

Intensify Your Orgasms

I get a lot of questions about orgasms—how to have them, how to delay them, how to have more of them, how to make them more intense—pretty much anything and everything to do with the big “O.” For the record, I strongly encourage couples to not have “goal oriented” sexual intimacy (i.e.- sexual intimacy driven by the goal to reach orgasm). The stress and pressure of striving for an orgasm, tends to make achieving them all the more difficult! Instead, I try to help couples learn how to have pleasure oriented sex (i.e.- sexual intimacy that focuses on feelings of pleasure, instead of focusing on the end result of an orgasm). Despite my beliefs on the matter, I feel compelled to respond to those who are already having successful orgasms, but would like to make them more intense and/or last longer.

Oxytocin

Oxytocin is both a hormone and a neurotransmitter in the brain that is released from the pituitary gland. As a neuropeptide, it influences neural activity and/or functioning, helping neurons in the brain to communicate with each other. When the hormone is released, it goes to multiple organs in the body, including the genitals. Oxytocin was originally studied and recognized for its role in female reproduction, as large amounts of it are released during labor, childbirth, and breast feeding. In past issues, I've discussed the role of oxytocin, with regard to increasing feelings of closeness and intimacy with your partner. Oxytocin is released in our bodies through hugging, cuddling, skin-to-skin contact, etc. Studies have also shown that it is responsible for pair bonding, both between mother and child during breast feeding and between intimate partners with touch.

More recent research; however, has looked at the role of this hormone in human behavior, specifically during sexual intercourse and orgasm. A recent study published in the *Journal of Hormones and Behavior* involved 29 heterosexual couples, who were administered 24 IU of Oxytocin (OXT) via an intranasal spray. According to the analysis of their findings, they report, “OXT increased the intensity of orgasm, contentment after sexual intercourse and the effect of study participation.” It is of note that according to their analysis, these effects were more pronounced with the male participants. Two older studies, published in the *Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism* found “increases in plasma oxytocin at orgasm in both men and women.” While more research is needed, the current findings support that higher levels of oxytocin will produce more intense orgasms. Moreover, by engaging in activities that release this hormone, we can actually increase the amount of oxytocin that is released. Thus, increasing hugging, cuddling, massages, and sex will all help to train your brain to release more oxytocin.

Dr. Paul Zak, author of *The Moral Molecule* reports, “eye contact also makes the connection more powerful during touch.” In addition, he also found that oxytocin levels increased 11% after partner dancing, regardless of age or gender. Who knew?! If we incorporate all of this information, I'd say going out on a date to go dancing, followed by giving each other massages when you get home (or some naked cuddling)

could increase your oxytocin levels, and help you achieve a more intense orgasm during sex. So...where's the nearest Salsa Dance club?!

Foreplay

I can't stress enough the importance of foreplay when it comes to having stronger, more intense orgasms. Too often, I hear couples tell me that they spend very little time with foreplay—maybe 5 minutes. Especially couples who have been together for a long period of time—they tend to get into a rut of going through the same motions, every time, and with little time spent building up arousal. In classic studies by both Alfred Kinsey and Masters & Johnson, when women had partners that spent 20 minutes or longer on foreplay, only 7.7% failed to reach orgasm consistently. So, not only will all of that kissing, hugging, and touching release oxytocin, it will also help women reach orgasm more consistently. Just 20 minutes of foreplay could be all the difference! I suggest couples try to be more creative, playful, and slow things down. Include the whole body in foreplay with kissing and touching. Above all else, don't forget about the clitoris! In the, *American Sociological Review*, women increased their chances of orgasm by 18% if there was clitoral stimulation, and by 9% if they received oral sex.

Want to really challenge yourself? Try to delay gratification. A study in the *Journal of Sex Research* found that when participants brought themselves close to orgasm and then stopped, they were able to build up a "bigger, more intense orgasm." The trick is to get yourself about 90% "there" and then slow down, pause, or stop and switch to a different sexual activity before resuming. This can be done repeatedly, depending on how well you train yourself to delay climaxing.

Kegel Exercises

Strengthening the pubococcygeus (PC) muscle can help both sexes achieve stronger, more intense orgasms. The pelvic floor is made up of a group of muscles; which hold all of your internal organs in place. The PC muscles stretch from your anus to your urinary sphincter. Kegel exercises are the best way to strengthen the PC muscles. The act of "doing" Kegel exercises is the intentional contraction and release of the muscle, with multiple repetitions. One way to learn how to locate the PC muscle is to stop yourself while urinating, midstream. Once you've learned how to how to clench these muscles, to tone them you have to contract, hold and release the muscle regularly. Gradually work up to clenching and holding for 5-10 seconds before releasing. The Mayo Clinic recommendation is three sets of ten, daily. Making them part of a regular, daily routine will help you to remember to do them. For example, every day while brushing your teeth, or while taking a shower. In males, strengthening these muscles helps achieve stronger erections and more intense orgasms. In females, they tone and strengthen the vaginal walls, increase arousal and help produce stronger, more intense orgasms. Since no one can see you doing them, they can be done anywhere, anytime!

Take your time, exercise and have fun!

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