

Fantasize

Daydreaming can be used to rekindle the deeper levels of passion that promote exceptionally fulfilling sex. Fantasize with your favorite erotic images from the past and create new ones. Use mental imagery to visualize yourself in a stimulating scene—perhaps the most passionate previous experience with your partner, sex in some exotic position or place or some new twist on how you'd like to feel even more pleasure or make love right now. Many people are troubled by guilt feelings caused by sexual fantasies. It is quite natural, however, for both women and men to have a wide variety of sexual fantasies. Yet it's important to remember that sexual fantasies are just that: fantasies. And as such, they require neither action nor guilt.

Take Advantage of 5-Second "Sex-Muscle Toning"

To get the most out of sex, at *every* age, you need to be in great shape for it—in mind and body. "Two powerful aphrodisiacs," write Robert N. Butler, M.D., of Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, and Myrna I. Lewis, Ph.D., "are a vigorous and well-cared-for body and a lively personality. Much can be done to preserve the functioning of both."⁴⁶ In one recent nine-month study of 95 previously inactive but healthy men (average age 48), researchers found that those who engaged in regular moderate to vigorous exercise reported a 30 percent increase in frequency of intercourse, with a 26 percent increase in the frequency of orgasms. They also reported increases in other arousal measures, such as passionate kissing and caressing. In contrast, the control subjects, who didn't exercise, experienced no improvements and actually saw slight decreases in their sexual frequency.⁴⁷ Here are two sensible suggestions.

Stay physically fit. Regular exercise has been linked to heightened sensuality and sexuality (see chapters 11, 12 and 18).

Do the PC exercise regularly. Beyond a good, balanced approach to everyday physical activity, there's a valuable exercise that takes just a few seconds and can be done almost anywhere at any time, by both men and women, to strengthen the sex-related sphincter muscles of the pelvic floor and, at least in some cases, help improve sexual responsiveness.⁴⁸ It's called the Kegel (*KAY-gill*) exercise, named after Arnold H. Kegel, M.D., the physician who discovered and developed it in the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁴⁹ In both men and women, the pubococcygeus (PC) muscle tends to progressively atrophy from disuse throughout our lives.

Studies report that, compared with women who have strong, toned

PCs, women with weak PCs—and this includes many, and perhaps most, women over age 45⁵⁰—are more frequently troubled with incontinence (involuntary urination)⁵¹ and are more often sexually dissatisfied.⁵² Weak PCs in men may contribute to incontinence, inability to achieve and maintain an erection, poor ejaculatory control and perhaps even problems related to the seminal vesicles and prostate gland.⁵³ PC exercises have enabled some women to climax more readily and intensely, and the exercise may even assist men to achieve easier erections and more control of orgasm.⁵⁴

To become toned, the PC must be exercised regularly. Dr. Kegel found that to learn the sensation of the PC contracting, you can start by interrupting urination. He recommended that to help the PC do most of the work itself, you should at first leave your knees spread when urinating and, once the flow has begun, make an effort to stop it, when urinating and, stop it, and so on. After a few trials, most people can let it start again, stop it, and so on. After a few trials, most people can consciously tense the PC by simple mental command, anytime and anywhere, and then should use the occasional interruption of urination only as a simple check.

Practice doing the PC exercise a number of times during the day. However, there is some evidence to suggest that performing it upon first awakening and before urinating, while the bladder is very full, may not be beneficial. Any other time is fine. Tense the PC strongly, holding for 1 to 2 seconds. Relax for several seconds. Repeat this cycle so that you complete 5 to 10 contractions in a set. You might also include quick flexing and relaxing sequences. As you gain strength and control, progressively increase the intensity of the PC exercise contractions, holding some for more than the usual 1 to 2 seconds. At first, the muscles may fatigue quickly. Don't overdo it. For many of us, 60 to 100 1-second to 5-second contractions performed inconspicuously throughout the day is a reasonable goal.

"Hot Dates": Plan for Extraordinary Sex at Least Once a Week

When you find your life especially busy, be careful not to let yourself feel that sexual overtures from your partner are an intrusion that wastes precious time. Warm, intimate, *shared moments* can often save you time overall by boosting vitality and feelings of well-being that, in turn, contribute to more effective work and less likelihood of arguments at home that arise from the perspective—in one or both partners—that "you never have time for me."

According to recent research, the reasoning for this goes far beyond enjoyment—which can be health-promoting in its own right.