

Sexercise: It Does a Body Good

Healthnewsdigest.com



(HealthNewsDigest.com) - Having a body that's primed for amazing sex has little to do with how great you look naked (though body confidence does boost the bedroom bliss). **"It's the smaller muscles you can't see or feel that make the difference," says NYC certified fitness trainer and exercise physiologist Franci Cohen.** There are several rational reasons why a physically fit person is more likely to fully enjoy sex compared to a non-fit person. For instance, improved muscle tone can increase sexual gratification since orgasms depend on multiple muscle activity. In the case of the more mature man, improved cardiovascular fitness can be critical for maximum sexual function.

Physically fit men seem to benefit in the bedroom as it relates to increased libido and stable testosterone levels that often decline as men age. On the other hand, sex can be as much mental as it is physical, and a person's physical appearance can be beneficial on an emotional level, as well. Looking and feeling healthy can increase your self-esteem while making you feel more attractive. The relationship between physical fitness and sexual function is not the only factor that may increase a person's sexual pleasure. Some researchers attribute a good exercise program, along with other healthy activities such as good eating habits, smoking cessation and getting plenty of rest, with having a positive effect on sexual performance for people of all ages.

A study conducted at the University of California-San Diego tracked 78 middle-aged men on an aerobic exercise program. The subjects exercised at moderate intensity for 60 minutes a day, three or four days a week. After nine months of continuous exercise, these subjects reported that their sex life was more satisfying as far as stamina and orgasms. In comparison, 17 male subjects that performed light workout routines such as walking at a comparatively slower pace stated that they had no substantial improvement in their sex lives.

The key is strengthening the stabilizing muscles in your lower body, pelvis, and core so you can handle any position you get twisted into...and enjoy a more intense finale. Do two or three sets of each move three days a week, and not only will you score a flaunt-worthy body, you'll have way more fun with it too!

To "keep your sex life awesome," Franci Cohen suggests these top five "sexercises." Though the following exercises are geared toward men, they also work great for women who want a boost to their sex life.

Pushups. If you're going to pick just one exercise to do, this is the one to go for, Cohen says, "for all the obvious reasons." If you can't do basic training-quality pushups at first, start with wall presses (essentially pushups done against the wall), aiming for 3 sets of 12 to 15 repetitions. When you're ready, progress to knee pushups on the floor, making sure to keep your back straight (squeeze your butt and suck in your gut) while you slowly touch your nose to the ground. Once you're ready to kick it up a notch, progress to traditional hand-and-toe pushups.

Abdominals Cohen says your abs are a critical sex-boosting body area to work on. "After all," he says, "you have to use your abdominal muscles during sex." Franci suggests starting your ab workout with good old-fashioned crunches. Lie on your back, hands supporting your neck, knees bent, and your feet on the floor. Then bring your body up just enough to get your shoulders off the ground. Do 3 to 5 sets of 15 to 20 repetitions.

For additional ab oomph, Franci Cohen suggests men and women also do bridges. Lying on your back, knees bent, feet on the floor, lift your hips up and down for 3 sets of 15 reps. Men can also try pelvic tilts. Standing up or lying down, straighten your lower back and pull your belly button in until your lower back touches the wall or floor. Women can try Kegels. Contract your pelvic muscles -- the ones you'd use to stop the flow of urine; squeeze the muscles tight for 3 seconds, then relax for 3 seconds. Do 10 to 15 repetitions three times a day.

Deadlifts . This exercise will keep your back as strong as it can be, Franci says, and give your legs and torso a workout too. Deadlifts, in which you start in a neutral bent-over position and raise a weighted barbell or dumbbells from the ground, are easy to do -- and easy to do wrong. So technique is important to prevent injury. Get some pro tips online or at your gym to be sure you're getting the most out of doing deadlifts

Torso side bends and twists. To get the most from this exercise, as well as the next one, head to the gym. The effort is worth it because torso side bends and twists will keep your upper body strong, Cohen says, and give you stamina. "Do them on the cable crossover machine for maximum effect." Pushing or pulling exercise in the gym. Rows, flyes, and lateral raises on the cable crossover machine will do a great job of enhancing your performance in the bedroom, according to Cohen. Remember to get a few quick tips from a pro on how to do these exercises most effectively. If you want even more sizzle, exercise for 20 minutes right before sex and Franci promises, "you'll never do better!"

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Franci Cohen is a personal trainer, exercise physiologist, and certified nutritionist with a double master's degree in nutrition and exercise physiology. She is the CEO of Fuel Fitness NY, and the creator of SPIDERBANDS®. Centered around suspension and aerial concepts, this unique hybrid fitness modality is a total-body cardio resistance workout that leverages gravity and your bodyweight with other intense exercise modules such as rebounding, kickboxing and indoor cycling. With over 18 years of experience, Franci has been a mainstay in the fitness and nutrition industries. Franci believes in a tough love approach to fitness and health. "We all have our fitness wake-up call at some point in our lives and it can be a powerful catalyst for change," says Franci. "Unfortunately, many people overcompensate and try to change everything at once, which is a disaster. Making lasting change involves going through stages that aren't necessarily linear. People fluctuate and transition between the stages. Knowing how to move through them can get you where you want to be."

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