



The new threesome: me, myself, and I

Your Hands-On Guide to Solo Sex

Pop stars like Britney are singing the praises of masturbation. We tell you how to throw a party for one.

By Lisa Chudnofsky

■ We've all seen Britney Spears grab her goods onstage. But until her anthem to solo sex, "Touch of My Hand," it was tough to picture the ex-Mickey Mouse Clubber double-clicking her own mouse. Nowadays, she's hardly coy when talking about pleasuring her bod. And it seems to be contagious. Listen to Missy Elliott's "Toyz." Hint: She's not rapping about Tickle Me Elmo. Yet even though masturbation seems less taboo, the National Health and Social Life survey reported that 58 percent of women don't indulge. And of those who do, 47 percent feel guilty. It's ridiculous, insists Pepper Schwartz, PhD, author of *Everything You Know About Love and Sex Is Wrong*. "Masturbation prepares

you for great sex, since you learn what you like and can teach a partner," she says. Every Cosmo girl should know how to wow herself. Here, a helping hand.

SOLO STEP 1 Get Into the M Mind-Set

It takes more than a five-second lip-lock to get you in the mood for sex with *him*. Same holds true for a DIY session. To

Who Ménage-à-Mois Most?

It's a tie! Turns out babes with boyfriends masturbate just as often as the single set.

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL LIFE SURVEY

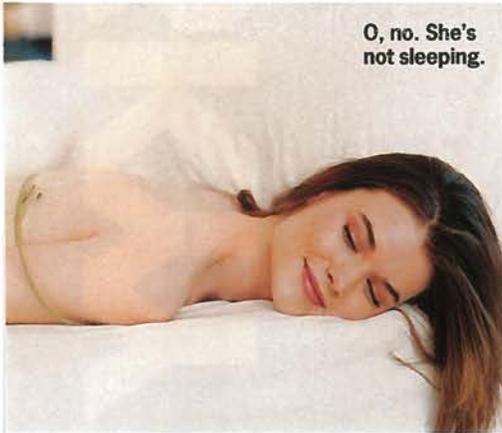
light your libido, create an atmosphere for arousal: a haven sans distractions where you can say to hell with inhibition. Lock the door so no one bursts in. Disconnect your phone(s). Add ambience with candles and slow jams.

Next, tune in to your head space. "If you're watching CNN and trying to masturbate, it's going to take a while," says Rachel Venning, cofounder of the sex boutique Toys in Babeland and co-author of *Sex Toys 101*. "In order to reach your peak, you need to relax and focus." If it takes a glass of wine to block out your boss (buzz kill!) and transition from work to play, cheers. Once you feel mentally uncluttered, fill your mind with sexy thoughts. Picturing Johnny Depp in a loincloth might help. Or do as Liz^o, 28, does. "I have a videotape of *Top Gun* that I keep set to the volleyball scene," she says. "All that action makes me want to get some."

SOLO STEP 2 Explore Down South

One of the most private places to awaken your senses is in the tub. To get started, draw a bubble bath. "As you soak in the warm water, your muscle

^oNames have been changed.



O, no. She's not sleeping.

tension will melt," says Schwartz. "You'll be more responsive to touch when you're relaxed." Increase the release by massaging your inner thighs and running your hands up your tummy and over your breasts. Now circle your nipples with a sudsy fingertip, then gently tug on them. "If this is an erogenous zone for you, it may trigger tingles down below," adds Schwartz.

Now zero in on your hot spots by getting even more hands on. "Our fingers are ideal tools for learning what type of pressure, speed, and stroke work the best," says Sadie Allison, sex educator and author of *Tickle Your Fancy: A Woman's Guide to Sexual Self-Pleasure*. Let your digits wander south, tracing the sensitive folds of your inner labia. Get playful and draw the alphabet with your pinkie. Or try lightly tapping your clitoris with one finger, speeding up as you become aroused. All the while, note areas and touches that provide the most satisfaction.

Bottom line: You're the master of your own domain. It takes trial and error to figure out what makes you tick. Experiment and you'll be surprised by the sexy sensations you can provoke. Take it from Sara, 23, who stumbled upon her own tub turn-on (and incidentally hasn't taken a shower since): "As the tub was filling up, I moved closer to the faucet to adjust the temperature," she explains. "The running water splashed on my clitoris and immediately felt good. So I wrapped my feet around the faucet and let the water flow over me. The excitement kept building."

SOLO STEP 3 Try These Techniques

Now to hit your high note, you'll need to intensify the manual manipulation. "There's no one method that works for everyone," explains Allison, "but certain stroking styles are tried and true." Like a move she calls The Figure Eight. Use one or more fingers to glide up, over, and around your clitoral area, tracing the number eight. You'll cover the clitoris and the inner labia—a lusty locale that has nerve endings within its walls, which some women find even more arousing than the clitoris. Another favorite is The Compass. Hold two fingers out straight, side by side, and run them north to south and east to west over the width and length of your entire pleasure zone. A more advanced method is The Three-Fingers Thrill. Use your index and ring fingers to hold open your labia. This frees up your middle finger to stroke the tip of your clitoris.

Ultimately, you'll know what strikes a cord when a warm, flush feeling starts to set in. "Try not to be super goal-oriented, like, 'I have to have an orgasm in less than 15 minutes,'" says Venning. Just ride the wave of pleasure as your nether regions become more sensitive, your heart rate zooms, your breathing intensifies, and the walls of your vagina begin to contract—all telltale signs you're bound for bliss.

SOLO STEP 4 Feel the Vibrations

Missy Elliot is on to something: Toys can be titillating. "Vibrators provide one of the strongest and most consistent forms of stimulation," says Judy Kuriansky, PhD, sex therapist and author of *Generation Sex*. Introduce the buzz factor once you've prepped yourself for pleasure and it could make an orgasm a sure thing. But you have to know how to summon the sensations. Begin by working the vibrator over your clitoris, using the same techniques as described above. (You may want to keep your panties on at first as a buffer; the buzz can be intense.) Then tease yourself by alternating speeds as your desire builds.

Just remember to switch up your routine. "Vibrators are great training wheels, especially for the gal who thinks she'll never get there," says Kuriansky. A word of caution though: Too much humming can potentially cause your nerve endings to become somewhat desensitized. Pace your usage of this joy stick and let your fingers do the work on the off days. Now that you know what makes your body tick, it's time to share your stimulating secrets with someone you love...or at least lust for. ■

Accidental Orgasms

Sometimes those Os come from surprising sources.

- "I was in the hotel's hot tub when I flipped around to order a drink and inadvertently discovered perfect jet placement. Before I could say *piña colada*, the water pressure had sent me over the edge." —Courtney, 19
- "In the car, I keep my cell between my legs. One drive home, I was pissed at my guy so I refused to answer his calls. I guess he was worried—he was pretty persistent. Luckily, the phone was on vibrate." —Allie, 26
- "I bought my jeans a size too small because they stretch, but I should've broken them in before class. Halfway through a lecture, my pants were practically molesting me. I had to excuse myself." —Nat, 21
- "My waxer moves my panties around as she works. One time, she pulled them up out of the way so she could get to the sides. The friction made me forget that Brazilians are supposed to be painful." —Sarah, 32