

SPARK HER EXCITEMENT

Chemical Melanocortins

What it does Melanocortins are neuropeptides (small protein-like molecules) that coordinate her brain's excitatory systems – crucial to preparing her body for sex. "When her melanocortin receptors are activated, it will make her incredibly horny," says Pfaus.

Harness it Turn on this excitement switch in her brain by piggy-backing "the sights and smells she associates with sexual reward", says Pfaus. So start by subtly spraying the bed with your aftershave when she's not looking – or better still, the aftershave you wore when you first got together and were having "honeymoon" sex. From there on in, it's all about the pillow talk. "The very best way to encourage the release of her melanocortins is to make her feel like the centre of the world," says Pfaus. That means tailoring your words to push the right psychological buttons. Talk about the hottest sex you've experienced as a couple and use the word "you" as much as possible ("You were amazing" or "I loved the way you did that"). By reminding her of steamy encounters gone by and focusing all the attention on her pleasure, you'll set her melanocortins free and liberate her sexual desire.

GET ALL TOUCHY FEELY

Chemical Oxytocin

What it does "Levels shoot up during orgasm and strengthen bonds between partners," says Dr Heather Rupp, of the Kinsey Institute in the US. It's also the key to calming her anterior cingulate cortex, the part of her brain that assesses risk – a crucial precursor to sexual arousal.

Harness it According to neuroscientists, the best way to increase oxytocin is via touch, but don't go straight in like Mr Tickle. Instead, hug her for 20 seconds – the time required to raise levels, says research from North Carolina University. Next, run her a bath and light some banana-scented candles. A study at the Smell & Taste Treatment & Research Foundation in the US found banana scents increase bloodflow to the vagina. Finally, be ready with a towel when she gets out and "try gently blowing on her skin while it's still wet", says Siski Green, the author of *How To Blow Her Mind In Bed*. "This will stimulate more of her nerves as the water evaporates and get her oxytocin pumping." And that's when Mr Tickle comes in.

RIDE HER PEAKS

Chemical Oestrogen

What it does Produced in her ovaries, oestrogen governs her arousal. It's not so much the spark that lights the gunpowder, as the gunpowder itself.

Harness it A study in the journal *Human Reproduction* found couples have 26 per cent more sex during the most fertile days of her cycle (the day of ovulation – in the middle of her cycle – and five days beforehand) when her oestrogen levels are highest. Get in sync at pmsbuddy.com.

"Towards the end of her cycle, rising levels of progesterone alter her oestrogen balance and mean she's subconsciously looking for stability and reassurance, so go clean shaven and hold her hand," says Rupp. "Conversely, in the first half of her cycle, women are more responsive to masculine traits." So avoid your razor in the second week after her period.

Finally, give her oestrogen levels a helping hand by making her a bowl of soy-rich miso soup. A study in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine* showed soy boosts sexual desire and arousal. Miso horny indeed.



SEX COACH

Jacqueline Hellyer boosts your bedroom know-how

Q My wife recently had a baby and we've started having sex again. But it feels different inside her? Is this normal? – PJ

A Yes, it probably will feel different for a while. Make sure she's doing plenty of pelvic floor exercises to get her muscles nice and taut again, so that it feels like it used to. These are the muscles you use to stop urine flow. The way to do the exercises is to squeeze and relax, over and over again. It's important to ensure that her abdominal muscles are relaxed as she does this, so only the pelvic-floor muscles are being used. Three key exercises are: squeeze and relax – slowly and rhythmically; squeeze and hold for three seconds, then relax; and squeeze, squeeze a bit more, squeeze a bit more, and a bit more, then relax.

Q My girlfriend wants us to make a sex tape. I've tried, but I just can't get into it because I'm not really comfortable with the idea. Any advice? – TF

A What is it that makes you uncomfortable? If it's the chance that someone might find it, then delete it straight away. If she wants to watch but you don't, let her watch it on her own (then delete it). If she's more the exhibitionist, only film in positions where you can't easily be seen.

But if the very concept of filming makes you feel bad, don't do it! But find out why it turns her on and see if you can satisfy her in other ways. Maybe you can take pictures, with you behind the camera. She might like sex in front of a mirror (sitting on the edge of the bed with her facing away from you means she can get a good look but you don't have to watch). Or she might like the chance of being seen, in which case have sex at the window or on a balcony (remembering that the law might frown upon too much exhibitionism).

The key point? Find out what turns her on, match them with your turn-ons, then be creative and have fun with it!



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