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9 Reasons married people should still masturbate

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Why flicking your bean can lead to better married sex

Growing up in a Christian home, sex was presented to me as the Holy Grail that would take on magical, mystical properties once you got married. It was implied, and often overtly said, that your sex life would be *amazing* once you followed God's plan and made it legal.

Five years into marriage, I now say: HAHAAAA. Religion, media and your friends have all set you up for unrealistic expectations about marriage. If you were anything like me, you probably went into it thinking that sex would be fantastic, forever and always, because you were *in love*.

Now that I have two kids and am perpetually exhausted, I've realized that sex is just another real world thing. Sometimes it's amazing, and sometimes it's just so-so. That's life. My husband and I did make one vow in our relationship to always be honest, so I can confidently say that we're both happy with our moderate sex arrangement while raising two toddlers.

And that's just where self-pleasure fits in — for those times when I'm too exhausted to perform or don't feel like moving anything above the waist in bed. Masturbation is often reserved for men, but trust me — [women like to masturbate too](#). In fact, I would assert that regular masturbation is part of a healthy married sex life, and here's why.

1. It increases your sense of self

[Antonio Pizarro, MD, OB-GYN](#), points out the empowering truth that every woman needs to hear: It's your body, and you can play with it if you want to. Pizarro tells SheKnows, "Masturbation is a healthy expression of a woman's control over her own body. Masturbation can also serve as a way for a woman to understand her reproductive anatomy, her physical needs and, in turn, share that understanding with her partner."

Erotic coach and sex educator [Dawn Serra](#) calls masturbation a "tremendous asset" to marriage. She says, "Masturbation gives both people permission to be their own person. It invites autonomy."

2. It gives you more sexual experience

This is a big one for me, seeing as I was a virgin until I got into a relationship with my now-husband. Masturbation is practice, and practice makes perfect most of the time. "If someone hasn't had lots of sexual experience before marriage, it can be difficult to tell your partner what works for you. Masturbation helps you learn," says [Carol Queen, Ph.D., Good Vibrations Staff Sexologist](#).

[Jennifer Gunsaulus](#), Ph.D., sociologist and intimacy counselor, adds, "Specifically for women who don't know a lot about their own pleasures and desires, masturbation, fantasies and playing with toys can be a good way for her to safely develop her self-knowledge and expand her pleasure-potential."

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3. It gives you space and time to yourself

If you're too tired to connect during sex, that's your prerogative. And it doesn't mean you can't paddle the pink canoe to relax yourself before you drift off to sleep. Andrea Adams-Miller, aka [The Sexuality Tutor](#), explains, "When an individual is feeling stressed or tired, often quickly knocking one off allows them to feel better without taking time or effort of the other. In my opinion, our sexuality is our responsibility, so if you desire it, take care of it."

Sex and intimacy coach [Rebekah Beneteau](#) says, "Relying solely on your partner for sexual satisfaction can lead to resentments. We are all responsible for our own orgasm."

4. It improves your sex life

As the saying goes, sex begets sex. Meaning, the more sex you have, even if it's a one-woman show, the more sexy and aroused you are going to feel. Dr. Gail Saltz, author of [The Ripple Effect: How Better Sex Can Lead To a Better Life](#), tells SheKnows, "Masturbation for married couples can help focus what kind of stimulation you would like from your partner, so that you can increase pleasurable sex with your partner. It also may add variety to your own sexual repertoire."

And if you thought masturbation was just a solo act, think again. April Masini of [AskApril.com](#) explains why masturbation as foreplay is both hot and beneficial to a relationship, "When couples engage in simultaneous [masturbation], or even one at a time in the presence of the other spouse, it can enhance the marital sex life and make couples feel closer to each other."

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5. It helps women practice self-care

Contrary to what my [shame-y religious upbringing told me](#), self-pleasure is actually an act of self-love. Amy Levine, sex coach and founder of [Ignite Your Pleasure](#), says that an orgasm is one of the best gifts you can give yourself. Levine explains, "Masturbating is a way to nurture yourself by nourishing your body in a way that you desire and need, whether it's a quickie for instant pleasure or when you're taking the time to discover new erogenous areas that you can then share with your partner."

Ellen Barnard of [A Woman's Touch Sexuality Resource Center](#) adds, "Masturbation is self-care. Although some people can overdo it, it is generally good for us to have between 1-3 orgasms per week, and if a partner is not available or interested, we lose this benefit if we do not give ourselves this gift."

6. It releases stress

If there's no one around to give you a back rub at the end of a long, hard day... I think you know where this is heading. Alex Fine, inventor of the Eva vibrator and co-founder and CEO of [Dame Products](#), insists that masturbation is good for you. She says, "It decreases stress, as well as reduces your risk of cervical or prostate cancer."

"When you orgasm, you release endorphins like dopamine and the hormone oxytocin. Studies suggest these endorphins exist in both men and women for myriad reasons, including pain relief and stress and anxiety reduction," adds [Elle Chase](#), Lead Sex Educator at the Los Angeles Academy of Sex Education.

7. It helps you sleep better

After hearing [Dr. Fran's take on masturbation](#), I'm now adding "buttering my biscuit" to my nightly bedtime routine, along with brushing my teeth. Dr. Fran Walfish, [Beverly Hills relationship psychotherapist](#), expounds on masturbation's stress reduction benefits, "Masturbation reduces stress and facilitates better sleep. The reason for this is based on science. Exciting yourself lowers blood pressures and raises endorphins, the chemicals responsible for helping to ease stress and increase relaxation."

8. It takes the pressure off

No matter what the horny man stereotype tells us, sometimes dudes just aren't in the mood. So what's a randy lady to do? Take matters into her own hands, of course. According to [Dr. Dawn Michael](#), "Masturbation is great for couples where at times in the marriage one may want to be intimate and the other does not."

Or as Suzy Olds, Ph.D. and founder of [After Nine Tonight](#), explains, "All couples have 'desire discrepancy' (where one partner wants sex more than the other) at some points (or throughout) their marriage. Masturbation can be a great way to satisfy the needs of the higher desire partner without making the other partner feel guilty about their lower desire."

9. It force you to try new things

Afraid to ask for what you want in bed? Just consider your solo sexy time a dress rehearsal for the main event. Dr. Madeleine Castellanos, author of [*Wanting to Want: What Kills Your Sex Life and How to Keep It Alive*](#), advises, "Don't be hesitant to try different sensations. There is no reason to have only one tool in your toolbox. Learn to give yourself pleasure with your undies still on — just with pressure and light stroking. You can also experiment with water flowing over you or vibration. The more ways that you find to bring your pleasure, the less you will be dependent on any one position, activity or stroke."
