty-five to seventy-four, and 26 percent of those seventy-five to eighty-six were sexually active. Health issues (and lack of a partner) affected their sex lives more than age did. And the problems were not surprising: lack of desire, vaginal dryness, and inability to reach orgasm among women, and erectile difficulties in men.

“The vast majority said that vaginal intercourse is always part of sexual behavior; that declines slightly as people age, with more cuddling and kissing and snuggling as the primary activity,” said Dr. Linda Waite, senior author of the paper.

SEX AS WE GET OLDER

Many older men and women have active sex lives. In the Internet dating world, aging Baby Boomers, those between ages forty and sixty, are the fastest growing demographic. Even older widows and widowers are connecting via the Internet and coming together for life’s final act. It’s not unusual anymore for two former high-school sweethearts in their seventies to rediscover one another after all those years. A woman I know says her eighty-year-old father lost his eighty-two-year-old girlfriend to a younger man (seventy-five) who was “still interested in sex.”

And, yes, there are more women than men in the golden years.

Of the 57 million American women who are forty-five and older, nearly half—25 million—are unmarried. There are several reasons for that: The late-marriage trend has left many women out, with men over fifty statistically still marrying younger women; divorce rates are high; and women outlive men by an average of seven years. The lives of older single women, however, are not what they used to be. According to an AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) survey, 22 percent of older men are looking for marriage or a live-in relationship, while less than 14 percent of women are. But the women still want to have sex.

There has never been a better time for a woman to enter mid-life than now. She is healthier, wealthier, hopefully wiser, and with more sexual options than the women of previous generations. Mid-life men don’t have it this good. If mid-life is your demographic, as it is mine, revel in this time. Sex life—life itself!—will end someday. Put on your high heels and dance on the lip of the volcano, champagne glass in hand.

To do anything less is to set a bad example for the girls behind us.



TRUE TALES FROM THE PATH TO SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT

Letting the younger man stalk you

The night I met T, I was eating burgers with my pal John at our neighborhood pub. As I leaned over to take a big bite of juicy burger, I made eye contact with T—that is, I stared at him until he lifted his eyes from my cleavage and met mine.

When I was younger, I covered my breasts, but cleavage is my trademark now. My breasts are 34C, soft but firm, relatively unaffected by gravity thanks to years of weight training. I like them and I always have. Why not share them with the world? Cleavage properly flaunted says: I know I am sexy but you should know I am also in control. Maybe I'll have sex with you and maybe I won't, but it will be damned good for both of us if I do.

Cleavage is for women, not girls.

"Are you two together?" T asked.

"You mean together, together?" I asked. I shook my head. He moved over to the bar stool next to mine and said, "Let me buy you both a drink."

I thought he was ten years younger than me. Later I would learn it was more like twenty. A young turk on Wall Street, T has the poise of an older man.

That first night he nuzzled my neck at the bar, whisked me away into a cab and up to a rooftop bar atop The Gramercy Park Hotel. As I sipped champagne, he excused himself. The restroom, I thought. He returned with a room key.

"You got a room without seducing me?" I asked.

No expensive Wall Street hook-up for me, thanks. Girls who put up with this nonsense are crazy. I want the sex, but I want the dinner and flowers and presents too. I left the table, took the elevator down to the lobby. As the cab pulled away, he was running beside saying, "Please don't go."

They tell me he stopped in that pub every night for two weeks before I showed up again.

"Do you believe in second chances?" he asked.

He took me to dinner at Per Se, an exclusive restaurant. In the car on the way back to my place, he kissed and caressed my breasts, his eager mouth and hands trembling when they first made contact with my flesh. "I want you so much," he murmured over and over. And I wanted him too.

Sometimes a woman just wants nothing more than to have her pussy pounded—and this was one of those times. His dick was long and hard, thick and fine. It glistened with droplets of pre-come as I slid the magnum condom onto it. He grabbed my hips and pushed into me hard. Oh yes, it was what I wanted: hard and fast, striking my cervix as my finger furiously circled my clit.

I came and came and came. He couldn't get enough of me, not that night, not for many nights to come. We were together two years before he transferred to London. Now he is my long-distance lover, no longer a boy toy.

The day after he left for London, I went to that pub alone and ate a burger at the bar, my thoughts obsessively on him. A woman with modest breasts, sat beside me and confessed that my cleavage inspired her to order push-up bras and low-cut T-shirts from Victoria's Secret. Even though she seemed to have the attention of the one man who really interests her and didn't know how to flirt anyway, she glowed when she walked into the bar wearing her new clothes and attracting admiring glances. Her new cleavage made her feel sexier. It gave her erotic power. Suddenly, she was flirting with men—and that one man had to work harder to get her attention, always a good thing.

My breasts are my ticket to ride, my shortcut through the labyrinth that is modern dating/mating for women no longer young. Besides, I really like them. They're fantastic—and they're real.





PART 5

RESOURCES

Women are always being told that, when it comes to sex, anything short of nirvana signals a problem. I don't subscribe to negative thinking. But sometimes there are little glitches in the sexual response machinery and tears in the fabric of sex life. Maybe the sex is good enough but it has been, could be, or should be *better*.

You can make that happen. You just need the tools.



Chapter 20

WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SEX LIFE

B*efore you pursue a specific solution, first you need to determine the root of the issue.* Is yours a problem of sexual functioning? Or is the problem that you and your sex life don't measure up to some ideal rooted in myth?

Before you judge yourself too harshly, take a look at these statistics:

- 43 percent of women suffer from “sexual dysfunction.”
- 30 percent of women say they never or rarely reach orgasm during lovemaking; 45 percent report they only “sometimes” do.
- 25 million American women—and more millions worldwide—have little or no interest in sex with their partners.

Much of the so-called “female sexual dysfunction” can be attributed to these issues:

- Failure on the part of women, clinicians, therapists, and media to understand how female desire and arousal actually work.
- The impossible myth that hot monogamy is an achievable goal.
- The unrealistic expectation that women should be able to have orgasms via intercourse alone in the same way that men do.

TRUE TALES FROM THE PATH TO SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT

A researcher and educator reflects on the sad state of sex education in America as exemplified by Sex Week.

There is a rumor going around the tightly knit circle of sexuality educators and therapists that this year's "Sex Week" at UMDNJ might well have been the last. In its thirty-fourth year, Sex Week at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School is by far the longest-running program of its kind in the United States. All second-year medical students are mandated to attend the full-week course, which consists of lectures, moderated panel discussions, and small-group processes facilitated by seasoned sexuality professionals. In other medical schools around the country, sexuality courses, when offered, are electives. The rumor mill has it that Sex Week is now being considered obsolete—ostensibly as "sexuality" issues are being. Sex Week is apparently being threatened with extinction.

The theme for this year's Sex Week was cultural diversity, promoting the understanding and acceptance of the varieties of sexual expression. In preparation for the course, the walls of the large lecture hall were lined with posters collected since the program's inception during the 1970s: a montage of bodies, breasts and penises of all colors, shapes, and sizes. The fledgling physicians filed in, wide-eyed deer-in-the-head-lights, clutching textbooks and clinical attitudes. Although the multidisciplinary course is open to social workers, sex educators, physician assistants, nurses, and psychologists who attend the forty-hour week to gain the unofficial status as "sexperts," the bulk of the attendees were the captive med students, cranky and harried. And what I observed during the course of the week strongly reinforced the urgent and critical need for training our doctors and helping professionals in

all matters pertaining to sexuality as an integral part of human life.

Initially annoyed about the mandatory attendance, the participants complained loudly about the distraction from their "real" studies as exams loomed before them. I listened as they resented being force-fed the unquantifiable, messy heapings of sexuality. Their overwhelming exhaustion was palpable. They spilled stress and despair in moments of self-disclosure. Their discomfort with the course inflamed insecurities as they faced the huge responsibilities embedded in being "virgin" health care providers.

"Just watch what attracts or repulses you," I coached the students in approaching the week. "Take note of anything that stirs a reaction in you."

Some lectures explored the comfortable medical aspects of sexuality—the old nuts and bolts of anatomy and physiology, including clinical sexual dysfunctions and sexuality in the disabled. Others delved into the unsettling topics of sexual violence. What about our cultural obsession with youth and beauty that translates into nine-year-old girls starving themselves into anorexic, airbrushed, perpetual pre-pubescence? And there was discussion of the dark, murky waters of what used to be called the "alternative" sexual practices, now renamed "variations."

Although skeptical at first of the need for a whole week of sex information, the participants eventually were disturbed that some of their fellow classmates were reading textbooks during the lectures and panel discussions as they crammed for upcoming exams, apparently oblivious of the value of what was being offered to them.

(continued)



TRUE TALES FROM THE PATH TO SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT (CONTINUED)

As the days progressed, the students paid more attention, listening to their lecturers and acknowledging the powerful self-disclosures of the courageous panelists who revealed personal stories. The sexual variations panel was the most provocative for the students, but not for the obvious reasons.

Afterward the med students came back to small groups, eager to process what they'd learned. They became interested in how much time they spent focused on the fact that one of the professionals participating had once been a sexual surrogate. They just couldn't get their heads around the notion that sexual surrogacy—the practice of being a paid sex partner to patients in sex therapy—which was once widely accepted in this country, is legitimate and potentially beneficial.

The larger lessons loomed everywhere about tolerance and diversity.

One doctor said that she routinely asks all of her patients about their sex lives. "How's your appetite, your sleep, your sex life?" Boom. Boom. Boom. Studies show that patients generally won't initiate conversations about their sexuality but will discuss it, often eagerly, if asked. A professional who is not comfortable with sexuality is not likely to bring such things up, and in doing so robs his patient of the opportunity to deal with a critical life concern. At the same time, the practitioner is also deprived of crucial information. The lack of sexual vitality can be an important indication of a patient's overall health.

A major goal for the medical students was to learn how to take a sexual history from "standardized" patients, actors trained to portray various clinical ailments and scenarios. The students anxiously tried to remain value-free while interviewing the patients. A young woman "patient" presented a difficult case. She had symptoms of a vaginal infection and revealed that she gave sexual favors to multiple sex partners without using protection in exchange for drugs. She neither wanted to be tested for AIDS nor provided information

on safer sex. All she wanted was a prescription to treat her "yeast" infection. As the students attempted to counsel her, the way they framed the questions, the tone of their voice, the repeated emphasis on how many partners she had had made it glaringly apparent just how difficult it was to remain nonjudgmental.

By the end of the week, the students unanimously agreed that their experience was extremely valuable. It would be hard to imagine them having such breakthroughs without the benefits of this intensive course.

What was left out of the curriculum was as interesting as what was included. Nothing was included about what makes for great sex. In fact, the only person who mentioned the word bliss was a panelist who was sharing about her problems with chronic pain and its impact on her sexual life.

Perhaps we will get to that topic next year; if, in fact, there will be another Sex Week.



The solutions to the problems are simplistic and sometimes as wrong as the definition of the problem itself. The experts are quick to give suggestions.

- Schedule sex dates and weekend getaways
- Be romantic, light candles
- Communicate
- Get therapy
- Watch erotic films, buy sex toys

But are the above suggestions enough?

REAL SPICE, NOT THAT SYNTHETIC STUFF

Scheduled sex dates and more romance are great, but they won't boost your NREU or give you an orgasm via intercourse alone. Talking about sex problems with your lover is only useful if you both know what you're talking about and can have this educated conversation without recrimination and blame. Therapy has less than a 33 percent success rate overall, even less with couples who have low desire and other sex issues. Sex coaching is a better idea if you can find a qualified coach in your area.

If you understand your own sexual responses (and your partner's), sex aides are helpful. But what else will improve your sex life? Consider the following:

- Understand how your desire and arousal systems work and apply that knowledge to your sex life
- Get your body in shape for good sex: Work on general fitness and developing strong PC muscle
- Learn how to have an orgasm any time you want one
- Be more playful in sex, including the use of erotic videos and DVDs and sex toys
- Master the erotic techniques that will bring you and your partner to greater pleasure

SEX EDUCATION

The United States is behind Western Europe and other countries in the realm of sex education. The impact of the religious right in insisting on abstinence-only sex education will be felt for years to come. Even clinics that were set up to provide birth control and sex education to poor and middle-class women are hampered by the abstinence-only requirement—if they want to receive federal funds. And we aren't teaching our doctors how to deal with sexual issues either.

You need to be responsible not only for getting good information for yourself and your children, but for playing the role of advocate and activist in your community.

If access to good sex information doesn't help you solve your problems or put them into perspective, go shopping and buy some toys or "sex aides" as therapists refer to them. What's more energizing than a new toy?



SEXUAL AIDES

Erotic DVDs and videos are sex toys too. They are often used to stimulate arousal during masturbation. And many couples use them as part of foreplay. Erotic films fuel fantasies, improve technique, suggest new ways of having sex, and can empower women.

The explosion of porn in the marketplace has changed sex. The quality of porn films has improved with higher production values, more women behind the camera, and storylines created to appeal to women.

On the other hand, these days some porn is more hardcore, extremely violent, and degrading to women. If you break down porn into “his” and “hers,” his can be stomach-churning while hers remains relatively tame. How do you come to terms with this unsettling idea of his and hers porn? True, it is difficult to reconcile the reality of all of this misogynistic degradation and abuse that is portrayed in some pornography. BUT the upside is there is some quality, sexy stuff out there too. Don’t automatically write off the idea of porn just because you think it’s degrading to women, because not all of it is.

Porn aimed toward women is also called “couples porn,” which often means he suffers through it because it puts her in the mood. I fast forward through the excruciatingly bad acting in the romantic story lines to get to the good parts, the sex—and I do like a lot of the sex in porn films.

RESEARCH

Top Porn Films Women Buy

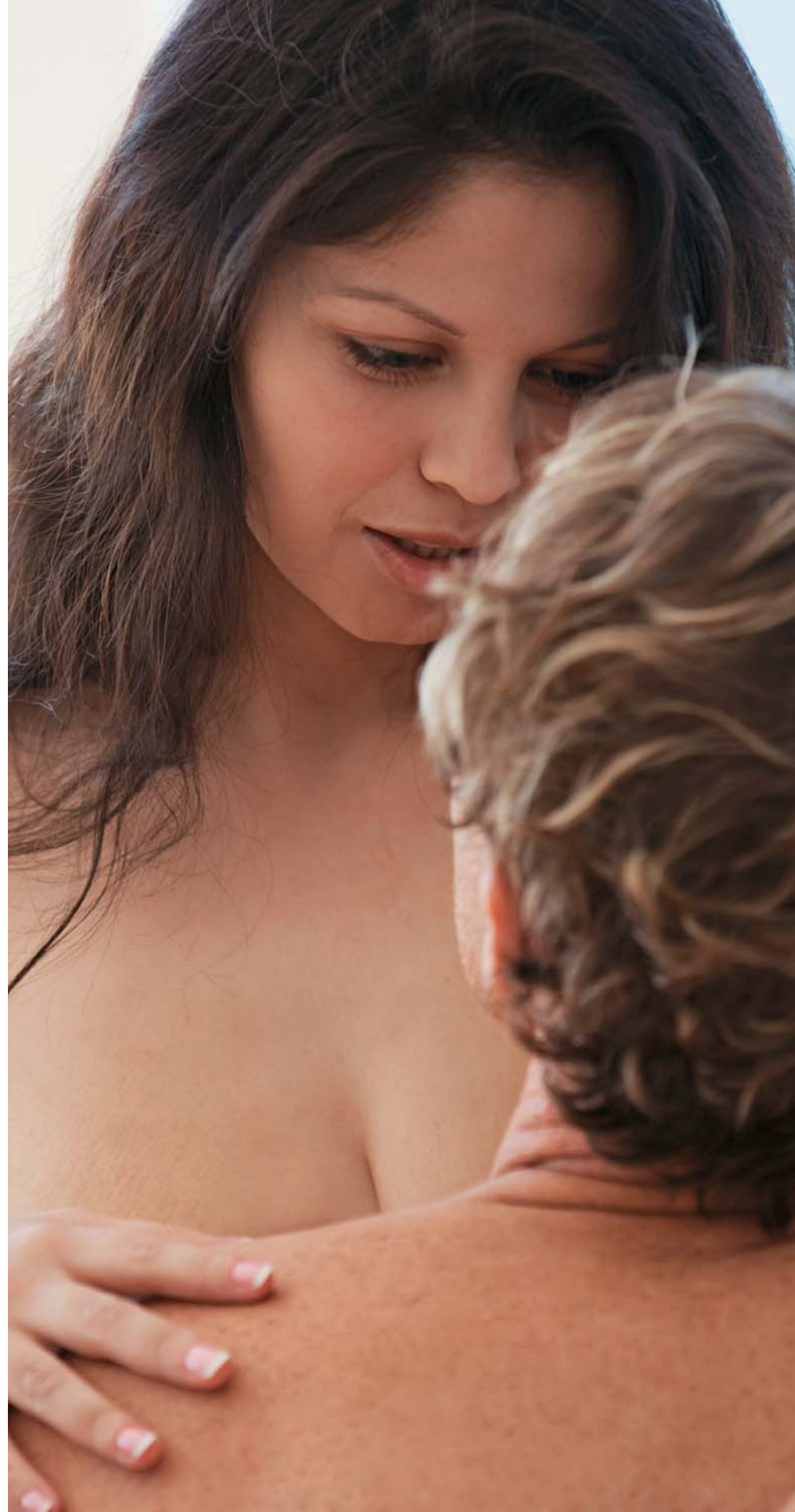
Some women like it hot. But we like the characters to be strong and smart too.

- *9 1/2 Weeks*, a mainstream film about S/M.
- *Kama Sutra*, a modern Indian erotic film by director Mira Nair.
- *Last Tango in Paris*, Marlon Brando before he got fat, in the hottest anal-sex film ever.
- *Deep Throat*, the fellatio classic.
- *Emmanuelle*, the ultimate coming of age film.
- *Edge Play*, director Veronica Hart’s rape fantasy.
- *Three Daughters*, director Candida Royalle’s cunnilingus masterpiece.
- *The New Devil in Miss Jones*, starring Jenna Jameson in the best film ever made about a sexually empowered woman.
- *Romance*, French director Catherine Breillat’s best film featuring unsimulated sex.
- *Shortbus*, John Cameron Mitchell’s film featuring nonprofessional actors engaged in every kind of sex you can imagine

Whether you watch porn or not, you have to admit that it has changed all our sex lives. Consider these examples:

- Women under forty tend not to have pubic hair anymore.
- Huge, fake boobs have begun to look normal to all of us.
- Heterosexual anal sex is far more common than it was even a decade ago. In fact, most men under age thirty-five expect it to come into play during the same stage as the blow job.

If you think you don't like X-rated movies, watch one of these. Open your mind. If you think you are not aroused, put a finger inside your vagina. Are you lubricating? You are aroused.





Chapter 21

SEX TOYS

S*ex toys have become an increasingly integral part of people's sex lives.* Twenty years ago, the sex-toy category was composed of big dildos in garish colors, a few serviceable vibes, and joke gifts like edible panties. Now sex toys are designed primarily with women's (and, to a lesser extent, couples') pleasure in mind. If men were once intimidated by them as common wisdom had it, most no longer are.

Buy your sex toys from reputable dealers, or you might end up with allergic reactions to cheap dye and parts that break at inconvenient moments. They should be cleaned after each use, especially if you're using them in partner sex. Enjoy!

VIBRATORS

Vibrators are by far the largest-selling category of sex toys, accounting for 60-70 percent of all toys sold. According to some surveys, half of all women in the United States own at least one vibe, and 27 percent use them regularly. Women in their thirties and in relationships use more vibrators than any other category.

There are vibes designed for external use and vibes designed for internal use. Others are waterproof. You can use them in the tub, shower, hot tub, or pool. There are even remote-controlled vibrators that your lover can control. With all of the options, you really need more than one.

The Classic External Vibes

The majority of vibrators are designed to stimulate the clitoris and are used externally. You can also stimulate the surrounding clitoral area and labia with a vibe. Experiment with touch and pressure. Here are some of the most-common external vibes:

- *Hitachi Magic Wand*

Labeled “a sex toy that changed the world” on the Babeland website, Hitachi is the largest selling vibrator worldwide. It is a very large and powerful vibrator. Marketed as “a muscle massager,” it’s available in drugstores as well as sex toy shops. And, wow, does it make those muscles vibrate!

- *Eroscillator 2*

The only sex toy endorsed by legendary Dr. Ruth Westheimer, the Eroscillator resembles an electric toothbrush in size and shape. It erroscillates rather than vibrates, so the motion is more gentle against the clitoris—but still effective.

- *Pocket Rocket*

Tiny but relatively powerful, this one tucks away into a small handbag and gets the job done anywhere, anytime. You can change the texture of the vibe and the feeling of the vibrations by adding a “jelly” sleeve, a soft covering with little nubs that stimulate the clitoris.

- *Water Dancer*

This is the waterproof version of the Pocket Rocket. It’s great for combining the morning shower with the first orgasm of the day.

- *Finger Vibes Like Fukuoku 9000*

The top-of-the-line finger vibe, Fukuoku is a great couple’s toy. Finger vibes wrap around your finger or fit over them and are perfect for clitoral stimulation during intercourse. Finger Fun is a slightly larger, waterproof version.

- *Strap-on Vibes Like the Butterfly*

A strap-on vibrator stimulates her clitoris during intercourse while giving him pleasurable sensations too. The Sweetheart and many other vibes, some remote-controlled, work the same way as the Butterfly.

The Classic Internal Vibes

The following vibes go beyond just the clitoris:

- *The Rabbit (with Pearls)*

The Rabbit stimulates three erogenous zones at once. Insert the vibrating shaft so it hits your G-spot. The G-spot is a rough patch of skin roughly a third of the way up the front vaginal wall. You can find it by putting your hand to your vagina, palm up, inserting two fingers, and making the “come hither” gesture or by using a G-spot vibe or vibe with G-spot attachment. The ears of the rabbit riding the shaft tickle your clitoris as the vibrating band of pearls around the base stimulates your vaginal opening. Some rabbits come without the pearls, but pearls are always a good idea. Why stop at two sensations when you can have three?

- *G-spot Vibes Like the Swirl*

Designed to hit the G-spot, this one and others like it are limited use vibes. If G-spot orgasms are your thing, this is your toy. (You can also buy G-spot attachments for other vibes, including The Hitachi Magic Wand.) These vibes have angled heads to hit the G-spot easily.

- *Contour Vibes Like Laya Spot*

One of the many new contour vibes, Laya is both chic and ergonomically correct. Designed to fit the curves of a woman’s body, it is versatile and discreet. It fits between a woman’s hand and her genitals.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER

Use your vibrator on him

Start on a low speed. Run the vibrator along the shaft of his penis, then press it against the base, scrotum, and perineum. Experiment with higher speeds and firmer pressures.

Don’t apply more powerful vibrators directly to his penis. Hold it against the back of your hand as you are holding the shaft of his penis. Move his penis up and down with your vibrating hand.

Give him a vibrating cock ring

The silicone ring attached to a vibrating torpedo and battery pack looks a bit strange, but you will both love the way it feels.

Place the stretchy cock ring around the base of his penis with the attached torpedo turned down to stimulate his perineum, or up during intercourse to stimulate your clitoris. Either way, he feels the vibrations around the base of his penis.

The New High-Tech Vibes

For the tech-savvy person who has to have it all:

- *Talking Head*

This Rabbit talks! The early version (still available) of this interactive vibe comes with computer chips programmed to speak as lovers, like the French man and the girl who say what you want to hear. The latest version has an MP-3 download, and you can program it with anything you like, such as your lover's voice or music. On the horizon: An alliance with Clone-a-Willy that will produce a Talking Head shaped just like your guy that speaks in his voice too. Also forthcoming: a Talking Head programmed by a rap star.

- *OhMiBod*

A slim wand that connects to your iPod, this vibe puts new meaning in "feeling the music." After you program your playlist into it, the wand vibrates to your preferred beat. You can only find this one at Babeland.

- *The Cone*

A big, pink, sixteen-speed cone that is unbelievably versatile. You can put it under you while you're kneeling on the floor performing fellatio, attach it to the wall and back into it, or put it between your legs and let it vibrate. The Cone is creative-and pretty enough to leave on your night table as a piece of art.

- *Form 6 from JimmyJane*

Dubbed "the new wonder vibe" on the Babeland Website, Form 6 is elegant and upscale in its design and target advertising. Its name comes from its six modes and six speeds (along with five intensity levels). And it is waterproof.

COUPLE VIBRATOR PLAY

Some vibrators, like the remote-controlled egg, are designed for couples. You insert it; your lover pushes the buttons. Strap-on vibrators and vibrating cock rings bring pleasure to both. There are also ways in which couples can incorporate vibrators into their lovemaking:

- Take turns massaging each other with the vibrator. Move down the body to the genitals, move away, and then move back again using the vibrator to tease as you would use your mouth or hands. Because it has a long handle and also works well as a body massager, the Hitachi Magic Wand is the one to use here.
- Use the vibrator to vary stimulation while caressing your lover's genitals. Let him hold it against the back of his hand as he strokes your labia and the sides of your clitoris.
- Ask your lover to stimulate your labia with a small vibrator, like the Pocket Rocket, during oral or manual lovemaking.

Have him use the G-spot vibrator or a G-spot attachment to a multipurpose vibrator to stimulate your vagina during intercourse.
- Use an anal vibrator on your lover while you perform oral sex. He can use an anal vibrator on you while he performs cunnilingus or manually stimulates your clitoris.
- Insert a wand-shaped vibrator between your bodies during intercourse. He will feel indirect vibrations throughout his penis inside your vagina as you are getting clitoral stimulation.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

Select a modest-sized vibe for couple play and start with a low speed.

Use lubrication and proceed slowly until your lover indicates a desire for more. As you play, vary the position, movement and speed of the vibe.





DILDOS

Dildos are shaped like a penis—sometimes a huge penis known to no man. Unlike vibrators, however, they have no action component. They have probably been around since women figured out the connection between the excitement of being penetrated and the male organ. In ancient times, women used everything from smooth stones to vegetables like long-necked squashes and cucumbers to stimulate themselves. Doesn't that make the array of beautiful dildos available in your sex-toy shop even more appealing? Yet some women ask, "Why bother when they don't vibrate?"

Dildos appeal to women who like to control the speed and motion of the thrusting. Using a dildo seems more like intercourse to them. They select dildos made of life-like materials and in sizes that penises actually come in. Huge dildos are more for display than insertion. (If you want to play with one, use it to stroke your vulva, labia, and clitoris.)

Strap-On Dildos

The unexpected success of that video series, "Bend Over Boyfriend," has widened the market for strap-on dildos, once a toy purchased primarily by lesbians, not straight women. Some men do enjoy anal penetration, and some women are willing to oblige them. And other women say to their men, "If you want me to receive anal sex, you give that position a try for a change."

You can, of course, manually use a dildo to penetrate his anus, but a harness frees your hands for other pursuits and gives you a new thrill, thrusting. If you don't own a dildo, you might want to buy a strap-on kit containing the dildo and a harness. That's a good option for beginners, and also for the woman who likes her dildo and harness color-coordinated. The kits come equipped with instructions and advice on performing anal intercourse beginning with: Use a lot of lube.

Prepare him to receive anal sex in the same way he prepares you. (See page 166) Make sure he is aroused and well-lubricated before you penetrate his anus. Insert the dildo slowly. Let him direct the depth of penetration and speed of thrusting.

The basic harness straps the dildo onto your body via adjustable straps around the waist and thighs. A two-strap harness has two leg straps that wrap around the thighs and attach to a slim waist-band. A sexier option is the G-string harness. It looks like a leather thong with a single strap running up the center of the butt, attaching to a slim waistband.

The ultimate in strap-on pleasure is the vibrating harness. Two little vibrating pads are attached to the harness, one next to her clitoris, the other located where the dildo comes out of the harness: Hers and his.

HOW TO BE A GREAT LOVER:

Clamping the Nipple

Prepare your lover. Make sure his or her nipples are erect. Suck, lick, and squeeze to get them there. Test the pressure by fastening the clamp to the web of skin between your lover's thumb and index finger.

Watch the clock. A clamp constricts (and possibly halts) the flow of blood to the clamped nipple and surrounding tissue. Don't leave the clamps on for more than ten to fifteen minutes at a time.

Start by clamping as much flesh as possible. Experiment over time by gradually clamping less flesh. The less you clamp, the more it concentrates the pressure and the more intense the sensations. Never clip only the very end of the nipple. Not only will the sensation be too intense, you will risk tearing flesh.

Once the clamps are firmly attached, you can tease your lover's nipples with your tongue or feathers. If the clamps are part of a master/slave game, you can make him or her get down on all fours or attach the chain connecting the clamps to a slave collar. If your lover is into a little more pain, briefly hang weights from the clamps as he or she is in the down-on-all-fours position. I emphasize: briefly.

Remember, the longer they're on, the more painful they are coming off. When the blood rushes back to the nipple, it hurts. Everybody has his or her own response to stimulation. Some like it light, some heavy. Get it wrong and the play becomes torture, which definitely is not sexy.

ANAL TOYS

Anal sex toys are a good way to prepare for anal intercourse. Or you can use them for anal foreplay or masturbation. The following are the most common types of anal toys:

- **Butt plugs**

Also called anal plugs, they are typically diamond shaped with a thin neck and a flared base, which prevents them from slipping into the rectum.

- **Anal beads**

They cause the sphincter muscles to contract, which can stimulate orgasm in men and women. Beads come in all sizes and materials. They are simply a series of beads knotted into place along a string with a ring on the end.

- **Anal dildos**

These are slimmer versions of the typical dildo. They come in several sizes. You can use them to simulate anal intercourse—as well as, of course, to prepare your body for receiving it.

NIPPLE CLAMPS

Nipple clamps are not a toy for women only. Men have nipples too. Some men enjoy having their nipples tweaked, squeezed, pinched, licked, sucked, and bitten more than women do. In general, men prefer a firmer touch on their nipples and genitals than women do, though a lot of women like having their nipples and breasts handled roughly in the heat of passion, especially just before their menstrual periods. (If you're going to experiment with S/M, this is the time to start.) You or your lover, man or woman, might like nipple-clamp play.

If you've never seen a nipple clamp, you might be imagining some wicked device or wooden clothes pins like the ones used in very old porn flicks. Nipple clamps come in assorted styles. They keep the same kind of pressure on your lover's nipples as you would exert in pinching them. The bonus is that your hands are free to play elsewhere.

You can browse the nipple-clamp selection online at www.babeland.com or www.goodvibrations.com as well as in your local sex-toy shop. Varieties include the following:

- **Tweezer clamps**

The best choice for beginnings, are the most comfortable and look the least like something you'd see lying around the warden's office in a prison camp. The tension can be adjusted by sliding a small ring closer to or further away from the nipple. Narrow, plastic-covered, curved wire ends close around the base of the nipples, leaving the tips standing up proudly.

- **Clover clamps**

Are big and sturdy and would be intimidating to the novice. The clamp's body has four open sections between articulated arms. The force is not adjustable and is relatively hard. Gripper pads, consisting of mini rubber discs with bumps, keep the clamps firmly in place without abrading the skin. Tugging on the chain momentarily tightens the pressure.

- **Kitty Clamps**

Are alligator-type clamps that have an adjusting screw limiting how tightly they can be fastened—with attached cylindrical weights. Turn the control dial on and the clamps hum, strumming the captive nipples. Rotate it up a notch or two and the clamps buzz like a vibrator and make the nipples dance. This is not a beginner's toy.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

CHAIN YOUR LOVE

Some nipple clamp sets come with a connecting chain. You can use that chain to gently tug your lover by the nipples as part of an S/M game. But go easy, especially at first.

Go shopping in person if you are fortunate enough to live in a metropolitan area with good sex-toy stores. The staff are generally well informed and happy to educate you on how to use the toys. Sex-toy parties are good places to shop for similar reasons. Online sites such as www.babeland.com and www.goodvibrations.com provide excellent information, including what to do (or not do) with the sex toys you purchase. You can type in requests for information or guidance and get a reply.



Conclusion

SEX IS A PRIVATE THING

S*ex life is a private thing.*

No matter how close you are to your man (or woman), you can't climb into his head, follow him around 24/7, or make him tell you absolutely everything.

And you aren't going to know his complete sexual history even if you married as virgins and never touch another lover until the day one of you dies.

Sex happens inside our brains and bodies, and only partially and intermittently—but oh, how joyously!—mingles with the sex life of an other.

Women put a lot of time and energy into figuring out men. We work on The Relationship and may try to manipulate our man to maintain what we consider to be happiness. Oh, we dress it up by saying we want “intimacy” and “communication.” But what we really want is to be loved when we are old or fat, not to be abandoned, to drive him wild in bed, to be driven wild in bed, to be

always safe and secure, not to be told what we don't want to hear, and, of course, to have the space to grow and develop to our fullest female potential beside our best friend/soulmate who does at least half the chores.

It's a load of expectation to put on a relationship that began when his secret nerve signaled your secret nerve and the brain chemicals began to surge.

For decades, we have been adding to the definition of an ideal love/sex relationship. Our grandmothers were grateful for much less, and they didn't kid themselves about who got pregnant. It wasn't “we.” It was “she.” And they were smart enough to keep him out of the delivery room.





Ten Answers to Ten Questions

I asked ten men attending a St. Louis Cardinals' game:

What does your woman not know about you sexually?

"She doesn't know that I know she fakes orgasm. We've been together almost four years. One of us should tell the truth about this, but we haven't. I know she fakes to make me feel good, but it doesn't. I want her to have real orgasms." —Randy, 37

"I jerk off two or three nights a week to cyberporn while she's asleep. She goes to bed first. If she knew, she would think I was cheating on her." —Ted, 44

"I like foreplay too. I would like more of it. She thinks that she doesn't have to touch me that much. I would like a back rub or a massage after sex too." —Ben, 33

"It's not okay that she won't let me do her ass. I say it's okay, but it's not. I got tired of begging. And she got to the point where she didn't trust me not to try to stick it in there, so I have had to shut up about it."
—Devonne, 29

"I have had two affairs in the twenty years we've been married and several casual one-night stands on business trips. She has no idea." —G, 50

"She doesn't know that I slept with her sister before we got married. I know her sister isn't going to tell her, but every now and then I have a nightmare about that."
—Ron, 40

"She's not the best sex I ever had. I am the best sex she ever had. And she thinks that she is mine, but she isn't."
—Brett, 31

"I'm getting the best blow jobs I've ever had—from another woman. We aren't having intercourse, so I tell myself it's not something that should come between me and my wife. I do feel a little guilty about it, but man, the way this woman gives head!" —Chris, 35

"I don't like going down on women. I do it. I pretend I like it. I make the big deal out of wanting to eat her sweet pussy. But I'm not that into it." —Jon, 33

"She tries too hard to make the sex hot. Whenever I see her in high heels and a garter belt, I know I won't be going to sleep for a long time, and when I do, my back will hurt in the morning." —Jim, 45





Ten Answers to One Question

And then I asked ten women at the same St. Louis Cardinals' baseball stadium the same question:

What does your man not know about you sexually?

"I fake orgasms—a lot. I'm really good at it. The secret is not to go too far over the top. He thinks I come every time, and I don't." —Mindy, 34

"I've had more partners than he thinks I've had. My real number is twice what I told him. And when I told him six, he thought that was a lot." —Chandra, 27

"Oh, there is more than one thing! I fake orgasms, I've had more partners than he knows I've had, I've cheated on him, and he's not as good in bed as he thinks he is. I guess that does it." —Debbie, 43

"I have had anal sex, and he thinks I haven't. I didn't like it and I don't want to do it again. If he knew I'd tried it with another man before him, he wouldn't leave me alone until he got into my ass." —Veronica, 31

"I'm having an emotional affair with a man at work. We kiss and touch, but nothing below the waist. My husband would be furious if he knew." —Gina, 39

"I have fantasies about being tied up and whipped. And sometimes I fantasize having a line of men jerking off on my face. Or being gang-banged. He would think my fantasies are repulsive. I don't want to act them out; I think they are repulsive too." —Sasha, 32

"He's my third husband. There is so much this man doesn't know about me that it would take a week to tell him. I've had a much wilder life than he thinks I've had. My second husband and I were swingers. This one goes to church." —Gloria, 52

"I know he pays call girls when he travels on business. I've seen his credit card statements and checked out the charges. I'm saving that information in case I ever need it." —Maria, 44

"I masturbate. Sometimes when I get home earlier than he does, I masturbate. Then I tell him I am too tired for sex. If he knew I was getting myself off, he'd be pissed." —Carla, 49

"We have an open marriage, so we tell each other everything—except he doesn't always play by that rule. I listen to his voicemails after he goes to sleep and check his emails and read his journal entries. He is seeing this woman more than he tells me he is. But now I know everything." —Nancy, 50

Did you blanch when you read some of those comments? I know they sound most harsh to women in the commitment years—women who have so much riding on the outcome that they are terrified to think he might cheat, they might cheat, or either one of them could be harboring a secret the other would find ugly. Women who are younger or older are less idealistic. They can afford not to be naïve.

The truth is that he can have an affair, masturbate three nights a week to cyberporn, or lie about any number of things—and still love you.

Another truth is that you can have an affair, have fantasies that would appall him, or lie about any number of things—and still love him.

It's not always pretty, is it?

Yet we love them and they love us, and we keep trying to create some happiness out of that. Maybe we try too hard. And maybe we fail sometimes.

As much as we think we know about our lovers, we don't—we can't—know everything anymore than they do or can know everything about us.

Sexual empowerment lies in knowing our own selves, in accepting and understanding our sexual response systems, in claiming our own pleasure at every stage of sex life, and perhaps too in cutting our lovers some slack, giving them some breathing space, accepting that we will never own them. It also means being a grown-up who accepts that there is no Santa Claus yet believes in the magic of Christmas.

There is no Hot Monogamy Forever. But there is the tantalizing, delicious, and very real possibility of having a good sex life throughout your life—and any number of ways you can make the possibility into your own personal reality. Go for that.







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INDEX

A

AFE Zone, 76
 affairs, 206. *See also* cheating
 ageism, 11
 aging, 103, 206
 AIDS, 184
 Alman, Isadora, 120
 alternating stimulation, 65
 amphetamine, 30
 anal beads, 231
 anal dildos, 231
 anal foreplay, 165–166
 analingus, 166
 anal intercourse, 93, 119, 120, 165–167, 221.
 See also anal play
 anal intercourse alternative, 149
 anal play, 62, 64, 77, 166–167, 167.
 See also anal intercourse
 anal beads, 231
 anal dildos, 231
 anal foreplay, 165–166
 analingus, 166
 anal intercourse alternative, 149
 anal toys, 231
 anal vibrators, 226
 anal sex. *See* anal intercourse; anal play
 anal toys, 231
 anal vibrators, 226
 Anderson, Pamela, 17
 androgyny, 183–184
 anger, 38, 100
 anterior fornix erogenous (AFE) zone. *See* AFE Zone
 anus, 165–167. *See also* anal intercourse; anal play
 aphrodisiacs, 106
 ArginMax, 106
 Armstrong, Carolyn, 102
 arousal, 11, 19, 21–27, 43–47
 during breastfeeding, 103
 in men, 24, 40, 41, 43–44, 67
 sexual orientation and, 43
 in women, 40, 43–44, 46, 61, 67, 103, 172
 Astroglide, 167
 attachment, 30, 32
 “attachment flu”, 32
 attitudes, 12, 17

B

Babeland, 193
 babymaking sex, 14
 Baker, Josephine, 17
 Bakos, Susan Crain, 47, 169
 Barkin, Ellen, 205
 Barton, Debra L., 38
 Basson, Rosemary, 37
 Baumgardner, Jennifer, 120
 Beatty, Warren, 110
 Behar, Joy, 90
 belts, 172, 175, 176
 Bentley, Toni, 165
 Berenson, Abbey, 89
 Berman, Jennifer, 46
 Berman, Laura, 46, 52, 90
 Beyer-Flores, Carlos, 49
 Big H, 77
 Binik, Irv, 44
 birth control, 99, 102
 birth control pills, 102
 bisexuality, 114, 170, 183–184
 blended multiple orgasms, 54, 57
 blended orgasms, 53, 54, 57
 blow jobs, 61, 77, 93, 96, 120, 121,
 135, 137. *See also* oral sex
 body
 body-image, 38, 88
 body relationship, 87–97
 lifecycle passages and, 99–111
 body-image, 38, 88
 body relationship, 87–97
 bondage, 172, 174, 175. *See also* S/M
 bonding, 30, 32
 borderline personality disorder, 113
 Bowie, David, 183
 breastfeeding, sexual arousal during, 103
 breasts. *See also* breastfeeding,
 sexual arousal during
 ejaculation on, 81
 sensitivity of, 103
 Brown, Helen Gurley, 17
 Bryner, Jeanna, 24
 Butterfly, 224
 buttocks, 77
 butt plugs, 231

C

canes, 176
cervix, 44, 52, 53
cesarean sections, 46
charming, 123
cheating, 12, 27, 186, 206–207
chemistry. *See* sexual chemistry
childbirth, 12, 89
chlamydia, 173
Cialis, 117
“clit” jelly, 33
clitoral orgasms, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58
clitoral stimulation, 54, 71
clitoris, 43, 51, 52, 53, 54, 61, 71, 76
 blood flow to the, 103
 “clit” jelly, 33
 clitoral orgasms, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58
 clitoral stimulation, 54, 71
 creams to stimulate the, 106
clover clamps, 232
coaching, 77
cock rings, 193, 225, 226
Cognitive Physiological Feedback Loop, 67
collars, 172
commitment, 197–203
compounded single orgasms, 57
conception sex, 200
condoms, 173
Cone, the, 226
contour vibrators, 225
corona, 77
cosmetic surgery, 88
cougars, 206
couple vibrator play, 226
Crawford, Cindy, 88
creams, 33, 106
Crenshaw, Teresa, 32
crops, 176
cuddle chemical, 30, 103
cuffs, 172, 175
cunnilingus, 53, 119, 132–133, 167, 226.
 See also oral sex
Curtis, Jamie Lee, 88
Cutler, Winnifred B., 41

D

dating, 191–192
Deep Throat, 220

DeGeneres, Ellen, 17

Depp, Johnny, 184

depression, 38

desire, 12, 19, 21–27, 38, 110. *See also* Desire Curves;

Desire Set Points; sex drive

 aging and, 103

 boosting, 33, 106

 defining, 24–25

 dissatisfaction and, 27, 40–41

 loss of, 25

 low, 103–105

 in men, 24, 40

 receptive, 14, 21–23

 rethinking, 25

 science of, 29–41

 spontaneous, 14, 21–23, 32, 37, 40

 in women, 40

Desire Curves, 29, 30–36, 37, 40, 100

Desire Set Points, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36

Desperate Housewives, 17

DHEA, 103, 106

diet, 105

dildos, 229

dissatisfaction, 27, 40–41. *See also*
 female sexual dysfunction (FSD)

divorce, 206

doctors, 104

Dodson, Betty, 58

doggy-style position, 141, 148–149

dominance. *See* S/M

dopamine, 30, 114

dopamine D-4 receptor gene (DRD₄), 114

dressing up, 128

drying off, 128

dysfunction. *See* female sexual dysfunction (FSD)

E

ears, 76, 77

Eastern lovemaking, 54

Edge Play, 220

ejaculation

 on breasts, 81

 female, 80

Emmanuelle, 220

Emotional Intelligence, 29

emotional safety, 12

emotional vulnerability, 14

empowerment. *See* sexual empowerment

energy. *See* sexual energy
 energy focus, 68, 71
 Epstein, Mark, 21
 erections, 21, 40, 95
 Eroscillator 2, 224
 erotica, 119, 128, 165, 187, 220–221
 erotic massage, 78–79
 erotic opportunities, seizing, 14, 17
 estrogen, 30, 32, 103
 ethics, 12
 excitement, 24
 exercise, 35, 105
 Kegel exercises, 49, 52, 57–58, 90, 105, 201
 PC passion exercise, 105
 sexercises, 105
 expanded orgasms, 54
 experimentation, 35
 extended orgasms, 49, 54
 external vibrators, 224
 extra-genital orgasms, 53
 eye contact, 123
 eyelids, 77

F

fabrics, 33
 Faludi, Susan, 114
 fancy strokes, 133
 fantasy, 177–181
 fellatio, 61, 77, 93, 96, 120, 121, 137. *See also* oral sex
 female ejaculation, 80
 female sexual dysfunction (FSD), 25, 27,
 117, 213. *See also* dissatisfaction
 female superior position, 65, 141, 142–145, 163
 fingers, 166
 finger vibes, 224
 Fisher, Helen, 27, 185
 Fisher, Terri, 23
 flexing, 49, 51, 53
 flirtation, art of, 123
 floggers, 119, 172
 flogging, 119, 172, 173
 foreplay, 43, 105, 119, 120, 123–128,
 177. *See also* sex play
 Form 6, 226
 F Place, 77
 French kissing, 127
 frenulum, 77
 frequency of sex, 25, 41

Freud, Sigmund, 51
 Friday, Nancy, 177
 Friedan, Betty, 114
 friends with benefits, 193
 FSD. *See* female sexual dysfunction (FSD)
 “fuck buddies”, 193
 Fukuoku 9000, 224

G

gags, 175
 Gale, David, 22
 games, 172
 gels, 106
 genitals, 43, 44, 47, 88–89. *See also specific genitalia*
 Grafeberg, Ernst, 76
 group sex, 120, 185–186
 G shot, 52
 G-spot, 44, 51, 52, 53, 58, 64, 76, 77, 80, 93
 G-spot vibrators, 225, 226
 G-string harness, 229

H

habituation, 35
 hairbrushes, 176
 handcuffs, 172, 175
 hand jobs, 80, 81, 198
 happy endings, 79
 Hasameat, Rick, 68
 health problems, 100
 high-tech vibrators, 226
 Hinduism, 87
 Hitachi Magic Wand, 224, 225, 226
 Hite, Shere, 52
 homosexuality, 12, 40, 43, 120, 184
 Honey Dust, 77
 hooking up, 192–193
 hormone replacement therapy, 38, 104
 hormones, 30, 32, 38, 41, 103, 104, 110.
 See also specific hormones
 humiliation, 172
 Hutcherson, Hilda, 75
 hymen, 89
 hypogastric nerve, 44
 hysterectomy, 46

I

illness, 38
 incontinence, 89

infertility, 12, 102, 173
infertility treatments, 12, 102
infidelity, 12, 27, 186, 206
intercourse, 43, 53, 119, 141–163. *See also* anal
 intercourse; penetration
internal vibrators, 225
intimacy, vs. technique, 121

J

Jagger, Mick, 183
“Jake” (*Glamour* magazine), 194
Jameson, Jenna, 17
Joannides, Paul, 40
Johnson, Virginia, 24, 52, 65, 117
Jolie, Angelina, 17, 184
Jong, Erica, 17

K

Kabazzah, 199, 200
Kama Sutra, 76
Kama Sutra (film), 220
Kaplan, Helen Singer, 24, 52, 117
Karezza, 199, 200
Keesling, Barbara, 58
Kegel exercises, 49, 52, 57–58, 90, 105, 201
Kerner, Ian, 52
kink, 119, 120, 169–181
Kinsey, Albert, 52, 117, 184
Kinsey Institute, 93
Kipnis, Laura, 114
kissing, 123, 126, 127, 128
kitty clamps, 232
knees, 76
Komisaruk, Barry, 44, 49, 51
Kundalini, 71

L

labia, 43, 51, 61, 77, 89
labioplasty, 89
laser vaginal rejuvenation (LVR), 89
last-minute saves, 95
Laya Spot, 225
Leiblum, Sandra, 24, 37, 104
“lesbian bed death”, 40
“lesbian until graduation” (LUG), 184
libido. *See* desire; sex drive
licking, 128
lifecycle passages, 14, 38, 189–209

light flicks, 133
limerance, 30. *See also*
 New Relationship Euphoria (NREU)
lingam, 87
lingerie, 128
lotions, 33
love bites, 172
lovers, selecting, 17
Low-Desire Syndrome, 37–38. *See* Desire Set Points
lubricants, 33
lubrication, 24, 33, 103, 104, 166, 167
lust. *See* desire

M

Madonna, 17, 183
makeovers, 104
male ego, 12
male G-spot, 77
manipulation, 12
man on top position, 141, 146–147
manual stimulation, 53, 54, 61, 167, 226
married life, 191
massage, erotic, 78–79
Masters, William, 24, 52, 65, 117
masturbation, 81, 103–104, 201, 220
 men and, 61
 mutual, 82–83
 to orgasm, 51, 53–54
 sexual empowerment and, 12
medications, 38
men
 arousal in, 24, 40, 41, 43–44, 67
 desire in, 21–23, 24, 30, 40
 erections and, 21–23
 number of partners and, 22
 orgasms in, 41, 46, 51, 54, 61–65
 younger, 206, 209
menopause, 12, 30, 99
menstrual cycles, 41
missionary position, 141, 146–147
“mommy” factor, the, 201
monogamy, 11, 12, 27, 114
Monroe, Marilyn, 17
motherhood, 201
multiple orgasms, 49, 54, 57
multiple partners, 21–23, 185–186
Musick, Kelly, 32
mutual masturbation, 82–83

N

National Center for Health Statistics, 22
neck, 77
nerve zero, 47
New Devil in Miss Jones, The, 220
New Relationship Euphoria (NREU), 30, 32,
34–36, 40, 100, 218
Nin, Anaïs, 14, 17
nipple clamps, 119, 230, 231–232
nipples, 63, 65, 76, 77, 103, 172
no-hands orgasms, 67–68
norepinephrine, 30
NREU. *See* New Relationship Euphoria (NREU)
nyphomania, 27, 113

O

Ogden, Gina, 52, 67, 184
OhMiBod, 226
olfactory nerves, 123
O Loop. *See* Orgasm Loop, the
online chatting, 186, 187
online cheating, 186
online pornography, 187
Operational Intelligence, 29
oral sex, 119, 120, 131–139. *See also* cunnilingus
oral stimulation, 54
Orgasm Loop, the, 49, 53–54, 63, 67–71, 68, 163
orgasms, 17, 19, 24, 27, 41, 49–59, 110, 121, 192
bigger, 54
blended multiple orgasms, 57
blended orgasms, 53, 57
during breastfeeding, 103
clitoral orgasms, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58
comparing male and female, 61–65
compounded single orgasms, 57
cosmetic surgery and, 88
expanded orgasms, 54
expanding the definition of, 51
extended orgasms, 49, 54, 82–83
extra-genital orgasms, 53
faking, 100
masturbation to, 51
in men, 41, 46, 51, 54, 61–65
multiple orgasms, 49, 54, 57
no-hands orgasms, 67–68
perineum orgasms, 62
refractory period, 54

sequential multiple orgasms, 57
serial multiple orgasms, 57
sexual empowerment and, 11–12
single orgasms, 49, 57
spontaneous, 53
types of female, 53–54
vaginal orgasms, 51, 52, 53, 54
whole-body orgasms, 49, 54
in women, 41, 46, 51, 53–54, 61–65, 172
O'Rourke, Meghan, 192
oxytocin, 30, 32, 103, 110

P

paddles, 172, 176
Paget, Lou, 81, 135
pain games, 172
Palace, Eileen, 67, 67–68
paralysis, 52. *See also* spinal-cord damage
partners, 183–187
multiple, 120, 185–186
number of, 22–23
virtual, 187
passages
commitment passages, 197–203
early passages, 191–195
lifecycle passages, 99–111
middle and late passages, 205–209
passion gel, 193
PC flexing. *See* pubococcygeus (PC) muscle
PC muscle. *See* pubococcygeus (PC) muscle
PC passion exercise, 58
PEA. *See* phenylethylamine (PEA)
Pearls, 225
pelvic nerve, 44
pelvic surgery, 46
penetration, 64–65, 141. *See also* intercourse
penis, 21, 40, 61, 65, 77, 90, 93. *See also* fellatio
erections, 21, 40, 95
flaccidity of the, 93
hardness of the, 93, 95
kissing the, 96
penis anxiety, 90, 93
shape of the, 93
size of the, 90, 93
worship of the, 87–88, 137, 139
penis anxiety, 90, 93
perineum, 61, 62, 64, 77, 137

perineum orgasms, 62
 personality disorders, 27
 phenylethylamine (PEA), 30
 pheromones, 47
 physical problems, 99–105
 pillow fighting, 100
 pinches, 172
 plateau, 24
 Pocket Rocket, 224, 226
 polyamory, 120, 185–186, 186
 pornography, 119, 165, 187, 220–221. *See also* erotica
 positions, 141–163
 anal intercourse alternative, 149
 doggy-style position, 141, 148–149
 female superior position, 141, 142–145, 146–147
 man on top position, 141
 missionary position, 141, 146–147
 rear-entry position, 141, 148–149, 167
 side-by-side position, 141, 150–151
 sitting position, 141, 152–155
 spooning position, 141, 150–151
 standing position, 141, 156, 160–161
 Tantric positions, 155
 woman on top position, 141, 142–145
 yabyum position, 154–155
 postorgasmic contractions, 49
 power games, 175
 power sex goddesses, 194
 pregnancy, 12, 102
 privacy, 235–242
 prolactin, 110
 prostate glands, 80
 pubic hair, 89
 pubococcygeus (PC) muscle, 49, 51,
 53, 57–58, 63, 67–68, 71, 95
 pudendal nerve, 44
 P Zone, 77

Q

quickies, 201

R

Rabbit, 225
 raphe, 77
 rear-entry position, 141, 148–149, 167
 refractory period, 54
 Reich, Wilhelm, 51
 relationships, 17
 commitment, 197–203

dating, 191–192
 friends with benefits, 193
 “fuck buddies”, 193
 intimate, 27
 issues surrounding, 38
 repressed anger, 100
 reproductive cycle
 sexuality and the, 102–103
 repulsion, 34
 resolution, 24
 restraints, 172
 re-virginization, 89
 risk-taking, 35
 R Line, 77
 role-playing, 172, 175. *See also* S/M
Romance, 220
 Ross, Carlin, 193
 Royale, Candida, 17
 rubbing, 51
 rulers, 176

S

sadomasochism. *See* S/M
 safer sex, 12, 173
 safety, 12
 scarves, 175
 scrotum, 77
 seat, the, 105
 Second Life, 187
 security, 12
 sedentary lifestyle, 100
 self-esteem, 88
 self-image, 88
 sensuality, building, 33
 sequential multiple orgasms, 57
 serial monogamy, 27, 185
 serial multiple orgasms, 57
 seven-year-itch, the, 32
 sex, aging and, 206
 sex, frequency of, 25, 41
Sex and the City, 17
 sex coaching. *See* coaching
 sex drive. *See also* desire
 drop in, 100
 genetics and, 114
 high, 114
 sex education, 218
 sexercises, 105
 sex nerves, 44, 47

sex play, 128. *See also* foreplay
sex therapy, 37, 121
sex toys, 166, 172, 220, 223–232
sexual aides, 220–221
sexual behaviors, 119–187
sexual body, the, 73–117
sexual chemistry, 23–25, 123
sexual desire. *See* desire
sexual dysfunction. *See* female sexual dysfunction (FSD)
sexual empowerment, 11–17
 issues surrounding, 14
 role models, 17
sexual energy, 68, 71
sexual habits, 35
sexuality, 17
 over a lifetime, 99–111
 overmedicalization of, 117
 pathologizing of female, 113–117
 reproductive cycle and, 102–103
Sexuality Information and
 Education Counsel of the United States (SIECUS), 184
sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), 173, 192
sexual orientation, 12, 120
 arousal and, 43
sexual passages, 189–209. *See also* passages
sexual peak, 12
sexual response, 17, 19
sexual response, stages of female, 24
sexual satisfaction, 25
sexual skills, essential, 121
sexual technique, 12, 17, 54, 121, 198, 199, 200.
 See also specific techniques
sexual variation
 partners, 183–187
 sex acts, 169–181
Sex Week, 214, 216
sexy squat, the, 105
Shortbus, 220
side-by-side position, 141, 150–151
single life, 191
single orgasms, 49, 57
sitting position, 141, 152–155.
 See also yabyum position
slaps, 172
sleep, 105
slow play, 107–109
“slut”, 113
S/M, 120, 169, 170–177
spanking, 172, 176–177
spatulas, 172, 176
Spears, Britney, 183, 184
speed sex, 198
sphincter, 49
spinal-cord damage, 49, 51, 52
spontaneous desire, 14, 21–23, 32, 37, 40
spontaneous orgasms, 53
spooning position, 141, 150–151
Sprinkle, Annie, 67
Squeeze Technique, the, 65
“squirters”, 80
standing position, 141, 156, 160–161
stand-up kiss, 96
STDs. *See* sexually transmitted diseases
Stepp, Laura Sessions, 192
stereotypes, 27
stimulation, 51, 53, 54, 61. *See also* G-spot
 alternating stimulation, 65
 clitoral stimulation, 54, 71
 manual stimulation, 53, 54, 61, 167, 226
 vaginal stimulation, 54
Stockham, Alice Bunker, 200
stop/start, 65
strap-on dildos, 229
strap-on vibrators, 224, 226
stress, 38
stress incontinence, 89
submission. *See* S/M
substance abuse, 38
surgery, 46
surveys, 22–232
swallowing, 137
swinging, 185–186
Swirl, 225

T

talking, 128
Talking Head, 226
Tantric breathing, 68
Tantric positions, 155
Tantrism, 54, 68, 155, 200
Taoism, 87, 200
teasers, 128
technique vs. intimacy, 121
temples, 77
testicles, 80
testosterone, 30, 32, 38, 41, 103
testosterone cream, 38
thermal imaging, 44

The Rules, 12
thighs, 76, 77
Three Daughters, 220
threesomes, 185–186
three-year itch, the, 32, 197–198
thrusting, controlling, 64–65
ties, 172
tongue, 166
touch, 123, 128. *See also* touch zones
touch zones, 121, 163
 exploring, 80
 female, 75–76
 male, 77
trauma, 14
troubleshooting, 213, 218
tweezer clamps, 231

U

urban culture, 189
urethra, 76
urinary tract infections, 166, 167
U Spot, 76
uterus, 44, 49, 52

V

vagina, 44, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 75
 atrophy of the, 103
 blood flow to the, 103
 cleaning the, 88–89
 elasticity of, 103
 lubrication of the, 103
 vagina anxiety, 88–89
 vaginal orgasms, 51, 52, 53, 54
 vaginal stimulation, 54
 vaginoplasty, 52, 89, 90
 waxing the, 89
vagina anxiety, 88–89
vaginal orgasms, 51, 52, 53, 54
vaginal stimulation, 54
vaginoplasty, 52, 89, 90
vagus nerve, 44, 49, 52
Velcro cuffs, 172, 175
velvet nos, 133
Viagra, 117
vibrators, 33, 51, 76, 103, 105, 163,
 166, 193, 201, 220, 223–226

virtual partners, 186, 187
vulnerability, 14
vulva, 51

W

water, 51
Water Dancer, 224
webcamming, 186
weight gain, 100
weight issues, 38, 100
whipping, 172
Whipple, Beverly, 44, 49, 52, 58, 76
whips, 172
whole-body orgasms, 49, 54
Willis-Abonowitz, Nona, 192
Wise, Nan, 29, 32, 35, 40, 117
woman on top position, 142–145
women
 arousal in, 40, 43–44, 46, 67
 desire in, 40
 Desire Set Points in, 30
 married, 191
 number of partners and, 22–23
 older, 206
 orgasms in, 41, 46, 51, 54, 61–65
 pathologizing of female sexuality, 113–117
 single, 191
wrists, 128

Y

yabyum position, 154–155
yoga, 35
yohimbe, 106
yoni, 87

Z

Zestra, 33, 106

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