

Dear Sex Counselor,

I have heard masturbation is good for you. Do you have suggestions of things I might try?

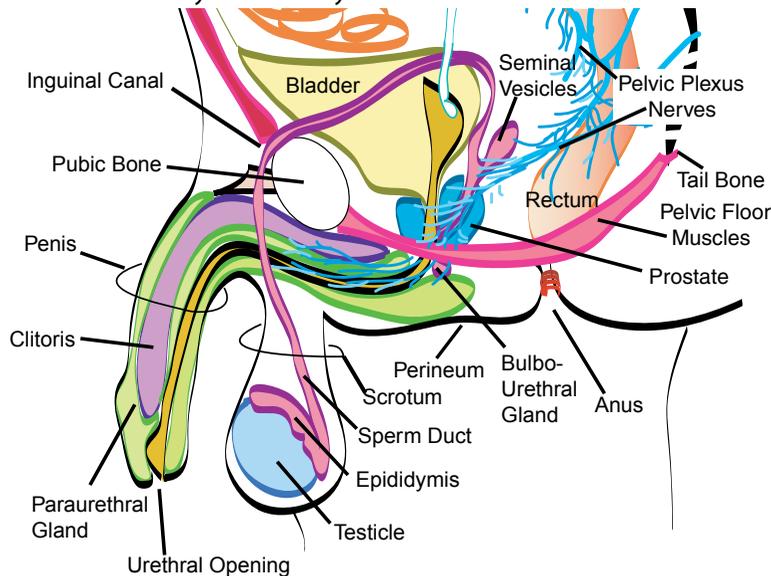
Self-pleasure, also known as masturbation, specifically refers to touching yourself sexually in a way that feels good. There is no right way to masturbate, and as long as it doesn't hurt, there's no wrong way either. You can do it alone, with a friend, or as part of sex play with a partner. Masturbating for your own pleasure, on your own terms, is a way to deepen your relationship with your body and mind.

Why masturbate?

Besides feeling good, masturbation can strengthen your pelvic floor muscles, revitalize body tissues, fight insomnia, reduce depression, and release emotional tension and stress. Masturbation with ejaculation also releases fluid from the prostate, which helps prevent prostate inflammation. Masturbation helps you learn to play with your arousal level and control when you ejaculate, which can prevent eager (premature) ejaculation and delayed ejaculation, as well as make partner sex more enjoyable. Masturbation is normal, healthy, and good for your body and mind.

On your mark...

Take a tour of your anatomy:



Your whole body is covered with nerve endings ready to be caressed by your sensitive fingers. Besides your penis and scrotum, don't forget your face, neck, nipples, stomach, thighs, anus, lips, fingers, toes...and any other part of your body that likes to be touched. You're in charge; there's no reason you shouldn't explore your whole body.

Get Set...

Here are some things to think about before you dive in:

Give yourself permission to play and experiment. This is about exploring and discovering what feels good, not crossing the finish line as fast as possible. Of course, you might enjoy trying that too, but don't forget to enjoy the scenery along the way.

To lube or not to lube, that's the question. Lube keeps things slippery, reduces friction and intensifies sensation. Some men love lube, some don't, but enough like it to make it worth a try. Experiment and find the right amount and type of lube for you. Use too little and you might find yourself getting sore from too much rubbing, while too much can reduce friction and decrease sensation. If you have a foreskin, you can move it up and down over the head of your penis without added lubrication, however, some men with a foreskin still like the feeling of lube between the foreskin and the head of the penis. Whether or not you

have a foreskin, if you decide to "go dry" try either moving the loose skin of the penis up and down with a firm grip, or lightly rubbing the skin itself. If you start feeling sore, add some lube.

What to use for lube? You can use saliva, although you might need a lot since it dries out quickly, and is not very slick. Some men use hand lotion, massage oil, or specially formulated men's masturbation creams such as Boy Butter. Some use a combination of these. Note that all of these contain oil and may leave stains on clothing or sheets. You might also enjoy water- or silicone-based lubricant made specifically for sexual pleasure. Water-based lubes can get sticky after awhile; just add some saliva or water and they'll become slick again. Silicone lubes are more

expensive, but a little goes a long way and they hold up well under water. Don't use soap or shampoo; they can dry your skin to the point of cracking and peeling, and sting if they get inside your urethra.

A warning about lubricant: many oils dissolve latex barriers such as condoms, and dissolve some silicone toys. If you plan to use either before you have a chance to wash thoroughly, stick with oil-free lubricants. Also, oils are not good for a woman's vulva and vagina, so if your self-pleasuring is part of penetrative sex play with a female partner, limit yourself to oil-free lubricants made for sex.

Go!!!

Erotic inspiration begins in your mind. Turn up the heat by fantasizing while focusing on the sensations you're creating in your body. Let your mind wander. Nobody ever needs to know what thoughts turn you on. You can think about a totally different storyline every time, or you can stick with a favorite scenario that works for you. Your fantasy can be quite vague, or specific and explicit right down to the last detail; it's up to you. Try moving your body in the ways you would be moving in your fantasy for a dose of realism. Other ways to fuel your imagination include looking at erotic pictures, reading erotic stories, or watching erotic movies.

Let your mind wander to whatever you find sexually exciting, and let your hands roam around your body. If you don't want to fantasize, focus on the sensations of your hands touching your skin.

Play with your nipples, your lips, your stomach, your thighs. Squeeze, rub, brush or tickle your skin. When you're ready, bring your focus (and your hands) to your genital area, and explore the sensation of touching there.

Some things to try:

-Wrap your fingers around the shaft of your penis and move them up and down; see how it feels to move the loose skin over the tissue underneath. Vary between firm pressure, a light touch, or a rhythmic squeezing.

-Rest the penis between both hands, and gently slap it back and forth between your hands. A variation on this is to slap it against your stomach.

-Wrap your fingers and thumb around your penis as if you were making a fist. If you are not fully erect, gently

fondle and touch yourself until you are. Then begin to glide your hand up and down the length of your shaft and over the head as well. Vary the strength of your grip to create different sensations. You might also want to try different speeds.

-Use two hands instead of one; both hands can move in the same direction, or you can use a twisting motion and move your hands in opposite directions (lubricant or a light touch recommended for this one).

-Hold your testicles in your fingers through the skin of your scrotum; try moving them around, or gently squeezing or stroking. Try pressing on the area between your scrotum and your anus (the perineum). Use one hand to explore your scrotum, while the other explores your penis.

-Explore the ridge where the shaft meets the glans or head of the penis. This area (the frenulum), on the underside of the penis just under the ridge, is sensitive for a lot of men. Try massaging this area in little circles, or holding your penis with the thumb on the top and two or three fingers underneath, and move your thumb up and down, creating pressure on the frenulum.

-Try one hand on your penis, and the other one massaging the opening to your anus; you can dip your finger inside if you wish, or just caress the outside. If you decide to insert a finger, use lubricant. You can just insert your finger a tiny distance, or as far as you can reach. A few inches inside, you will encounter a bump about the size of a walnut but softer, on the side towards your belly button. That's your prostate, and many men enjoy the sensations they get from stimulating it. Try pressing gently, pressing firmly, or stroking a finger side to side over it. (See AWT's Prostate brochure for more.)

-No hands. Try thrusting against a pillow, or rubbing against your mattress.

-Envelop your erect penis in one of your hands with the palm of your hand touching the head of the penis and your fingers and thumb surrounding the shaft. Imagine your fingers are tentacles that can stretch up and down the length of the shaft as you draw your hand in an up and down motion. Use the insides of your fingers to grip the shaft firmly. You can increase and decrease tension easily.

Once you find a kind of touch you really like, stick with it for awhile, and see how your body responds.

Masturbation for Men

~learn how to masturbate

~improve your sexual
connection with yourself

~stroke your way to new
heights of pleasure

~add positive energy
to the world

Let yourself play this way for as long as you like. Experiment with letting your arousal build, then giving yourself a little rest and allowing your arousal to lessen a little bit, and then begin again. The longer you spend on the buildup to your orgasm, the more sensitive and responsive your body will become. Once you are able to control your arousal level by starting and stopping, or by changing the speed and intensity of your stroke, your partner play can last as long as you (and your partner) find pleasurable.

As you get aroused, you might (or might not) notice a drop or two of slippery fluid coming out of the end of your penis. This pre-cum is the warm-up fluid expressed by your Bulbourethral Glands. It's a normal part of the process of arousal, although some guys never notice it and that's normal, too.

Now What?

As you continue to self-pleasure, you may experience an orgasm, which usually occurs just seconds before ejaculation. For some men, this will happen after just a few minutes of pleasuring; for others it takes longer. When you approach orgasm, you will experience a buildup of pleasurable sensations, increasing muscle tension and excitement. Some describe this as being like cresting the top of a big hill, before tumbling down the other side. Some say they feel a little like they might urinate; that's normal, and is caused by the semen entering the urethra. Just keep on doing what feels best, and allow the sensations to carry you over the top of the hill. Orgasm is different for everyone, but many describe an intense sensation of pleasurable release, along with a series of muscle spasms and throbbing sensations deep inside the pelvis and at the base of the penis.

Most men ejaculate during or just after orgasm. When you're young (before puberty) you might not ejaculate at all, or not very much. As you get older, you will ejaculate more, and with more force. A series of spurts of semen (a clear or whitish mixture of sperm and fluids from the seminal vesicles, prostate, and bulbourethral glands) will come out of the end of your penis. Some guys like to keep on stimulating themselves right through ejaculation, and some don't. You'll want to experiment to figure out the right time for you to stop.

After ejaculation, most men lose their erections and go through a period when they are unable to ejaculate again, called the refractory period. The refractory period lasts a few minutes for some men, and hours or days for others. There is no reason you can't engage in sexual activity during that time; you just might not have an erection, reach orgasm or ejaculate. But you don't need to do any of those things in order to experience sexual pleasure; if it feels good, go for it.

Common Questions

I've heard of multiple orgasms for men; is this a myth?

No, not at all. Orgasm and ejaculation are actually two separate events in your body, and some men can separate the two. It's the ejaculation, not the orgasm itself, that leads to the refractory period; having more than one orgasm before choosing to ejaculate can really expand your sexual options. For some guys this comes naturally, while others have to practice, but it certainly is possible for some men. One part of the process is to practice starting and stopping masturbating to allow arousal to build to higher and higher levels before going over the edge into orgasm. For more information, refer to the book *Male Multiple Orgasm* by Somraj Pokras, visit the website *Jack in World* (see Resources section), or pick up our brochure on *Eager Ejaculation*.

Will masturbation ruin me for partner sex?

No. Liking to touch yourself doesn't mean that you won't like being touched by someone else. In fact, many men agree that being with a partner is much more fun than masturbation—plus it gives you a lot of real-life fantasy material for future self-pleasure sessions! However, there is one possible pitfall worth mentioning: it is possible to train yourself to be able to achieve orgasm only with a certain kind of stimulation, so vary your technique every now and then to avoid getting into a rut. Especially avoid always using a technique that partner sex can't possibly duplicate; for instance, if you always masturbate with a very tight grip, it might be hard to get that level of stimulation from penetrating a partner. Try loosening up your grip now and then as you pleasure yourself. Likewise, if you always masturbate using a fantasy your partner is unable or unwilling to explore with you, it may be difficult to get fully aroused with your partner. Try switching between your primary fantasy and your

next-runner-up fantasy, with the goal of gradually training yourself to become fully aroused and reach orgasm using a variety of fantasies.

My erection comes and goes and often I don't stay hard for very long. How can I masturbate?

First, you should know that difficulty becoming erect or maintaining an erection can be a warning sign of more serious health problems, like heart disease or diabetes, regardless of your age. Please make an appointment today, and tell your doctor what you're experiencing. This could be an important opportunity to prevent a heart attack. For more information, see the *AWT Erectile Dysfunction* brochure.

But remember, you don't need to be erect in order to experience sexual pleasure. In fact, you don't need to be erect to experience orgasm or ejaculation, either. If you are in the mood, but not hard, just go for it. You might also enjoy trying a cock ring. These straps or stretchy rings are made of a variety of materials, and they work by allowing blood to flow into the penis, but not out. For safety, these toys should only be worn for 30 minutes at a time, and we strongly recommend you choose the flexible kinds only. For more information, check out the *AWT Men's Toys and Erectile Function* brochures.

Speaking of toys, are vibrators just for women?

Vibration adds stimulation, and lots of men enjoy vibration. If you're curious, go ahead and try it out. There are all kinds of vibrators, in a variety of shapes and sizes, including vibrating cock rings you can use alone or with a partner. Other popular toys for men include masturbation sleeves, anal plugs, prostate stimulation toys, and nipple clamps. Visit our store or website to learn more.

Further resources:

www.sexualityresources.com : On our website, browse our online store, download all our brochures, and read articles about sex and sexuality.

www.jackinworld.com : If you have more questions, this is a very complete website about masturbation for men.

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