



## WHAT IS MASTURBATION?

Masturbation is simply the self-stimulation of the genitals. In other words, it's solo-sex! Masturbation is a normal and healthy practice, enjoyed by many people.

May is International Masturbation Month (but you can certainly enjoy masturbation all year round).

## IS MASTURBATION NORMAL?

Yes. It's a sexual practice enjoyed by people of all ages and genders. The large majority of people will masturbate at least occasionally during their lives.

### How often do people masturbate?

Some people may masturbate every day, while some may only masturbate once a month or less. There's nothing wrong with either of those options, so long as you feel good about it. Additionally, you may masturbate more at some points in your life, and less in others. Variations throughout the year and the lifespan are natural.

## IS MASTURBATION BAD?

**Can it make me blind/ infertile/ crazy/ grow hair on my palms/ make my genitals bigger or smaller?**

Nope (nope, nope, nope)! Many of these negative 'consequences' of masturbation are based in old stories meant to scare people away from something that was seen as morally wrong. There is no scientific (or anecdotal!) evidence that shows that any of these things will happen if you masturbate.

Not to mention that masturbation is low-risk. You can't get pregnant or contract an Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) from masturbation. This makes it a great way to explore your sexuality.

## WHY WOULD I MASTURBATE IF I ALREADY HAVE A SEXUAL PARTNER?

There are many reasons to masturbate and many people continue to masturbate even when they have a sexual partner. People may masturbate to relieve stress or help them sleep. They may masturbate in front of their partner as foreplay, or if they don't have/want penetrative sex. Masturbating is also a great way of exploring your own fantasies and learning more about your own body, with or without a partner.

Masturbation and understanding what feels good for you and turns you on, is an important part of a satisfying sexual relationship with a partner. It's hard to communicate about your desires and what sort of sensations feel good to you if aren't familiar with them yourself.

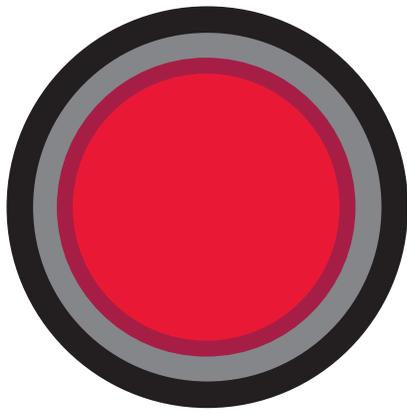
## ARE THERE HEALTH BENEFITS?

There are health benefits to masturbating. First and foremost, masturbation feels good and can be comforting. It is also a great way to learn about your own body and sexuality. Regular masturbation may increase a person's ability to have orgasms.



Masturbation keeps the pelvic floor muscles (sometimes calls the pcc muscles) strong. Strengthening the pcc muscles can reduce premature ejaculation, increase the intensity of orgasm, and reduce the chances of experiencing urine incontinence (urinary leakage).

Masturbation can be a great way to relieve tension and stress. It's also a very effective way of reducing cramping and pain associated with menstruation.



## PUSH YOUR BUTTONS

### okay... so how do people masturbate?

There are as many ways to masturbate as there are masturbators! And there is no wrong way to masturbate.

People who have vulvas/vaginas might enjoy a variety of stimulation. Some people will only touch their clitoris, while other may enjoy stimulation of the vagina, labia or mons pubis (the pubic bone, where your pubic hair grows).

Some people will use their whole hand or the palm of their hand to touch their genitals, while other may prefer to just use a finger or two. Some people might use sex toys or DIY sex toys (the water from a shower head or tap is popular first sex toy).

People who have penises also enjoy lots of different stimulation. Some like fast and firm pressure on the shaft, while other prefer a more gentle touch. People with foreskins may enjoy pulling them up over the glans (head) of the penis with the palm of the hand. There are lots of sex toys designed for penises as well!

Some people may use lube (like the stuff available at the drug store, or spit), while others won't.

Some people also enjoy anal stimulation when masturbating. Remember to wash your hands before touching your genitals after anal stimulation, you can cause infections if you don't. If you plan on using a toy for your butt, make sure it has a flared base. It's not uncommon for people to get toys without a base stuck up inside the rectum because there is nothing to stop it from slipping inside. That's a trip to the emergency room you'll want to avoid!

The best way to learn to masturbate is to experiment and take some time to practice. Find a quiet space where you can be alone and take your time. Listen to your body, stimulation shouldn't hurt or be uncomfortable. Go at your own pace.

# LEND A HAND

## What is mutual masturbation?

Mutual masturbation is masturbation with a partner. One partner may watch the other masturbate, or the partners may masturbate each other. Mutual masturbation can feel great and has a very low risk of transmitting STIs like HIV and basically no risk for pregnancy.

However, some STIs like HPV and Herpes can be passed from skin to skin contact. You can help minimize this risk by avoiding contact during an outbreak (although the virus may be transmittable at any point). You can also use barriers (like condoms, gloves or dental dams) to reduce the risks.

Why mutual masturbation? People may use mutual masturbation for all sorts of reasons. Watching or being watched by a partner can be a sexy and exciting thing to do. It can also help show your partner what you like. Partners may engage in mutual masturbation as an alternative to other forms of sex. It can also be a great activity when partners are tired or want an alternative to sexual activities that require holding themselves up in strenuous positions.

## WANT MORE INFO?

This pamphlet was prepared and published by the Lunenburg County Sexual Health Centre in 2013.

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