

Men's Health

FOREPLAY MISTAKES

5 Ways You Screw Up Foreplay

Don't make these mistakes before the main event

BY SARAH JACOBSSON PUREWAL, IMAGE FROM THINKSTOCK

Without foreplay, there's just sex. And while sex is awesome, it doesn't always allow you to experiment with what drives her wild. "On its own, sex is pretty mechanical—insert penis into vagina, etcetera. Foreplay is where you learn what you like and don't like," says psychologist and relationship therapist Tracy Thomas, Ph.D.

But, like all things sex-related, it's easy to fall into the trap of sticking with what works and boring her with the same opening act over and over again. Here are five common mistakes you might make during foreplay—and the fast fixes that will lead to hotter sex.

1. Focusing on Just One Spot

Being goal-oriented is great if you're a businessman—not so much if you're a lover. "Genitals are fascinating and fun, but try to spend some time focusing on your partner's entire body instead of going straight for her crotch," says Cassie Fuller, cofounder of Baltimore sex-ed company Touch Of Flavor. "Try caressing, licking, or nibbling other erogenous zones, such as her neck, back, ears, belly, or wrists."

Exploring the non-sexual parts of her body makes you seem generous and attuned to her wants and needs, but it doesn't have to be all gentle reverence. "Throw some hair-pulling in, if she's into that," says Fuller. "A little effort will turn her into putty in your hands."

2. Talking Too Much

Yes, foreplay is as verbal as it is physical, but it's possible to go overboard with the sexy talk—or, worse, the *non*-sexy stuff. Be especially careful if you're dropping new weird pet names or attempting dirty talk, says sex expert April Masini of AskApril.com. "Weird, clichéd phrases can cause the mood to die quickly," she says. As a general rule, keep dirty talk simple and personal: Pick a body part and tell her how sexy you think it is, or describe a fantasy you have involving her.

And please, keep mundane conversations—like how busy you are at work—out of the bedroom. "Recent research indicates arousal often has more to do with avoiding life's turn-offs than with how well you can turn someone on," Fuller says. "Talking dirty or communicating your desires is awesome, but the last thing anyone wants to do is discuss chores, dinner, or—God forbid—finances."

3. Going Too Fast or Too Hard

You probably already know that you shouldn't try to rush foreplay—at least, not all the time. "There's room for a quickie in everyone's sexual repertoire," says Masini. "But when a quickie becomes the go-to sexual act, you can expect a disappointed partner." Not only do women usually take a little time to warm up—for most women it's 15 minutes—but speeding past her needs to the finish line can make you seem just a little callous and uncaring.

Too much pressure on her sensitive areas is another mistake you may be making, says Jenny Block, author of *Open: Love, Sex & Life in an Open Marriage*. "Once you do touch her clitoris or vulva, you have to be gentle," Block explains. "Yes, pressure can be good. But you have to work up to it gradually, and communicate to get it right."

4. Never Skipping It

If you've got a good sexual rapport going on outside the bedroom, feel free to forego the occasional foreplay session. "When you've been creating a larger sexual context in your relationship, you're basically operating in that [state of foreplay] all the time," says Thomas. If you've been together for a while, you should know her well enough to know when it's okay to jump straight to the main event.

And if the girl you've been flirting with all evening at the bar is ready to go the second you end up alone, you can jump right ahead to the fast, frantic, half-clothed sex.

5. Not Reading Her

Every woman is a little different when it comes to, well, everything. So while you may have your go-to moves, be willing to throw them out the window if she seems uncomfortable or bored. "If she winces when you talk dirty, move onto your next play," says Masini. "Or if she's really into making out on the sofa, don't try to move it to the bedroom."

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