

LOVE

BEFORE & AFTER

SYNC UP YOUR SEX DRIVES

Mismatched libidos aren't just a problem between the sheets: Research reveals they're a relationship deal breaker for about one-third of people. And some experts say it's the number one reason couples seek therapy. Check out what could be causing the disconnect between you and your man—and simple ways to get back on track.

By Jamie Hergenrader

DESIRE

YOU WANT SEX MORE OFTEN

HE WANTS SEX MORE OFTEN

Men greatly underestimate their partners' sex drives, found a recent study from the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. It also showed that if men thought their partners weren't up for doing it, they wouldn't attempt to initiate. Shocker: Women do want sex! But we're typically not as free with sexual expression, so men don't pick up on our cues.

SYNC UP: You've gotta tell your guy directly you want to get busy. Feel awkward? Bring it up in a setting that makes sense—say, while watching a romantic movie. "The language we use to talk about sex can be sexy in itself," says Ian Kerner, Ph.D., a psychotherapist and sexuality counselor in New York City, so phrase it like a fantasy. ("I love morning sex with you. It would be so hot if we could do more of that.") If it's still not happening, make an emotional case, says Megan Fleming, Ph.D., a New York City sex and relationships expert. Explain what it means to you (e.g., you feel closer to him) so he knows it's important to you and your bond.

Men's higher libidos are hardwired (more testosterone) and socially ingrained (they're taught to pursue sex), says Fleming. Another perk: It's physiologically easier for them to get aroused spontaneously. All they need are simple signs, like seeing you step out of the shower, and—boom.

SYNC UP: You don't have to satisfy every hard-on, but don't belittle his requests either. Rejections like "Jeez, you're always so damn horny" will build up over time. "The higher-desire partner's sexual frustration can leave them feeling hurt, while the lower-desire partner feels pressured," says Kerner. The solution: Compromise on how often you want to do it, and schedule your romps. He'll know you value sex with him, and seeing Thursday's 8 p.m. "🍑" in your cal will put you in a sexy mindset to prep for the deed.

ORGASM

YOU HAVE TROUBLE REACHING THE BIG O

HE HAS TROUBLE REACHING IT

A mind or body block could lead to an O that's MIA. Physically, many women can't orgasm from intercourse alone (bring on the clitoral stimulation!). Mentally, the issue is twofold: You need to be focused *enough* on the sex (i.e., not wiggling about work deadlines), but not so focused that you're geo-tracking when you're going to come.

SYNC UP: Slow. Down. Pay attention to how he's kissing your neck or caressing your inner thigh, rather than whether you'll hit O-town. "Our culture is so results-based, when sex is really about giving and receiving pleasure," says Fleming. As for the clitoral action, ask your guy to reach down, and show him how you like it by either guiding his hands with yours or using sexy verbal cues ("It drives me crazy when you start out slow and then get faster.") Or take matters into your own hands, literally or with a vibrator.

Contrary to popular belief, not all men can get off whenever they get it on. A man's ability to orgasm can change over time, especially in long-term relationships, says Kerner. Sexual novelty is key for some men to get and stay aroused, so if the sex you're having has become routinized (same places, positions, and times), it might be harder for him to orgasm. Or if how you're doing it conflicts with his masturbation style (say, he goes at it hard and rough solo, but you're slow and sensual together), he might get used to his self-service approach.

SYNC UP: Schedule two or three 20-minute sessions per week to explore new turn-ons together, whether you do so by reading erotica, trying new positions, or watching pornography. Even if you don't have sex, introducing those sensations into the bedroom could help your guy bust out of that rut to achieve orgasm, says Kerner. If he still can't get there, he should talk to his doc to rule out any physiological problems (such as low testosterone or erectile impairment).