

The 5 rules of getting it on in the time of chaos

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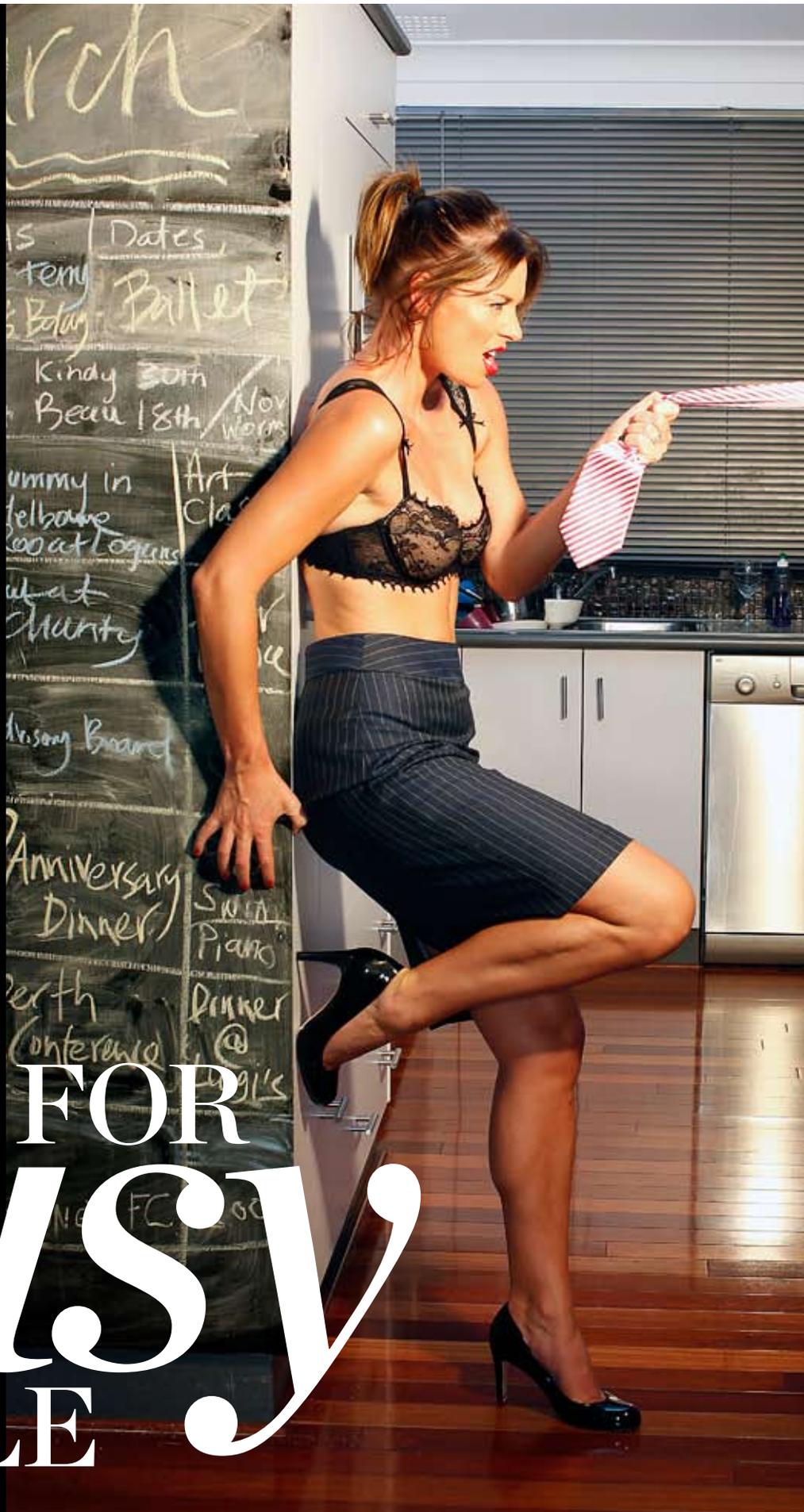
WORKPLACE DEADLINES, a rushed visit to the gym before racing home to be confronted by your partner's issues and/or the kids, help tidy the house, check your email, flop in front of the TV (if you're lucky), get into bed, turn around . . . and she's asleep (or pretending to be). Turn me on baby! Truth is, you might even be relieved she's spared you the ignominy of being the one to feign a headache.

Sound familiar? It's the reality for all too many couples in this harried age. After the demands of work, partners, children – and a little “you” time – what's left in the tank for sex? You'd both like to feel close to each other, get some emotional support and relieve some stress, but you're both too shagged to shag.

So what to do? Pressure her for sex, even though you know she's not into it and, really, it's little more than masturbating inside of her? Or be the “understanding” sensitive new age guy who won't pressure his partner and just reaches yet again into his pants?

There is a third way. Consciously manage your life so you create the conditions that allow sex to happen. Just follow these five steps and you'll soon rediscover the energy, the urge and the opportunities to fit great sex back into your hectic schedule. >>

SEX FOR *busy* PEOPLE





Symbol	Company Name	Price	Change
GOOG	Google	245.12	+1.23
MSFT	Microsoft	31.45	-0.12
AMZN	Amazon	178.90	+2.10
FB	Facebook	112.34	+0.87
DIS	Disney	115.67	-0.45
IBM	IBM	168.23	+0.56
ORCL	Oracle	45.78	-0.21
CRM	Salesforce	132.56	+1.01
ADBE	Adobe	389.01	+3.21
INTC	Intel	35.67	-0.34
QCOM	Qualcomm	118.90	+0.67
TXN	Transaction	52.34	-0.18
WDC	Western Digital	48.76	+0.45
STX	Storage	38.90	-0.12
SPX	S&P 500	1245.67	+15.23

1 *Forget spontaneity!*

This has got to be the biggest myth out there about sex; that it's got to be spontaneous to be good. That's like saying the best meals or the best parties happen of their own accord. They don't. Many of the best things in life require planning – health does, wealth does, and so does sex.

Think back to when you were first dating. Chances are the sex was pretty hot, and it wasn't spontaneous. You'd have been thinking all week about that date on Saturday, what to wear, what to say, where to go, what moves to make.

Sexpert Esther Perel, the author of *Mating in Captivity*, put it well: "I believe that longing, waiting and yearning are fundamental elements of desire that can be generated with forethought, even in long-term relationships."

It's that lovely thing that Frank N. Furter describes so well in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*: anticipation.

"We advise couples to get their calendars out and start planning," write marriage experts John and Julie Gottman in *10 Lessons To Transform Your Marriage*. "Set aside some time and then use your imaginations to plan for romance, plan for sensuality and plan for sex."

So set a nookie date. Maybe Saturday is always your day, or maybe you just want to plan a week or so ahead. Another benefit in knowing when you're going to have sex is that it lets you off the hook on other days – no more awkward dance around the question of whether you're going to do it or not.

And if the concept of planning for sex still leaves you cold, then at least plan to spend chilled-out time together. If you're chilled and you're together, then the chance of sex happening is a hell of a lot higher.

2 *Start sex way before the bedroom*

Planned or not, it's not going to happen if you think that getting into bed, rolling over and saying, "How about it, love?" – maybe with a tweak or two of a nipple – is enough.

No, sex needs to start a long time before you reach the bedroom. In a way, it never stops. I call it living life as foreplay, so that you keep intimacy and erotic tension alive through the day. As Perel says: "Eroticism extends way beyond the sexual act."

The better your connection at this level, the more easily and quickly you can move into sex. If you think of a woman's sexual energy as being like water, in that it takes a while to heat up (unlike your fire energy), it means you're going into sex with her waters at least tepid, rather than ice-cold.

So start from the moment you wake up. Take a second to look her in the eye and smile. It's these small acts of intimacy that keep the *oomph* factor alive, rather than the small acts of neglect that dampen the embers of desire.

Think of it as treating your partner as your lover, all the time.



MODELS: NATALIE DUVAL AT VIVIENS AND BRAD HEFFERNAN AT CHADWICK; HAIR & MAKE-UP: KATIE GOERLACH AT LIZARD MANAGEMENT; NATALIE WEARS BRA BY CHANTAL THOMAS AT DIRTY PRETTY THINGS, TOP BY REVIEW, SKIRT BY HERRINGBONE, SHOES BY SACHI; BRAD WEARS SHIRT AND TIE BY GEOFFREY BEENE, TROUSERS BY HERRINGBONE

3 Switch from business to pleasure

A hugely important part of this is to get your transition from boardroom to bedroom right. Even if you feel that, with your more pressing male libido, you can transform from worker to stud in moments, chances are your lady can't. (Although I have to say, I have plenty of male clients who get dragged in by their partners for being less than enthusiastic about sex, generally because they also are just too tired.)

Switching from the busyness of everyday life may involve making time to chill alone when you get home; it definitely means needing time to chill together. That might be having dinner together at the table without the TV, or only watching TV that you both really want to watch. (Did you know that people are in a state of mild depression when they watch TV? And what is a common symptom of depression? Low sexual desire.)

Think about what you do after you've had dinner and (if you have them) once the kids are in bed. What then? Three hours of crime shows or surfing the net? Or relaxing with a beer on the verandah, watching the moon, cool music in the background? Take heed of Lou Paget's recommendations in her book *How to Give Her Absolute Pleasure*: it's all about the two Rs – romance and relaxation.

In a way, you're allowing yourselves time to actually want each other, a concept that sex-and-marriage therapist Dr David Schnarch hammers home in his book *Passionate Marriage*. If you are (or she is) too stressed and harried, you're not giving yourselves the space to actually "want" each other, or even to want to want each other.

Because, as the world's leading authority on Taoist sexual practices, Mantak Chia, stresses in his many



books, including *The Multiorgasmic Couple*, "the more we open ourselves up physically, emotionally and spiritually to our partner, the more pleasurable and profound our lovemaking and our relationship will be". But that's not going to happen if you're completely exhausted or still have your head in the office, is it?

4 Let your environment turn you on

We're very sensory creatures, affected positively or negatively by our surroundings. So make sure your surroundings ramp up your sexual desire. In particular, turn your bedroom into a boudoir, a sanctuary away from the stresses of life, a place that allows you to leave the world behind when you enter.

Perel has found that couples who have great sex lives "take the time to nurture an erotic space". So tune into and turn on your senses, with music that feeds your soul, fabrics that turn you on, scents that heighten mystery, sights that elevate passion. Am I sounding poetic here? Well, I do want to put the poetry back into sex. Create a space that you can dive into so that you emerge refreshed and re-energised. Just what you need in these chaotic modern times.

It's like creating a holiday in the everyday, a special sanctuary just for you, a place where your environment turns you on.

5 Remember, sex is playtime for adults

To misquote Oscar Wilde, sex is far too important to be taken seriously. Keep it light and playful.

You see, it's not the spontaneity or otherwise that makes sex good, it's what happens when you have sex. So you have to use your imagination. Experiment with positions, places, procedures and props.

As I point out in my own book *Sex Secrets for Busy People*, "playful sex frees you up to think outside the square and not get caught up in what you think you 'should' be doing, what you think is 'right' or 'normal'. It lets you be creative, use your imagination, push your boundaries and try new things."

Helen Fisher, the American biological anthropologist who has studied the chemistry of love and sex, has discovered that "novel experiences drive up levels of dopamine in the brain – hence they can also trigger the brain chemistry of lust".

There you have it: with a little inventiveness, even the busiest person can get the dopamine to flow.

SO LET'S TAKE a look at that opening scene again, with this new knowledge.

You come home, relax by taking the dog for a short walk, return for dinner around the table, then after the children are in bed (if you have kids), you and your partner forget the housework because you decided earlier that tonight's the night. So you bring her a glass of wine while she's having a bath, give her a foot massage, then light the candles. By the time she arrives at the sensuously lit bedroom, with you reclining on the bed, she's quite happy to have you ask her to drop her robe and move over to the bed. The rest is up to your imagination.

Perennial boredom and frustration, or exquisite pleasure? Busyness is no excuse. It's your choice.

10 firestarters to add some heat

Move... together with a slow dance or go for a walk holding hands.

Read... erotica aloud to each other.

Brush... her hair, massage her head, stroke her back – even while watching TV.

Undress... her slowly or stage-direct a striptease (if she's up for it).

Offer... to light the candles in the bedroom, creating an atmosphere for her pleasure.

Pour... one alcoholic drink (no more) and choose a few select yummys.

Kiss... and then kiss some more.

Play... the ragdoll game (one of you just lies there while the other slowly and gorgeously explores the other's body).

Watch... an erotic/romantic movie (not porn, unless she's into it).

Laugh... because it puts you both in the right frame of mind. "Humour is based on novelty, the unexpected, which raises levels of dopamine in the brain," explains biological anthropologist Helen Fisher.