

# More sex is the secret to a longer, healthier life

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Sex is anti-aging, immune-boosting and stress-reducing to name a few of the health benefits. Here are six reasons to spend more time between the sheets.

By Natasha Turner, ND Updated November 8, 2012

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There is an anti-aging, immune-boosting, stress-reducing, mood-enhancing and hormone-balancing secret out there—and it's not just for the stars! It's sex. Did you know that having regular sex will give you a host of physiological and psychological benefits? Here's why:

**1. It's a natural pain reliever:** Sex causes increased production of oxytocin, which is often referred to as the “love hormone”. Before orgasm, oxytocin, released from the brain, surges and is accompanied by the release of endorphins, our natural pain-killing hormones. The area of the brain involved in pain reduction is highly activated during arousal and endorphins are released; endorphins soothe nerve impulses that cause menstrual cramps, migraines or joint pain. Oxytocin also affects the way we feel, helping us form strong emotional bonds as well as reduce pain. According to a study by Beverly Whipple, professor emeritus at Rutgers University and a famed sexologist and author, when women have an orgasm, pain tolerance threshold and pain detection threshold increases significantly, by up to 74.6 percent and 106.7 percent respectively.

**2. It's a stress reliever:** The endorphins released during sexual intercourse and orgasms are natural mood-boosters and stress relievers. Regular sex can also boost your self-esteem and increase intimacy between partners. For those in a monogamous relationship, studies have found that semen does contain several mood-altering hormones that can reduce depression and elevated mood.

**3. It boosts immunity:** Endorphins released during intimacy have been found to stimulate immune system cells that fight disease. Researchers have found higher levels of Immunoglobulin A in individuals who have regular sex. Immunoglobulin A is a type of antibody that helps to protect us from infections.

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It is normally found in high levels in the mucous membranes of the digestive and respiratory tracts.

**4. It's good for your heart:** Intercourse, depending on your level of enthusiasm, can be considered aerobic exercise, burning up to 200 calories per session. Among other benefits, women who engage in regular sexual activity with their partners have higher levels of estrogen, which protects against heart disease. Research has found that men who have sex two times per week have fewer heart attacks than those who do not. The hormones released during sex cause an increase in blood pressure and heart rate, and it can engage almost every muscle in the body.

**5. It gives you a glow:** The glow of good sex is real. Women who have more sex have higher levels of estrogen, which is essential to enjoying healthier, smoother skin. This increase in estrogen also helps to protect us from heart disease, osteoporosis and Alzheimer's disease. It also promotes the production of collagen, which keeps the skin supple and gives you a healthy glow.

Still not feeling in the mood? If you notice a [decrease in your libido](#), do not let it go unaddressed. Relationship problems, depression, hormonal imbalance or stress can contribute to a lack of libido. Consider supplements to raise testosterone or reduce stress, such as those suggested in my three-step program for hormonal health and wellness outlined in [The Hormone Diet](#). I also encourage you to see your doctor for proper assessment.