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Relationships

How to Heat Up Your Love Life

Whether the problem is no time or no desire, here's how to bring sexy back
By Amy Beal, Parenting

How's your love life? If your answer is anything but "It's great, thank you very much," then read on. Having kids can wreak havoc on a mom's mojo faster than grape juice can stain a white carpet. And as we discovered in a recent Parenting.com poll, it's not just the brand-new parents who are missing sex: For a variety of reasons, mothers at all stages often find themselves bereft of grown-up bedtime. Here are some of the most common ones, plus some doable solutions for each.

Issue: ugh! negative body image

I'm saggy on top, mushy in the middle, and jiggle all over. I can't imagine who in their right mind would want to get naked with me.

Well, your partner, for one. But we get it: The most important sex organ is between your ears, so if you think you're no longer attractive and you're too self-conscious in bed to enjoy yourself, then your sex life is going to suffer. So here's what you do:

Take it off. Take it all off. Seriously. Strip down, stand in front of the mirror, and check yourself out -- everywhere, advises Lonnie Barbach, Ph.D., author of *Turn Ons: Pleasing Yourself While You Please Your Lover*. Bend, stretch, run your hands over every angle and curve. Those areas that seem squishy to you? Believe it or not, they're probably the ones that feel softest and most sensual under your husband's fingertips. He won't see them as "problem areas" unless you point them out, adds Laura Berman, Ph.D., author of *Real Women, Real Sex*.

Then dress the part of a sexy woman. Not in high-high boots or skimpy thongs (unless you're into that), but in clothes that don't hide your body. Kick those oversize tees and baggy sweats to the back of the closet, and find a pair of jeans that fit and a flattering top or two. A lacy pair of undies won't hurt either. And if you just can't bear to bare it all in bed, invest in some sexy lingerie that you can leave on -- at least up until the last



Raphaël Büchler

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minute. (You won't care by then, we promise!)

Finally, get physical. Studies show that exercise alone can improve body image, whether or not it results in pounds or inches lost. A walk with the kids, a sweat-inducing spring cleaning -- anything that gets you moving -- is practically *guaranteed* to budge the needle on a skewed body image.

Issue: eek! no time

My husband and I are like two ships passing in the night -- every night. We want to get together, but we can't figure out how.

If you're waiting around for a free moment to magically appear so the two of you can be alone, forget that. It's about as likely to happen as your kid is likely to potty-train herself -- which is why the following advice gets repeated again and again: In order to have time together, you're going to have to schedule it. "The rest of your life is planned practically down to the hour," says Barbach. "Sex shouldn't be any different." Pick a day and time together, and then write it down on your calendar (or tap it into your BlackBerry or iPhone and set the alarm). Whatever you do, try not to cancel. And if you absolutely have to, reschedule right away! Even better, keep a standing date for sex -- like Friday nights or even Saturday mornings while the kids are at soccer practice.

If timing isn't the problem so much as logistics (you can't "let go" with the kids in the house, for example), then get out. "Find another couple in the same boat, and take turns babysitting," suggests psychologist Laurie Mintz, Ph.D. Enjoy having an empty house to yourselves, or book a room in a nearby hotel (even if you can only manage to stay a few hours). "For about the same amount of money a fancy dinner would cost," says Mintz, "you can get a bargain hotel room, a cheap bottle of wine, and some bubble bath." Bonus: You won't have to make the bed afterward.

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Quote of the Day
 I find myself ignoring, yelling, losing my temper, and wanting to run far away.

Posted by CaidenzWearnMeOut

Quick Poll

How much "me time" do you carve out for yourself each day?

I'm a happier person if I get at least 30-60 minutes.
 I relax before bed sometimes, but that's it.
 Seriously? I barely have time to go to the bathroom.

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