



## TOO TIRED FOR SEX?

BY MARCY LOVITCH

Too tired for the horizontal tango with your sweetie? Find you're yawning smack in the middle of the act? If your low energy equals an even lower libido, it's time to take back the power. Here's how to get out of that sexual slump, and put that under-the-covers heat back on your barometer.

It's the middle of *Ally McBeal* and your partner eyes you with that, "Hey, let's get naked before the next commercial" look. Unfortunately, getting forty winks, not a roll in the hay, is more what you had in mind. How can you tell your guy you still want his bod...but just not now?

"Ask for a sexual raincheck, but sooner, not later," says Carol Queen, Ph.D., a sex educator and co-owner of Good Vibrations, a San Francisco shop specializing in erotica. "You don't want to be a dead fish when you make love. You want to be able to throw yourself into it."

Of course, you also want to be sure about why you don't want to have sex. Avoiding your partner sexually may mean there are deeper issues at work. Be aware of signs that you might be burned out on the relationship, such as not wanting to have sex later on either, getting cranky with your guy for no apparent reason, or even finding you're more

attracted to other men. If so, it might be time to rethink your union. But if your lack of zest is due to lack of ZZZs, try these suggestions on for size:

### **Touch Me in the Morning**

Try a romp first thing in the morning if your worklife has you chronically exhausted. Since it's a scientific fact that a man's testosterone level is higher in the a.m., intercourse before breakfast might be the perfect hors d'oeuvre for the day.

Plus, "just as men often awake with erections, many women wake up having orgasms, no matter what they were dreaming," says Barbara Keesling, Ph.D., a California-based sex therapist and author of *Getting Close: A Lover's Guide to Embracing Fantasy and Heightening Sexual Connection* (HarperCollins). "During the night women have lubrication cycles during the different cycles of sleep. The trick is to get enough sleep," she adds.



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### Sack Time

Keesling says being too tired to rustle the sheets isn't a sex problem, it's a sleep problem. Recent statistics from the National Sleep Council say 64% of Americans are sleep-deprived. Without our recommended eight to ten hours of shut-eye a night, you risk losing that stored-up sexual stamina. "If you're not getting enough rest, the body doesn't have enough blood flowing, especially to the genitals," says Keesling.

Besides the potential for increased arousal, you'll be better rested. "My current lover likes morning sex and when we wake up, he pulls me over on top of him; it sounds demanding, but it's actually a turn on," says Beth, 33, a publicist in Los Angeles. "I let the lovemaking happen slowly and quietly, my sleepiness being lifted off in thin layers."

A good night's sleep restores the body, rejuvenating organs and replacing cells. So why not suggest the two of you hit the hay early and rise to the occasion at sunrise? He might just thank you for it!

### Bedroom Workout

We all know exercise is good for us, but here's another reason to get on the treadmill. A recent study from the University of California, San Diego says that people who exercised for one hour, three to four times a week, enjoyed a 30% increase in the frequency of sex with their partner as well as an increase in the number of orgasms. Research also shows that physical activity makes some people better lovers. Why? Exercise elevates testosterone, the hormone associated with sexual arousal. Regular trips to the gym increase sexual stamina as well as blood flow to all parts of the body, so you'll feel more energetic and invigorated in and out of bed.

### Shower Power

Isn't it amazing how a hot shower can invigorate you? Why not entice your sweetie to join you for a sexy session under the tap? Allow that hot water to hit your tired muscles and relax you. (Tip: Safe shower action requires a towel or mat on the floor to prevent slipping and ending up in the ER). A bath will do just fine too. Throw in some sea salts or bubble bath for extra scent and imagine that you and your guy are Kristin Scott Thomas and Ralph Fiennes in *The English Patient*. When you're done, you can both hit the sheets freshly scrubbed and all steamed up for some intense mating.

### Rub Down

Who says you have to muster up energy for a sexathon? Instead, ask your partner to get your motor purring. A simple, "Honey, I'm too exhausted to get this started, can you take the lead?" could do the trick. If you can muster up the energy to slip on some lingerie and give each other a back rub, then you both might get turned on enough to perk up and make love, advises Sari Locker, author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Amazing Sex* (Alpha Books). Let him wake you up with a sensual massage enhanced with sexy aromatic oils. Like exercise, a wonderful massage rejuvenates the system by allowing oxygen to flow more freely throughout the body.

### Bedtime Stories

Turn off the TV. "That's what I tell many couples with sexual problems," says Keesling. "A television doesn't belong in the same room where you make love." If you must keep the TV on, watch an erotic program. Music can get your blood pumping and your limbs moving too, so pop in that *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack and boogie down in a provocative disco striptease. "Dancing will keep you awake longer than just flopping on the bed," says Queen.

Feeling more literary? Light some candles, then open up that book of erotic fiction your honey gave you for your birthday and ask him to read it aloud. Have him tell you a sexy story or just reminisce about an amazing lustful session the two of you shared. Then recreate it!

Try experimenting in other rooms besides the bedroom. "The best cure for being tired is having sex in the living room, the kitchen, or the bathroom—somewhere you don't associate with falling asleep," says Laura, 26, a film editor in New York City. "Getting out of the bedroom makes a world of difference and really peps me right up!"

Unless you can get your hands on some Viagra for women to make you feel sexy on command (yes, they're testing the stuff out on us, too), getting in the mood when you're exhausted still takes work. "It's really easy to say 'no' to having sex because you're tired; if you waited until you felt like it, you might never have sex," says Barbara Keesling. "But if you just begin with some cuddling or touching, you'll probably see things differently twenty minutes later." ❁