

7 tricks to feel **SEXY THIS SUMMER**

Struggling with a dwindling libido? Try these tips to reignite your sensual side

Almost a quarter of Brits haven't had sex in the last month*, despite it being good for us – benefits of regular steamy sessions include increased immunity, lower stress levels and improved heart health. Rarely in the mood? Menopause and ageing can have an impact, but whatever the date on your passport, it's still possible to feel passionate and flirty. Here are seven tricks to help get your sex life back on track.

1 BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

Middle-aged spread and menopausal symptoms can dampen self-esteem – and, in turn, desire – so finding ways to accept your

Struggling with low sexual self-esteem? Try speaking to a sexual therapist. Find one at cosrt.org.uk.



changing body is crucial. 'The critical voice that focuses on your ageing or sagging bits isn't your friend,' says menopause coach Claire Snowdon-Darling, founder of Balanced Wellness. 'It takes discipline, but every time a negative thought creeps in, take a second to reframe it with a positive one about yourself. Over time, you'll find an appreciation of your fabulous body!'

In order to feel sexy and wanted, you also need to be sure of your own needs.

'Confidence helps you release shame about your desires, so you'll feel less inhibited and ready to claim pleasure,' says sex therapist Rhian Kivits. 'When you feel more confident, you'll then feel able to ask for what you want and like in bed.'

2 PRACTISE SOLO

If you've disengaged from yourself sexually and rarely masturbate or get turned on, it can be harder to be stimulated by a partner. However, bringing yourself to orgasm can actually raise your self-esteem. 'Sexual self-care helps you become more connected and compassionate with your body, and self-pleasure helps you get in touch with what arouses you, and increases feel-good chemicals in your system,'

3 EMBRACE THE SUNSHINE

Could basking in the garden help you feel friskier? Exposure to sunlight relaxes you, which makes space in your mind for sexual thoughts so you're open to pleasure, says Rhian. It also encourages vitamin D production, which affects hormones and boosts libido, adds Claire. What's more, a study** found that UV light exposure can increase sex hormones and make people feel more passionate. But while 'sun sex therapy' sounds promising, don't forget your SPF protection. 'It's important to be sun safe,' says Claire.

says Rhian. 'Plus the more pleasure you get, the more you want, so masturbation is great for your libido.'

4 FIND YOUR VOICE

Not talking to your partner, let alone ripping each other's clothes off? Try to keep lines of communication open as much as possible and speak up about anything that's bothering you. 'Relationship troubles can contribute to loss of sexual desire,' says women's health expert Dr Marilyn Glenville. 'If you don't feel listened to, respected or important, it can really dampen libido. Make use of the long summer evenings to set aside time to talk through any issues.'



Keep active to boost your blood flow

6 MOVE IT, DON'T LOSE IT!

Blood flow to our genitals enhances the arousal process, says psychosexual therapist Jodie Slee for walking app WeWard. 'Aerobic exercise increases circulation and helps ensure a healthy circulatory system – fundamental for vaginal lubrication and clitoral sensation.' And if the weather's fine, exercising outdoors gives you a double whammy of happy hormones from sunshine *and* working out. Ditch the gym for open-water swimming, yoga in the park and long walks.

7 HAVE A MENOPAUSE MOT

Many health conditions can influence sexual desire, but the menopause in particular can be a real passion killer. 'According to research****, 46% of women report a lower libido during the transition,' says GP and menopause specialist Dr Rebekkah Tomlinson from healthandher.com. Despite it not being widely discussed, there's help out there. 'It could be as simple as talking to a menopause-specialist GP who can advise on treatments to treat vaginal symptoms that could be impacting intimacy.'

Already on HRT? Claire recommends a prescription review. 'If your libido has taken a tumble, check with your GP if it's possible to have body-identical progesterone and separate oestrogen, rather than synthetic hormones,' she says.

You may also be lacking testosterone, adds dating expert Kate Taylor from Ourtime. 'Women lose this hormone during the menopause – adding it to your HRT might give you back your lust for life and love,' she says. Speak to your GP about whether it's suitable for you or try upping testosterone naturally by exercising and getting 20 minutes' natural sunlight, daily.

5 RECOUPLE WITH TANTRA

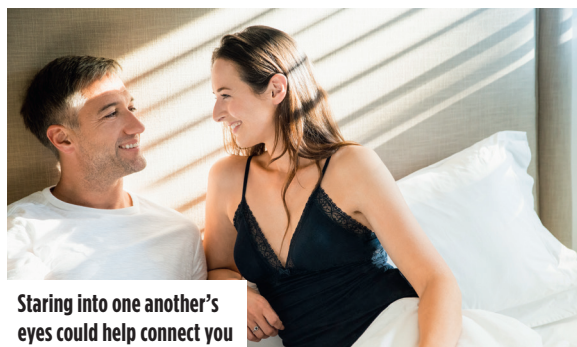
Think of tantric sex and you probably remember Sting talking about his marathon-long sessions with his wife Trudie Styler. But tantra is more than a celebrity fad. 'It's an ancient philosophy originating in the Indian subcontinent,' says Tatiana Aitken, who runs tantric workshops for individuals and couples***. 'It can make couples mindful of each other's needs and help them connect from the heart.'

Tatiana suggests trying these tantric exercises:

- * Sit opposite your partner, stare

into each other's eyes and synchronise your breathing for two minutes. Afterwards, talk about the experience.

- * Give yourself a slow, sensual touch to find out what you like. Once you know your body better, you can guide your partner!



Staring into one another's eyes could help connect you

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