

Self Service

What happens in her bed when you're not there? Real women reveal their top-secret solo-sex habits.

A girlfriend recently told me, "I was late to work the other day because I was too busy masturbating." I issued a knowing nod. This kind of thing is commonplace—not only being late someplace because we're getting off, but also talking freely about it among ourselves. Yet, if you believe the limited research that exists on female masturbation, you'd think girls almost never reach below the belt. In a 1992 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) survey, only 54 percent of 3,400 women polled admitted to touching themselves, and 38 percent of those women said they do so no more than three to five times a year.

In my experience, however, those figures are extremely low. The truth is, women masturbate—a lot. In fact, I conducted an informal poll of sexually healthy twenty- and thirty-somethings that blew those NORC results out of the water: Every woman I spoke with confessed to indulging herself regularly, sometimes multiple times a day. Why so often? To answer that question, let's turn to a classic joke. Q: Why does a dog lick his balls? A: Because he can. The

same rings true for women when it comes to self-pleasure—it's quick, easy, and feels awesome. We, too, do it simply because we can.

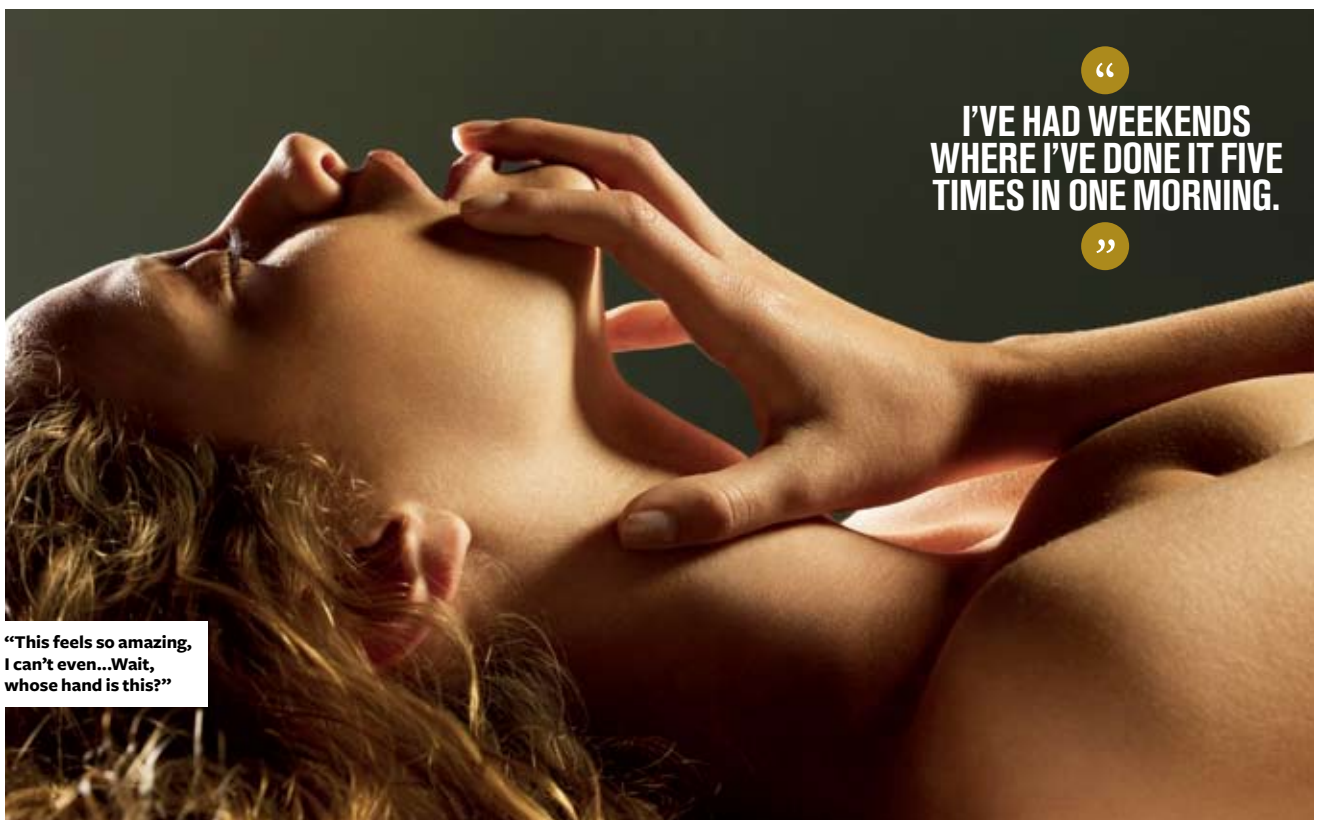
Just Can't Get Enough

Like you, women try to rub one out whenever we get the chance. But the most convenient time for us is usually first thing in the morning. Chances are, your girl is doing it right under your nose. "When I lived with my boyfriend, I'd actually wait for him to leave for work in the morning," says Ellie*, a 28-year-old photographer. "I just needed to start my day with an orgasm." Debra, a 25-year-old marketing assistant, agrees: "I do it every morning before my shower." For some women, especially those who don't live alone, the shower itself is a sort of sanctuary, providing a few precious minutes of privacy. "My morning shower is one of the few times I have to myself," says Karen, a married 27-year-old student. "I'm naked and soaped up, and the steam from the shower makes the whole experience even hotter. Plus, the showerhead is my tool of choice."

Now don't get paranoid and start thinking your girlfriend is constantly petting her kitty

because you don't satisfy her. Most women I spoke with said they masturbate for the same reasons you do: They're home alone, and the opportunity is ripe; they want to relieve tension; they can't fall asleep; they're bored; and yes, they're just plain horny. "Most of the time I honestly do it to kill time," says Alison, a 27-year-old publicist. "If I have 15 minutes before my favorite TV show, I'll break out the vibe." And if we have enough time on our hands, a speedy job isn't even required. "I've had weekends where I've lounged around in bed and done it up to five times in one morning," says Jordan, a 31-year-old advertising exec.

So going it alone isn't something we do instead of having sex with you; it's just one aspect of our sex lives. In fact, we sometimes do it because of you. "I actually do it more often when I'm in a relationship," says Carolyn, a 32-year-old fashion designer. "I guess the more I'm getting some, the more I want it." The truth is, most women prefer a good, passionate real-life sex session to self-stim any day of the week. Touching ourselves provides that quick orgasm fix we need, but it's no replacement for someone who'll tell us we were good ➤



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”

“This feels so amazing,
I can't even...Wait,
whose hand is this?”

in bed or give us a kiss after making us shudder with ecstasy. “With my boyfriend sex is a hot bonding experience,” explains 27-year-old Sabrina, a musician. “But when I’m by myself, the purpose is to come quickly.” Think of it this way: Does your electric razor give you the same clean, close shave you get at the barbershop? Not a chance. It’s handy in a pinch, but the real deal will always be infinitely better.

The Need for Speed

All this talk about coming quickly must have you confused. Yes, we will get angry if you take only three minutes in the sack. But that’s because when it comes to getting off with a man, we prefer long sessions full of kissing, teasing, and all sorts of naughty foreplay. Where solo sessions are concerned, women want to get in, get off, and get on with their days. Our super-fast arousal-to-orgasm time when masturbating stems from two factors: One, we know exactly what works for our bodies. Two, we have a helper—a little orgasm-triggering machine called the vibrator.

Please do not begrudge us for having orgasm-triggering machines. After all, machines were invented to make our lives easier—just like, say, the microwave or the golf cart does. If a man’s penis could suddenly make thousands of vibrations a minute with the addition of a few batteries, shops like Brookstone would surely be out of business. Simply put, vibrators have been designed to stimulate as many nerves as possible, instantly. So we’d be remiss not to use them.

But women do have other pleasure weapons in their arsenal. Lisa, a 28-year-old Web designer, masturbates in the bathtub, positioning herself under the water streaming from the faucet, while Samantha, a 27-year-old waitress, prefers to use her electric toothbrush. Some women can only come from rubbing up against things, like pillows or sofas, while others search for makeshift vibrators they can

Bad Vibrations

Buying your girl one of these classic vibrators? Don’t do her any sexual favors.

The Rabbit

For all its bells and whistles, the Rabbit is more freaky than fun. The massive shaft spins like a dreidel, while the bizarre, pearl-filled band around the middle rotates in the *opposite* direction. Huh? These things are supposed to make girls feel good, not like they’re being pounded by a corkscrew.

Hitachi Magic Wand

The Magic Wand could probably stand in for a jackhammer at a construction site—and that’s not a compliment. It’s huge (the handle alone is nine inches), unsightly, and terrifying. Worst of all, it comes with a plug. Sure, it’s six feet long, but no one needs to be attached to a wall when they’re trying to get off.



use in a pinch. “I once tried masturbating with my cell phone on vibrate,” admits Kathy, a 25-year-old receptionist. “It didn’t work.”

Fantasy Island

Vibrators aside, the most important tool at a girl’s disposal when she’s getting herself off is her mind. As men are well aware, no one’s going to blow their stack from touch alone. You also need a visual. The same holds true for women—and our turn-ons and fantasies can be just as nasty as yours. Thanks to the online free porn revolution, access to explicit content is easier than ever, and girls are taking advantage. X-tube, YouPorn, and TotallyNSFW are just some of the sites the women I spoke with admitted to visiting on a regular basis. What are they checking out? Amateur videos showing everything from straight sex and girl-on-girl encounters to anal.

In the absence of a laptop, women have no problem using their imaginations. My interviewees described a variety of deviant fantasies, ranging from the mildly taboo (lesbian experiences) to the downright filthy (being at the center of an all-male gangbang). Just as often their thoughts are as innocent as imagining that they’re having sex. Single women confess to picturing themselves with friends, bosses, and neighbors. And girls in relationships factor their boyfriends into fantasies all the time, usually placing themselves in a hot scenario. “I always think of my boyfriend just lifting up my skirt and giving it to me up against a fence, like in *8 Mile*,” says Alexis, a 30-year-old teacher. OK, and here’s the cold, hard truth: Sometimes we just think about Clive Owen.

What’s in It for You

As I’ve mentioned, women generally prefer their solo sex to be short and sweet. However, there are plenty of situations when we’d love to have a guy involved in the process, either by having you observe exactly what we do to hit the right buttons or by having you inside of us while we touch ourselves for double pleasure. “I actually use a vibrator 75 percent of the time I’m having sex with my boyfriend,” notes Alison. “It just guarantees I’m going to come, and we can both have a good time.”

Now, a girl might not be totally comfortable touching herself in front of you. But a good way to put her at ease is to convince her that you want to make sure she comes, no matter how she does it. Assume she has a vibrator—any sexually healthy woman who’s been single at any point in her life will have one stashed away somewhere—and ask her to use it while you two have sex or while you watch. Then sit back and reap the benefits. ●

Planes, Trains, and Automobiles

Sometimes girls just can’t fight the urge—no matter where they are.



“In college I bought a Brookstone massager and tried it out as soon as I got to my car in the Cincinnati Mall parking lot.” **Jordan, 33**

“I was exchanging dirty IMs at work, and I had to touch myself right there. It was just hand-over-the-pants action, but it worked.” **Ellie, 28**

“I masturbated on an overnight flight from South Africa. Most people were sleeping, so it wasn’t that tough to get away with.” **Maya, 25**

“One time I actually made myself come by rubbing against the seat of a stationary bike at the gym.” **Nina, 29**