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Uncover His True Feelings..... 94
Secretly Sexy Things..... 96

Sex+ Love

Instant Love Fixes

Crank up the heat
and intimacy in your relationship
in five minutes—or less.

By *Elise Nersesian*

Even if his jokes are lame, laugh. Men need to believe they're funny.

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→ You don't want to put off nurturing your union until you've hit a bump in the road. "Successful couples work at their relationship every single day," says Sandor Gardos, Ph.D., founder of mypleasure.com. "They don't wait until something big happens to do damage control; they take baby steps to make sure their bond remains strong." No need for a major overhaul—you can have better sex and a stronger connection in just a few minutes a day.

There's more than one way to have a quickie.



• Reclaim romance

Write him a little love note—with an actual pen and paper. Studies show people who record positive feelings about their partner are more satisfied with their relationships.

• Have stronger orgasms

When you begin to climax, take deep breaths through your mouth instead of your nose. "It will relax your nervous system; that increases blood flow, which heightens sensation," Gardos says.

• End a fight

A 20-second embrace lowers your blood pressure and heart rate and releases the feel-good chemical oxytocin, easing the distressing effects of an argument, according to researchers at the University of Virginia.

• Up your in-the-buff confidence

Strip down to pay bills or paint your nails. "Spending time by yourself naked gets you comfortable in your skin, because you won't feel scrutinized," says Ava Cadell, Ph.D., author of *12 Steps to Everlasting Love*. "So when you have sex, undressing will be easy."

• Make sex last

Aggressively rub his lower back, butt, and legs when he's about to ejaculate. "The muscles in these three areas connect to his pelvic region, so when you massage them, he slows down his pace, which stalls his climax," Gardos says.

• Boost intimacy

To guys, your beauty regime is a secret portal into the mysterious female world—so let him watch you apply your mascara or self-tanner. "He'll feel closer to you when he has access to a side of you no one else sees," says clinical psychologist Scott Haltzman, M.D.

• Stimulate your G-spot

To help him hit this pleasure zone, you need strong back muscles to position your pelvis the right way (you'll know you've got it "right" when, mid-nooky, you feel like you need to pee). To strengthen those muscles, do this move five times a week for two weeks: Lie face-down with your arms out to the sides. Inhale, lifting your arms and legs off the floor as if you're flying; hold for five seconds. Repeat 10 times. "You'll feel your lower back tightening and releasing," says Derek Christensen, a certified trainer at Revolution Fitness in Boston.

• Make mornings hotter

If your bedtime uniform is a T-shirt and boxer shorts, slip them off during the night—or right before he wakes up—so when his alarm goes off, he'll be met with a sexy little surprise.

• Connect deeply

"Ask him a big-picture question to show you're interested in his opinions," suggests Bethany Marshall, Ph.D., author of *Deal Breakers*. For example, "What's one thing you want to do before you're 50?"

• Cheer him up

Even if his jokes are lame, laugh. Studies at McMaster University in Ontario say men place importance on humor and need affirmation that they're funny.

• Snag more compliments

Guys are more comfortable showing their love than talking about it, so to get a compliment out of him, pay him one first. "Saying 'I wore this dress for you' will boost his ego and spur him to tell you how hot you look in it," Marshall says. And reciprocal praise will keep you together: Studies show that pairs who admire each other endure tough times better than those who don't. ■

THUMBS UP

Texting can be an effective way to communicate your feelings...if you follow these rules.

BE POSITIVE

Couples who use words like *happy* and *great* in their texts stay together longer than twosomes who don't use such upbeat words.

NIX SARCASM

Corresponding in a straightforward manner boosts your bond. Pairs whose texts are direct are happier than those who trade wisecracks.

BE FUTURE ORIENTED

Phrases like "Can't wait to see you" and "Looking forward to tonight" help partners feel connected and valued.