

Most of us treat our sex lives like we would our cars – your first few months together are all about burning rubber 24/7, but a couple of years in it's covered in dust and not getting regularly serviced. According to 2011 Australia's Biggest Health Check*, 41 per cent of Aussie women aren't entirely satisfied with their sex lives. Yikes! Great sex is your unassailable right, so it's time you got it sorted. Here, exactly how to defrost your sex life for action so red-hot, you'll set off the smoke alarm. (Not really.)

The issue

YOU AREN'T CONNECTING

A lack of intimacy outside the bedroom can cause service interruptions on the inside. "Signs your intimacy levels are in trouble include a decrease in kissing or touching, finding you're talking but not really communicating; disinterest in each other's lives or thoughts, or an increase in conflict," says *WH* relationship expert Dr Traci Coventry. Or perhaps it's more technique-related: if he's too wham-bam-slam and/or his oral technique is missing the mark – this frustration can filter into other aspects of your relationship, so address it, stat!

RED-HOT STRATEGY

Bring intimacy into the relationship first, says Dr Coventry, and it will flow into your sex life. Make time to reconnect every day by engaging in conversation, and a passionate kiss (observing the seven-second rule) once a day. "Find something each of you has always wanted to do that will stretch you either emotionally or physically, book it, and go for it," she says. "You'll get that 'in love and dating' spark back all in one move."

If his sex moves are making you retreat, *WH* sex expert Jacqueline Hellyer† recommends not mouthing off about his technique while he's at it. "You need to tell him while being sensitive to his effort," she says. "Remember, what might not work for you may have worked for a previous partner, so be encouraging and loving," she says. Mid-foreplay, tell him what you'd like him to try and let him know it'd be a big turn-on for you. Or, if you'd like to guide him while you're in the middle of the action, say something like "Oh I love that... It's even better if you do it a little harder. That's it!"

Naked ambition

RED HOT SEX STRATEGIES

By Lori Cohen

The issue

YOU'VE MISSED THE SPOT

There's some controversy about whether or not women are equipped with the G-spot, but Dr Beverly Whipple, sex researcher at Rutgers University, US, who found a coin-sized piece of tissue that could sometimes trigger an orgasm when stimulated, is convinced. In her groundbreaking book *The G spot: and Other Discoveries about Human Sexuality* (amazon.com) released in 1982, Dr Whipple's study of the spongy tissue found it identical to that of the male prostate gland, a well-established pleasure zone, which makes sense considering some women are actually able to ejaculate fluid when they orgasm. If you haven't found it, it's worth sending in the search party; imagine lying on your back with a clock placed upright inside the lower part of your vagina – no sniggering... The most sensitive area will be at 12 o'clock, right behind the urethra. "It's most likely to be on the anterior wall of the lower third of your vagina," says sexual health expert Dr Elna Rudolph.

RED-HOT STRATEGY

Got a shocking sense of direction? Enlist your partner's help. Using a specially designed toy like the Trumpeter Swan Rechargeable G-Spot Vibrator, (\$169.95, adultshop.com.au) you'll be able to stimulate the most sensitive spot on the wall of your vagina. Do some Kegel exercises before you get started, to increase blood flow to the area and heighten sensation.

thirty

Percentage of WH readers who haven't found their G-spot

SOURCE: ALL STATS BASED ON A WH POLL OF 1165 READERS



Get a red hot-boudoir

"Your bedroom should be a sensual, erotic place," says WH sexpert Jacqueline Hellyer. Get yours ready for action with these easy steps:

Go back to basics

"Ban all technology except for your iPod and speakers," says Hellyer. "And remove the TV – it's a libido killer," she adds.

Change your fabric

When choosing linen for your bed, mix in posh velvets and satins, suggests set decorator Jenny Oman. "Deep crimsons and pinks feel sensuous and luxurious," she says. Bonus: tactile fabrics feel amazing against naked skin.

Light citrus-scented candles

Not only will the light boost the ambience of your room, according to the US Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation, a whiff of orange can increase penile blood flow by 20 per cent.

Create a sexy playlist

"Take the time to make steamy playlists so you're not scrambling [for the right] music in the heat of the moment," says sexual health expert Dr Elna

Rudolph. "Match the genre to your mood."

Raise the roof A study by the University of Minnesota, US, found high ceilings prompt inventive thinking, and low ceilings help you focus on details. Want your partner to focus more on your sweet spot? Paint your ceiling a few shades darker than your walls to make it appear lower. If he rarely strays beyond missionary, paint it a few shades lighter to fire up his imagination.

The issue

YOU'RE JUST NOT UP FOR IT

You can thank your busy lifestyle for those bedroom tumbleweeds. "Life gets in the way. Stress, work and home obligations all play a role in decreasing women's sexual desire and libido," says clinical psychologist Diante Fuchs. "The desire is to come home for a quickie during lunch, but the reality is actually a lunchtime business meeting that continues well into the evening, leaving you tired and drained." We get it: women plan everything and because you have so many things on your mind it's hard to put them aside and do something spontaneous.

RED-HOT STRATEGY

Know this: the more sex you have, the more you'll want. "Female sexuality is like water: it's slow to heat up, but once it's heated it'll boil," says Hellyer. This month: make it one of your priorities. Schedule it into your routine like you would the gym. OK, OK, it may feel like a chore but as with working out, you might not always feel like it beforehand, but once you've warmed up there's no stopping. "And remember, most women are more sexually aroused during the day, so lock in a time with your partner that will accommodate that," Hellyer adds. "Think: Sunday morning."

ten

Percentage of WH readers who have sex at least once a day. Whew!



Steam room



The issue

YOU'RE BORED

Same ol' vanilla sex making you feel more starfish than reverse cowgirl? Introduce a battery-operated booster. To avoid your bloke viewing a sex toy as stiff competition, shop online for it together. "Sometimes men can mistake your eagerness to try toys as an insult, and see it as an indication that they're not good enough," says sex counsellor Linda Venter. "But once they realise how it can enhance sex, they never look back." Order online and your treats will be delivered in plain packaging.

RED-HOT STRATEGY

Before you invest in any hardcore gadgets, take a few small steps out of your comfortable rut. "Feathers are a great start. Using them on each other can be a very sensual experience and helps you both locate new areas of your bodies that get turned on when stimulated," Venter says. "It helps you adjust to a new ritual in your lovemaking without making either of you feel inadequate, and is a great way to start expanding your boundaries." Feeling more adventurous? Why not try something like the Lelo Insignia Remote Controlled Tiani Couples Vibrator (\$199.95, adultshop.com.au) – a C-shaped toy that stimulates your clitoris and G-spot, which he can control via remote. ▶

thirty four

Percentage of WH readers who want more experimentation in bed



seventy eight

Percentage of WH readers who wish their partner would initiate sex more often

The issue

YOU DON'T INITIATE SEX

Twenty three per cent of you rarely initiate sex, according to our recent online sex survey of 1165 readers, so whether you're too shy to ask or you're just not in the mood, chances are it's your partner who usually kicks off proceedings. But why? Men are simply wired differently, says Dr Rudolph. "They have at least 10 times the testosterone that women have. This makes them assertive and randy." But Fuchs reckons society's perceptions are likely to influence you when it comes to your sexual confidence too. "Women are often considered to be promiscuous when they openly display their sexuality, whereas men are seen as powerful. Consequently, women often restrict and oppress their sexuality."

RED-HOT STRATEGY

We challenge you to own your sexuality. "Sex is a healthy human need and you're entitled to sexual enjoyment – having this mentality will make it easier to approach your partner," says counselling psychologist Jaci Henry. If your idea of seducing your partner involves perspex heels, crotchless knickers and quoting lines from *The Bride of Spankenstein*, is it any wonder you find it cringey? (Although, if that's your bag, hey, we're not judging.) The key is, keep it real. "You don't have to do much at all – just be nice to him," Hellyer says. "It can be as simple as giving him a compliment, looking him in the eye, stroking his bum and suggesting an early night."

And if not for your relationship, do it for your health. Infrequent sex can increase your risk of heart attack, says a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The study found that people who exercise/have sex sporadically have a higher risk of suffering a heart attack within the first two hours after they do it as the action shocks their system. So not having regular sex is actually bad for you. Really. **wh**

ADDITIONAL WORDS: RACHELLE MCKINTOSH; JOCELYN NUBEL PHOTOGRAPHY; CORBIS; *1 SURVEY OF 25,919 PEOPLE BY WOMEN'S HEALTH IN CONJUNCTION WITH PREVENTION; SURVISE AND PRICELINE; TAU THOR OF SEX SECRETS FOR BUSY PEOPLE (S.I.; JACQUELINEHELTER.COM).

Slow emotion

The issue

HE'S TOO QUICK

Having sex should not be like an episode of *The Amazing Race*. You like to get from point A to B without rushing things, but some men are genuinely confused. And really, you shouldn't blame them.

Porn is partly responsible for delivering unrealistic expectations of sex, says Dr Rudolph. "We know that foreplay is essential for women, but penetration is usually rushed on screen," she says. "No aspect of porn is realistic."

RED-HOT STRATEGY

"If he's reluctant to slow down, negotiate one night a week that's dedicated to sex that includes foreplay," suggests Dr Rudolph. But foreplay needn't only happen in the bedroom; it can be a massage or a bath together. Spark your imagination and create a sense of anticipation, suggests Dr Ian Kerner, author of *She Comes First: The Thinking Man's Guide to Pleasuring a Woman* (\$32.95, HarperCollins). Send him a sexy text while he's at work to set the tone.

forty nine

Percentage of WH readers who say the worst mistake a partner can make in bed is to rush or skip foreplay

wh tests it...

We tried Basic Instinct Fragrance Balm (it's supposed to make you über desirable to men), \$40, pureromance.com.au

Felicity Harley, 35, Editor

"Driving home from work – no response. So I gave him a big hug in bed that night... the rest: TMI. Foreplay in a bottle. Ingenious."

Crystelle Coulon, 26, Senior Features Writer

"I think my boyfriend's reaction says it all: 'Oh my God, what are you wearing? It smells AWESOME.' (Followed by vigorous sniffing... and you know... other stuff)."

Greer Boulting, 33, Senior Sub Editor

"When I hugged my husband hello he breathed in deeply and said 'Mmm you smell beautiful...' I couldn't get him off me!"