

THE *EXPERT* GUIDE TO A GROWN-UP *SEX* LIFE

Ditch spontaneity. Turn on the stereo. Go to bed half an hour earlier... and eight more secrets to better sex

1 RETHINK SCHEDULED SEX

“Let go of the myth that sex should be spur-of-the-moment – spontaneous sex isn’t necessarily better. Planning it is often associated with boredom, but change the way you think of it from ‘scheduled sex’ to a ‘tryst’. This essentially means ‘planned sexual encounter’, but sounds more exciting. Organise a tryst with your partner for later that day, or even that week, and spend the time before fantasising about it. It also gets rid of that whole ‘are we? Aren’t we?’ feeling, and ensures sex actually happens.

Dr Laurie Mintz, psychologist and author of Becoming Cliterate: Why Orgasm Equality Matters And How To Get It (HarperOne, £18.99)



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USE A ‘SECRET WEAPON’

“Lube is one of the best secret weapons for female orgasm. It helps you feel more sensation from touch, and a dab of lube on your clitoris makes it easier for you to have an orgasm during intercourse, by helping your partner’s body glide against yours. You can use organic coconut oil, but keep in mind oil can break down condoms, so this only works for couples using a different form of protection.”
Vanessa Marin, sex therapist and founder of online orgasm course Finishing School (Find out more: Vmtherapy.com)

3 ADDRESS YOUR NON-SEXUAL NEEDS

“It’s quite common for women in long-term relationships to have lower sex drives than their male partners. Think carefully about why you’re not as open to sex. Is it because you’re always too tired? Is it because it takes too long? Once you’re able to pinpoint exactly what’s blocking you, it will become easier to reach a happy medium.

Open up a discussion about how you feel by reassuring your partner – make clear that your differing level of desire is not because you don’t love them, or don’t find them attractive. Simply say your body doesn’t work in the same way theirs does, and that you’d like to come up with a plan together to meet both your needs. Often women feel like they need more intimacy that doesn’t lead to sex, more attention, or more help with daily chores – non-sexual needs are equally as important to address, as the more satisfied you are with the relationship as a whole, the more satisfaction you will have in the bedroom.”

Dr Laurie Betito, clinical psychologist, sex therapist and author of The Sex Bible For People Over 50 (Quiver, £15.99)



4 BE MINDFUL

“You can’t have an orgasm when your mind is somewhere else. If you find your thoughts wandering during sex, bring yourself back to the moment by taking a deep breath. Move the breath from your head all the way through your body and focus on your senses. What does your partner smell like? How do their hands feel on your body? If you practise being mindful and tune into your senses throughout your everyday life, this will help you be present during sex and, as a result, increase your chances of orgasm.”

Dr Laurie Mintz

5 Practise pillow talk

“If you’re nervous talking about sex with your partner, start by recapping after you’ve had sex. Tell them what you enjoyed about what you just did. It’s low-stress, it’s already on both of your minds, and it’s a great way to get more comfortable talking about sex so you can work your way up to talking about more serious topics. I always recommend starting with positive communication; that way it won’t feel like the only time the two of you ever talk about sex is when there’s a problem.”
Vanessa Marin

6 Create space where sex might (or might not) happen

“When I was researching my book, to find out ways of keeping your sex life exciting after having kids, psychotherapist and sex expert Esther Perel suggested the person who is feeling deprived (in my case, my husband) should create ‘space’ where sex could happen, but doesn’t have to. I’m always worried about not getting enough sleep, so my husband puts the kids to bed earlier, to create space in our day where sex might or might not happen. Feeling free of obligation relaxes me and more often than not, sex happens.”
Jancee Dunn, author of How Not To Hate Your Husband After Kids (Hutchinson, £14.99)

8 STIMULATE WITH SOUND

“Sound can be a powerful element of sex. Try blindfolding your partner, then place headphones on them and use classical music to further enhance their state of sensory deprivation: not only are they unable to see where you’re going to touch them next, but they can’t hear either, which can be exciting. Another night, play the same concerto at dinner – perhaps in company – and see how your partner responds; it’s a secret signal of what’s coming later.”

Then there’s silence to explore: challenging one another not to make a sound during sex can give things a new dimension. A partner recently asked if we could both keep quiet during sex. I expected to feel restricted, but it was a revelation: we made love with our faces close together, maintaining eye contact. It was so tender and connected.”
Alix Fox, sex educator and Durex sex and relationship expert



7 TRY THE SEVEN-DAY SEX CHALLENGE

“It might seem overwhelming, but I recommend trying this ‘sexperiment’ based on the teachings of Texan Reverend Ed Young who told all of his flock to have sex for seven nights in a row. I did this with my husband and we went on for 10 – it’s true the more sex you have, the more you want it. You don’t have to continue this forever – according to a study by Society for Personality and Social Psychology, carried out on 30,000 adults, the ‘sweet spot’ is once a week. Another study found the perfect amount of time for sexual intercourse is seven to 13 minutes – everyone can set aside that once a week; you just have to make the time.” *Jancee Dunn*

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SEE YOUR PARTNER THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE’S EYES

“Another thing Esther Perel recommended to me was next time you go to a party with your partner, keep your distance and observe them from afar. She explained that you become more drawn to your partner when you see them through other people’s eyes. When you’re in a long-term relationship, you’re accustomed to seeing your partner at their worst and you’re overly conscious of their bad habits. Seeing them at their best – dressed nicely, performing a little, using their best jokes – can act as an aphrodisiac. Sometimes the realisation that you would choose them all over again can reignite something, and put you in the mood for when you get home.” *Jancee Dunn*



10 GET CONNECTED

“During sex a man’s arousal is often faster and stronger, which makes it harder for him to remain connected with what the woman is feeling. Try sitting opposite each other and breathing for a few minutes. In this tantric exercise the woman leads; the man follows the speed of the woman’s breathing, allowing him to ‘tune in’.”

Another way to explore this problem of disconnect is for the man to take the 30-day challenge where he does not ejaculate. During penetrative sex, he slows down, focusing on how the woman responds. Your partner will gain a better understanding of what creates greater levels of arousal.”
Isabel Losada, author of Sensation: Adventures In Sex, Love And Laughter (Watkins, £9.99; out 21st September)



11 Recreate the holiday mood back home

“Think back to the most recent time you had great sex – what led to this? Did you have a lovely meal? Had you been laughing and joking together? We often have our best and most frequent sex when we’re on holiday; we’re free of responsibilities, more relaxed. Replicate these conditions – maybe by taking your children to a sleepover every few weeks so you can go out and relax together. You can’t sustain passion for years and years, but you can create it in new ways.” *Dr Laurie Betito*