

# August 2009

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## ENLIVENING LIBIDO

### Thoughts on putting some zip back into your sex life

**PHYSICAL COMFORT**...Vaginal dryness, burning, or pain with intercourse may hinder sexual enjoyment. Relieving dryness and discomfort may help make sex pleasurable again. There are many over-the-counter vaginal moisturizers (Replens) and lubricants (Intimate Options Personal Lubricant Mousse...brand new, Astro Glide, KY Jelly). Hormonal preparations used locally in the vagina or taken by mouth or transdermally, can help maintain vaginal health, increase lubrication, relieve night sweats, and increase overall enjoyment. A healthy lifestyle of exercise, diet, vitamins, regular sexual activity, and overall self-care can improve vaginal and sexual health.

**EMOTIONAL COMFORT**...How can we be present in the moment, relaxed, and not distracted by work, kids, or feelings of anger or resentment toward our partner. We can set the stage and create the right environment and mood for a superior intimate experience with some forethought and planning. Spontaneity as we age often 'needs' planning.

**DATE NIGHTS**...We live complicated, busy, hectic lives, and too often don't make time for intimacy, whether sex is involved or not. So...how about reserving date nights? These can be once-a-week or once or twice-a-month depending on circumstances. Important! Barring a true emergency, the big earthquake, or any of our other too easily devised excuses...the night is sacred!!! It's a night to focus on one another, your relationship, an activity you both enjoy...not necessarily sex. Chances are sex will find its way in.

**CREATE INTIMACY**...Create a surprise your partner might find sensual,

perhaps preparing a favorite dish, dressing in an erotic fashion, planning a surprise evening out. Activities you both enjoy are so important, and require effort, time and open communication. Yet, adding a little 'sexual spice' will go a long way toward encouraging sex when it is satisfying to both of you and your time together is protected. Remember, candles, music, massages, baths together, whatever turns you on, all help to set the right atmosphere.

**CREATE FUN MOMENTS...**The more a couple enjoys one another outside the bedroom, the more pleasure they'll find behind closed doors. Why not try to make an old partner feel more like a new one, for 'newness' in a relationship is associated with increased sexual excitement and pleasure. Try to remember how things were when you first met (before kids, work stress, and extra pounds!) and make an effort to recreate some of the special experiences you shared. Or, be creative and try something novel, such as a new position, time of day, room in the house, or a night at a local hotel. Make it all about pleasuring your partner and not about yourself.

**ASK AN EXPERT...**You may benefit from talking with a professional who has expertise in sexual education, counseling, and therapy. For help locating a sex therapist, go to the Web site of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT).

For additional information regarding sexual function and menopause, see the NAMS Web site @ [www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org)

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