

How to Talk to Your Husband About Sex

Get pointers on discussing intimacy with your spouse

By [Denise Schipani](#) Posted February 11, 2010 from [WomansDay.com](#)

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The most common sex issue faced by otherwise happily married couples? Not surprisingly, it's the "not enough" factor. Couples often end up bemused and confused by a marriage that's dimmed in sexual intensity or frequency. But that's the good news, according to [Kimberly A. Sharky](#), a certified sex therapist in Chicago. The fact is, "Sexual issues in otherwise good marriages are often resolvable." But—and you knew this was coming, right?!—you have to talk...to your spouse...about sex. Here are some pointers about discussing the subject with a less-than-talkative hubby.

1. Don't broach the subject in bed.

Right before or after sex, when you're naked, is *not* the best time to examine faults or dissect performance, says Sharky. "It's when we're at our most vulnerable." Plus, your bedroom, and certainly your bed, should be a sanctuary, not a place to air grievances. Instead, choose a pleasant but neutral place, such as a restaurant that's romantic enough to be relaxing (and noisy enough for a reasonable amount of privacy!).



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2. Make a plan to talk.

There is something to be said for spontaneity, but this may not be the time for it. "If you blindside your husband, you're more likely to make him defensive," says Sharky. Give him a heads-up that you want to chat, so you both have time to think about what you want to say.

3. Look back fondly on the good/hot old days.

Sometimes a shared sense of nostalgia for what the two of you used to do can be enough to lead you down the path of talking about sex openly, says Sharky. You could say, "Remember when we used to spend hours just kissing? I miss that." Or, "I loved when you used to just grab me from behind; it made me feel so wanted."

4. Realize that he doesn't automatically know how to please you.

The bumbling, fumbling man who can't find his way around the female body may be a cliché, but in some cases, it's true. But what's actually more common, says Los Angeles-based therapist [Todd Creager](#), author of *The Long, Hot Marriage*, is that what *used* to be a surefire pleasure-inducer no longer works, thanks to a changing body (like after having kids) or just shifting preferences as you get older. If you don't tell him what works (and doesn't work anymore), how will he know? Think of it as updating a map as new roads—or roadblocks—are put in.

5. Be clear about what *you* want.

If you're not sure what floats your boat, there's no way you'll be able to communicate it to your partner, says Creager. If you used to just jump into bed and get right to it, but now would feel more comfortable with a long make-out session on the couch first, tell him that. If a certain part of your body is, for whatever reason, no longer a go-to hot spot, say so—and tell him what *does* feel good these days.

6. Don't berate or belittle.

"You don't have to be mean to get what you want," says Creager. Start with "a mental state of acceptance." That means presupposing that your man takes your best interests (and your pleasure!) to heart. So instead of saying, "We need to talk about the dismal state of our sex life," say, "I know you want me to feel good, and I want you to enjoy sex, too, so I want to talk about how we can make it better. That OK with you?"

7. Make "I" statements.

Angle the conversation so it's about *you*. "You're telling him, 'This is not about what you're doing wrong, but about what I want,'" says Creager. So instead of saying, "You never give me enough foreplay," say, "I would like more touching and caressing time before we move to the main event."

8. Remember your nonverbal expression, too.

You may have the whole non-blaming thing going on in your words, but what about in your actions, your body language and your tone of voice? "All these things communicate your feelings, too," says Creager, so be sure you're relaxed and ready to speak without letting anger or frustration get in the way. "Take a few deep breaths, uncross your arms and sit close to him."

9. Have solutions in mind, and be open to his ideas.

It's one thing to get across your needs and desires, but you also have to listen to where *he's* coming from. "His preferences may have changed, too, and you need to meet him halfway," says Sharky. Brainstorm better times for sex, or ways you can juggle your schedules. "You might also consider a short course of therapy," says Sharky, who points out that sex therapy tends to be solution-oriented and brief. You could also browse for books or videos on improving your sex life.

10. Remember that this isn't a one-time conversation.

Talking about your sex life isn't something you tick off a list once in a lifetime; it's an ongoing discussion. Some couples make a regular date to check in with each other on all sorts of things, from financial plans to their children's activities. Why not also set aside time to do a health check on your sex life?

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