

Ten-point tune-up, step 4: revive your sex drive

This article originally appeared on Dr. Teitelbaum's website, Vitality101.

This is the fourth installment of my “Ten-Point Tune-Up” series, a ten-step method to energize every system and organ in your body. And it’s the sexiest installment of all!

Now you may think of sex as a kind of “fringe benefit” of everyday living; it’s nice if you’re having *satisfying* sex, but it’s no big deal if you’re not. But good, loving sex is *good* for you—very good.



Studies show that people who are sexually interested, sexually active and sexually satisfied are healthier. They have healthier hearts, less pain, less depression, more well-being, and a better overall quality of life¹—and that’s particularly true for folks over 50. Not bad for a roll in the hay!

And don’t buy into the myth that older people aren’t interested in sex. Another study shows that three out of four of adults aged 57 to 64 were regularly engaging in sexual activity—about the same percentage as adults aged 18 to 59. (Sex never gets old!) And those in the study weren’t having sex once or twice a year—most of the sexually active people aged 65 to 74 were having sex 2 to 3 times a month or more².

Another myth: a chronic health problem like fibromyalgia, heart disease or diabetes inevitably destroys your sex life. Wrong. In a new study of over 400 people aged 60 and older, only 13% reported that poor health led to sexual problems.³

The bottom line is that no matter your age or your health, you can improve your love life, and by doing so improve your whole life. Here’s how to revive a sagging libido—and enjoy the passion, pleasure and happiness you deserve!

Sexual Optimization

Men, If You have Erectile Dysfunction, *Get A Checkup!*

The first and most important point: if you have erectile dysfunction (“ED,” the inability to get or keep an erection firm enough for sexual intercourse) don’t just take an ED drug like Viagra or Cialis (though these are very reasonable to use). Because ED may be an early warning sign of heart disease or diabetes, or both. So if you have ED, have a check up with your doctor.

And Check Your Testosterone Levels (Women, Too!)

Decreased production of the hormone testosterone can cause sexual problems in men. It not only deflates erections, but can deflate libido and leave you generally feeling lousy—fatigued, depressed, irritable and unmotivated. Low testosterone is especially common in men with those symptoms and metabolic syndrome, which is a constellation of conditions that include high blood pressure, prediabetes, and high total cholesterol.

If you’re having sexual problems, ask your doctor to check your total testosterone

levels. If your total testosterone is below normal (or even in the lowest 30 percent of normal range) and you have the symptoms suggesting low testosterone (which also can include poor concentration memory loss, vague aches and pains, and extra fat around the middle), consider bioidentical testosterone therapy.

Women also generate a small but important health-giving amount of testosterone, and low levels can stall their sex drive, too. About 70% of my male *and* female patients with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia are low in testosterone (in the lowest 30 percent of the population). My own clinical findings and scientific studies show that testosterone therapy in these patients decreases fatigue and pain, increases red blood cell levels (to help oxygenate a tired, aching body), improves heart function, and revitalizes libido!

Try “Hot” Herbal Supplements

- Rhodiola. This herb may reduce premature ejaculation in men and boost sexual desire in men and women. It also seems to revive sexual energy, provide increased pleasure, improve erections, and intensify orgasms, which allows for more satisfying sex.
- Ginseng, ginkgo, maca and horny goat weed. These herbs can help in restoring sexual desire and function in both men and women.
- Two supplements I recommend: “Hot Plants for Her” and “Hot Plants for Him,” both from Enzymatic Therapy. They contain the above herbs and many others known to energize sexual function.

Deal with Depression (But Think Twice About Taking an Antidepressant)

Depression is a common cause of low libido. A particularly good antidote is regular exercise, like brisk walking. Studies show it is as effective for banishing mild to moderate depression as antidepressant medication. Natural environments also help ease depression. If you can, walk outside in a lovely spot. You’ll also get a good dose of sunshine, which boosts blood levels of antidepressant vitamin D. Another helpful herb? In a recent head on study, the herb curcumin was as effective as antidepressants—without the sexual dysfunction. I recommend CuraMed 750 mg 2x day to lift ones mood. Give it 6 weeks. If taking other curcumin products, it takes 16-250 pills a day to get the same absorption as 2 of these. So use this form!

On the other hand, antidepressant medications are a major cause of loss of libido and inability to reach orgasm. If you have mild to moderate depression, I recommend you try natural remedies first.

Burn A Few More Calories—Make Love!

Exercise is good for your sex life. People who are physically fit see themselves as sexier and more desirable than the average Joe or Joan. They also think they’re better in bed—that their sexual performance is far above average. Even if those perceptions aren’t correct, research shows fitter folks are having more sex. In fact, older people who exercise have about the same amount of sex as people 20 years younger. Maybe that’s because guys over 50 who exercise are 30% less likely to develop ED.

But it’s not only that exercise leads to more and better sex. Sex leads to exercise—because sex is exercise. (“Sexual activity is probably the most pleasurable and enjoyable type of exercise available,” enthused an editorial in the medical

journal *Expert Review of Cardiovascular Therapy*.)

Sex is good for sweethearts and for physical hearts. In one study, men with frequent sexual activity had *half* the risk of heart attack or stroke. Sex also generates endorphins, feel-good brain chemicals that can decrease pain.

Another benefit: Along with sex and exercise, sex triggers the production of growth hormone, also called the fountain-of-youth hormone. Growth hormone helps you look younger, melts fat, and builds muscle. But most of all, intimate sex makes us feel younger and happier, and gives us the sense that life is worth living.

I encourage you to “exercise” with your mate today!

Lubricate Your Sex Life with Coconut and Olive Oil

Many studies show that a Mediterranean diet rich in olive oil is the best diet for preventing, and curing, erectile dysfunction.

For women, using a liquid coconut oil (I recommend the one from Nature’s Way) is an excellent way to overcome vaginal dryness and painful intercourse; people find using a liquid coconut oil offers excellent lubrication during sex. It is not irritating like other lubricants, and smells and tastes good to boot!

I also recommend fish oil supplements for men and women with sexual problems, to help enhance circulation.

References

1. Syme ML, et al, “Predicting Sexual Decline and Dissatisfaction Among Older Adults”, *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 2013 May;68(3):323-32.
2. Rohde G, et al, “Perceived effects of health status on sexual activity in women and men older than 50 years”, *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 2014 Mar 27;12:43.
3. Lindau, ST, et al, “A Study of Sexuality and Health Among Older Adults in the United States”, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2007;357:762-774.