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!GUIDE!

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# GENDER HACKING or

write your own title :

By Santi



# INTRODUCTION

I wrote this guide as a way to come to terms with my internal gender confusion, and with the fact that I'll never know exactly what I am and that's okay. Gender is a mess - one that we don't get to revel in too often, so I created this space for you to do so. I am Genderqueer. I say that with strong conviction, and at the same time, without a linear trajectory in terms of what this gender experience looks like, sounds like, or what it is exactly. It's not a stuckness, it's rather an unravelling of gender; a non committal approach. Whether it be clothes, names, labels, or something else, I add things, take away things, and try on new things all the time to embrace the complexity of it all. This unraveling isn't a road block, no, it's a site that is continuously under construction; a lifelong DIY project, an ongoing hacking experiment. My point is that you can identify as whatever gender you want, whether it makes sense or not. You get to explore that here.

(My) gender resembles a slingshot. Remember those handheld devices you used to make as a kid, by wrapping a rubber band around a sturdy stick to catapult stones and marbles from? Picture pulling this really stretchy band back with a marble held in the sling. Stretch it as far back as it can go. Gender is all that space in between the stick and the stretched rubber band, it's also just the stick and the rubber band itself, the marble, the air blowing through your fingers, the target 5 feet ahead of you, the itch behind your ear that you can't scratch because you don't want to loosen the band just yet. How far can you stretch your gender? Did you create it yourself? Do you think you can hit the bullseye on the first go? Most of us can't (hit the bullseye, or answer these questions really), and that's the whole point.

A DIY Guide To Gender Hacking is for anyone who has ever thought about their gender for more than five minutes. It's a space where you can explore whatever you want without needing to commit. Maybe this could have been called A Non Committal Guide to Gender. Like everything else in this book, there are no rules, so you can call it what you want.

This guide is a smorgasbord of niche gender experiences that we don't always get to indulge in. It's for the chronically online, the Y2K stans, the conceptual thinkers, the dreamers, and those with a sweet tooth for imagination. It's the MySpace of gender exploration and an adventure through queer (sub)culture: collage, astrology, fashion, personal ads, a lot of absurdity - and a splash of taboo, maybe? You can decide.

This guide isn't here to change lives. It's a free for all space that poses more questions than answers and where getting it wrong is welcome. You might learn something new about yourself, and take your gender to far off places, or you might sign off and pretend like none of this ever happened; build-a gender-adventure.

In Halberstam's work, *Trans\*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*, he sees gender transition as similar to building with Lego blocks. The world of Lego is one constant transition where creation can be anything you want it to be. Hacking your gender could look like bringing home a shiny new box of Lego and tearing it open, spreading all the building blocks out on the floor, and ignoring all of the instructions to build what you want from scratch.

This is an alternative LEGO experience: DIY your own dick, identify as a mythological creature, read the book upside down, print it out and cut it up, read it backwards, make up your own set of gender rules,

unleash your inner gender hacker.



# Slogans or Slurs

A W O J Q T D R L Q J P R V V  
F T Q S W U B A E E F C I X J  
S X T A P T C T N U U A V Q C  
R N N E B H H A K N G T I F L  
S S O T N V E E U W O Y F R B  
W V K W R T T L Y K D Y G T Y  
Y O Z E F E I D I F D C I E N  
G F K H J L N O Y C A O K N S  
O R I E M O A D N S O B R B G  
B E D S L T N K E S Y P T Y X  
L A K M I O V X E R E H T G I  
I K V I I H R Y R Y X E I E R  
N U U W U J X D H Q P X K Y R  
A L B H A B E T M A F I A E B  
P E R V E R T P A N S Y H M R

trender      theyfab      wokelord  
helicopter      annoying      pansy  
enby      attention seeker      pervert  
goblin      snowflake      freak  
            alphabetmania      uwu



## Your Badge Of Honour Checklist:

- ☐ A badge, patch, or a T-shirt with a slur or slogan that you have reclaimed
- ☐ The badge is worn in a very visible place (backpack, front of jacket, shirt collar)
- ☐ It's bright and bold - most likely a DIY job
- ☐ You have multiples to share with your friends
- ☐ People stare at it a lot in public
- ☐ It strikes up conversation
- ☐ You get called more things which inspires you to make more badges
- ☐ Repeat



A while back I had this badge that had two faces on a baby blue background. On the right it said 'girl' with a picture of a girl with pigtails, on the other side it said 'boy' with an illustration of a pig face. I used to wear it on the front of my jacket and snicker everytime I left the house. I thought it was the epitome of 'man-hating' political slogans and couldn't wait for people to spot it in public.

Lately I've been wearing one that says 'Faggots and Dykes For Trans Rights'. I usually wear it on the front of my bum bag and I forget it's there until I see someone ogling at it on the tube.

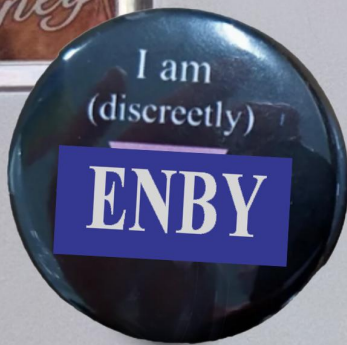
Some of my other favourite badges are ones that I picked up from an artist at one of my own G(end)er Swap events. It says, 'Some Of My Friends Are Straight'. A couple summers ago, a crush made me a one that says 'Good Boy' - I wear it for all occasions.

I have other buttons that just state the obvious, a hand crafted collage one that just says 'GAY' or 'DYKE'. Reclamation confuses, and it disempowers the ones armed with those words.

What would it feel like to reclaim words used lately against queer and trans people in the media? What (new-ish) slogans and slurs would you wear as your badge of honour and why?



badge  
of  
honour





**fashion**

**Hack(s)**

**Gender**

**fuck**

**[fast]**

**fashion**



**What R U wearing?**

Fashion hack your way to gender. Hack your clothes until they are deemed unacceptable. Fuck the fashion system: gender fuck your way out of it one safety pin at a time. Gender fuck, fashion fuck, fuck fast fashion, hack fashion, hack gender and find fashion hacks and gender hacks for gender fucking.

I am not here to tell you one way or the other. If you tack on a pair of cat ears as an accessory to your outfit and get read as a nonbinary demi girl gaymer, then I guess it does. If your sunflower lanyard signals your identity as being autigender, then just maybe. If you took fabric paint and wrote BOY across the back of your jacket, and someone called you sir at the shop, well that's something. If you don't really care about clothes, but use them to blend in, to 'pass' then your way of (fashion and gender) hacking is still getting the job done.

**wait, do clothes equal gender?**

Fashion hacking is exactly what it sounds like. Hack up the way you wear clothes, defy fashion trends, fuck up forms of dress as we know them. For Barry and Drak (2019), fashion hacking is a way to redistribute power to people not included in the fashion system<sup>1</sup>. Customised clothing, DIY, creating alternative style resources and adaptable clothing are ways that people subvert the mainstream fashion system's rules (remember your badge of honour?). A method of self-empowerment that is formed through resource and skill-sharing that doesn't rely on high-street brands.

Fashion hacking is gender affirming and accessible. Use trouser legs as arm warmers, cut open your denim jeans and sew in fabric to make them fit your boy hips, sew shoulder pads to the inside of your shirt to fashion a chest, add velcro sleeves to your blazer so you can easily slide into your jacket while using a mobility aid - accessorise your mobility aid.

Fashion hacking is a way to figure out your gender. Play around with style genres, figure out what colours, textures and fabrics feel good. Draw pictures, write words, embellish your clothes with things that you love.

**Free yourself from expectations.**

**what would you choose to wear if no one else was looking?**





<sup>1</sup> Ben Barry & Daniel Drak (2019) Intersectional Interventions into Queer and Trans Liberation: Youth Resistance Against Right-Wing Populism Through Fashion Hacking, *Fashion Theory*, 23:6, 679-709.



# WTF is Dragongender?

I had a conversation with my friend Madina, who is cis het (not trans and heterosexual) about lesser known genders, and how they function in the social world. There were more questions than answers.

**Madina:** I don't know how colour/fantasy genders relate to social behaviour. Like what does it mean to be pastel-orangegender beyond a preference for a colour? What's the difference between colourgender and for example, being part of a brutalist appreciation society? Like can I be sportsgender or basketballgender?

Can we define gender as something other than human?

**Me:** So MOGAI (Marginalised Orientations, Gender Alignments and Intersex) [aka xenogenders/sexualities] are mainly claimed by younger, oftentimes neurodivergent queer people who feel an affinity with non-human descriptions of gender experiences. The short answer is that you can identify as whatever you want.

**Madina:** I feel like basketballgender makes more sense because it is associated with certain behaviours and norms.

**Me:** You can be creative and imaginative – like whatever. It can be a good way to fight back against the 'I identify as an attack helicopter' discourse created by cis people.

**Madina:** So is gender defined by your subjective feelings only? That's the question. To have full control over your social place in the world without the imposition of social expectation and structure? Like is it a stride towards absolute liberation from the normative gaze? And what happens to this gender without society? Like can you be Xanadugender on a desert island with no human or living being around?

What are the conditions that create an acceptable gender/a transgressive gender?

**Me:** I think gender can be defined by your subjective feelings only. Like for some they feel it's a biological position, others it's mainly constructed, or a bit of both, lots of people want to defy the parameters even set by more mainstream trans communities, to carve out a space that makes sense to their own experiences.



**Me:** Or maybe it's a chicken-and-egg situation, where people have fun creating these genders then the embodiment of it follows.

Of course you can be Xanadugender with no one else around on a desert island. In fact, that probably makes more sense because you might feel dysphoric in a sandy golden environment and realise you feel more green.

Interesting that you found some alignment in basketballgender though. I think being this expansive means you have the opportunity to zoom out so wide then stretch back to a 'normal' size, like a slingshot, and then understand your own gender experience better.

Do you know what I mean?

**Madina:** Yeah for sure. I would say that you don't think about gender on a desert island. You just are. Because gender is relational, like every social construction. The moment there is more than one person/being on a desert island, that's when you start defining yourself against the other.

The basketball thing would be a subculture for me actually. But I did use it the way I find xenogenders using it. Like are tech bros techbrogender? Or, because I see with one eye only, can I be one-eyedgender? Basically I'm interrogating the boundaries of what constitutes 'gender' as a signifier.

Who gets to establish what language is used within/outside of the community?

**Me:** I would say, you don't think about gender on the desert island because you just are a woman, and once you have that sedimented there is no need to think about it further. Whereas someone who is questioning their gender is more likely to sit on a desert island and think about it. To try to understand their gender in relation to what's around them, even if that's trees and sand. What xenogenders demonstrate is that other objects/things also contribute to this sense of becoming/knowing.

**Madina:** Ah this is where we disagree fundamentally. If I've never met a man in my life, I wouldn't know what a woman is, or what gender is.

**Me:** There's blurred lines between what constitutes a gender or a lifestyle. But what if it's just a word being used in place of a gender experience that can't be defined, but which brings someone closer to understanding themselves? Someone who identifies as dragongender, most likely just identifies as nonbinary first.

**Madina:** Yeah I was just thinking about that.

**Me:** And then introduces a subset of characteristics that adds complexity to their experience.



**Madina:** Like I saw on Reddit someone identifies with some plant. But the thing is, it's an identification with something whose experience you don't know, because you are not that.

I agree that it broadens your understanding of yourself, but to identify with a plant, is to identify with something based on your assumption of it, because you fundamentally are not a plant species, and don't have that species' experience.

**Me:** Someone who identifies as plantgender doesn't identify as a plant. They identify with the aesthetic and embodied forms that a plant may assume.

**Madina:** Yes exactly, so one is creating a narrative around what plants are like.

**Me:** Right, but you have also said that you have created a narrative on what it is to be a woman in relation to a man. So what is the difference here?

**Madina:** Those have been historically rooted in practice. Like I would buy techbrogender over plantgender.

**Me:** Because you are prioritising the human.

**Madina:** I think there needs to be a material relation to gender, and yes, because I am human. I can be in symbiosis with nature. But I eat, shit and sleep like a human.

**Me:** The thing is, you eat, shit and sleep like a hamster too.

**Madina:** Based on social theory, there needs to be practice associated with a particular identity.

**Me:** But what's more interesting is to a degree you get many of the xenogenders without having a human experience of the inanimate object or mythological creature that it's attached to. If I said to you that I identify as a dragongender, what are the assumptions that you come up with right away about that gender?

**Madina:** Well that's culturally rooted. You could be a chinese dragongender, or medieval, or you can be shrek film dragon gender. But it's more like a BuzzFeed quiz to me.

**Me:** Right but in the context of exploring gender, wouldn't this be beneficial? The dragon from Shrek is very femme, alluring and pink. It gives insight into textures, expressions, gendered associations that might resonate.

**Madina:** I think we should probably make a distinction between gender as a way of self-knowing, and what it means to the social world.

**Me:** Yes, so what I outlined above is more for self-understanding. And the question here is, to what extent does it need to be applied to the social world? MOGAI gender is more of an intercommunity code perhaps.



How does disability overlap with gender experience? Who gets to create these identity labels?

**Madina:** Love that. I think that cracks it.

**Me:** BUT, if someone was going to ask, well what the fuck is dragongender? Then perhaps it would lead to a conversation like this in which we can explore what the person feels, how they arrived here, or how they are just passing through.

And also, how it makes you think of your own position as a woman who could identify as basketballgender, even if it's not REALLY a gender, and more of a subculture to you, you know?

**Madina:** To me basketballgender is closer to national identity or (sub)culture. Like identifying with certain aspects of Post-Soviet culture, Tajik culture, French culture, London urban culture. To me those are not genders.

**Me:** But you have attached an assumption to how basketball is situated socially/culturally.

**Madina:** Yes, but within basketball culture there is a gender continuum in the classical sense.

**Me:** But the point with MOGAI genders is to fuck the binary and to fuck established understandings and definitions of gender. So in this case basketball gender disrupts that continuum. Maybe it's just a personal gender exploration exercise not meant to go any further than the MOGAI community – I sort of like that exclusivity.

**Madina:** I guess I see the act of the identification as a protest against the binary. And not necessarily as a real identification.

**Me:** But it could be real in someone's own reality.

**Madina:** Yeah, I mean I could say I identify with a fridge because I feel like I have a cooling effect. But that cooling effect is in relation to other people – not other machines. So you're essentially extrapolating human-like traits from non-human things.

**Me:** But for me I get it (fridgegender with the definition) because genderfluid for me is so nebulous. I wonder if getting into these detailed MOGAI genders helps cis people understand the complexity of gender(s) overall. It's like what I said about stretching super far out then loosening the slingshot and all of a sudden you have more context for what a nonbinary gender is/could be/feels like.

**Madina:** I think certain things we discussed bring it home for me. I think dividing it between gender as socially/politically understood, and as a path to self-knowledge helps me to understand how MOGAI genders could function.

**\*\*A conversation that needs to be continued and deeply unpacked.**



# DIY DICK

Wearing my DIY dick feels good. It smells good too. Like synthetic man. The texture is similar to those squidgy stress toys shaped like animated fast food with googly eyes. You know the ones that you can win in the 2P coin slot machines on the pier in a seaside town? Except my dick is a couple of condoms filled with hair gel. I hold it up to my nose and soak up the smell of cologne (thanks to Vo5 men's hair products) through the old T-shirt it's wrapped in, before shoving it into my boxers. I turn to my friend standing in my kitchen to ask him if it looks proportionate in relation to the rest of my body. He confirms it does as I grope my crotch.

Trans activist Stephen Whittle's 1998 resource for trans masculine people, *The White Book*<sup>2</sup>, is a comprehensive guide that covers everything from trans terms to curiosities about medical transition. The book featured a DIY section that gave instructions on how to create your own packer out of condoms and hair gel encased in old T-shirt fabric. The method feels very hack-y. It feels like digging into gloopy and raw, hands-on genderfuckery.

<sup>2</sup> THE WHITE BOOK: A REALLY INDISPENSABLE MANUAL FOR INHABITING A TRANS MAN'S BEING IN 1998.

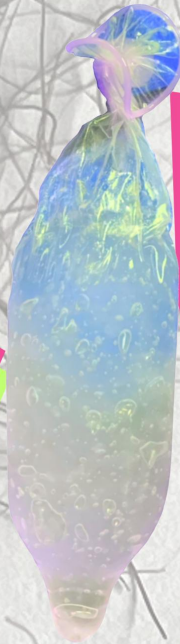


# How to make your own dick:

## STEP 1

### Create the Shaft

Squeeze a dollop of gel into a condom. Shimmy the gel down to the tip. Repeat. Don't pack the gel in too tight. Layer a second condom on top.



## STEP 2

### Make Balls

Squirt gel into two separate condoms - two inches' worth. Knot the condom further down the base so the ball shape stays in place. Then knot the two balls together.



## STEP 3



## ENJOY IT!

### Create a case to hold your junk

Use scrap fabric to sew a fabric tube for the shaft to sit in, and a square fabric pouch for the balls. Once those are sewn up with the bits inside, cut a hole in the square ball pouch and feed the shaft through.

### Reinforce & Decorate it

Use a safety pin to keep the shaft in place and to attach it to the balls, but only through the fabric parts and avoid the condom. You can use it to pin the packer to your boxers. Customise your packer with patches, fabrics and colours.

Now use it, but not just in your underpants.





More names!

More Inventions!

More Dicks!

- D.Mortimer

What's your

Dream

Dick?

According to Preciado, the concept of 'countersexuality' challenges gender and sexuality norms<sup>3</sup>. The traditional system is heteronormative and contains people to not only specific gender binaries but also a rigid container of sexual acts and behaviours: active/passive, man/woman, giver/receiver. This means that the dildo, and everything beyond it, becomes unidentifiable as an organ in the traditional dynamics of man/active, woman/passive, and renders the hetero-binary gender role system meaningless (ibid). The dildo is part of what Preciado calls 'prosthetic sexuality', where he argues that sexual identity and expression are not tied to biological anatomy. Instead, they can be creatively reconfigured through the use of prostheses, symbols and rituals which opens the opportunity to transcend the fixed categories of male/female, hetero/homo and so on.

The dildo is adaptable and can attach to different body parts (thigh, mouth, arm, or on top of another dick). It can also be used with other tools (harnesses, sexual devices) which decouple sexual acts from the rigid binary.

The dildo is very unserious, multipurpose-full and a very creative hacker indeed. As Preciado says, here is an object that ...can give as a gift, throw in the trash, or use as a paperweight (72:2018). Preciado argues that ANYTHING can be a dildo: a limb, an object, or a device.

I extend this mode of thought to my flaccid packer, which, like a dildo, disrupts biological assumptions of who can have a dick and what materials constitute a dick too.

The ritual of creating a dick by repurposing condoms to fill them with hair gel, instead of cum, to shove them into my boxers to create a bulge, and to have others perceive it and interact with this crafted thing, destroys binary ideas of gender, biological sex and sex tools too.

Preciado views the dildo as an outsider, a hacker. So is a packer. Make your dick out of anything, wear it in your pocket if you so wish. Call it whatever you want, describe it like it's food, a household item, a character. Be a countersexual gender hacker. Create your own dream dick.

<sup>3</sup> The Countersexual Manifesto (2018), Paul B.Preciado



**A hot incubator (mummy) seeks an egg**

ASL: a mum age, sexually fluid, Old MacDonald's Farmhouse

A hot milf mummy seeks an egg who is questioning their gender(\* ⊖ \*). Into roleplay, dress up, coddling you, or just sitting on you to keep you warm until you hatch. I can help you come out of your shell as the hot trans person you are meant to be. Don't be shy now. ^.^.

Transtrender dyslexic  
enby sub seeks degradation chat from an AI Top

ASL: 27 club, robosexual, I live online

Me: A subby trender attratcted to machines looking for an AI bot to degrdae me on a vioce messaging srevic becuse reading is harddd.

You: Identifies as a humansexual, and a top, excited to bully my gendre until I squirt. Tell me I'm a fake trains. Call my sexuality an embarrassment to the communiyt and tell me my pronouns aren't valid. Send this pick me into an AI genereted cloud 9.

# PERVERTED *personals*

**Furry seeks Wolf Daddy  
4 back scratches**

Raawwrrrr I like to dress up as a unicorn-lion hybrid on my days offrrrrr U identifiy as a wolf 24/7 and luv to wear extendable nail talons you bought at the costume shopgrrrrr I'm looking to learn more abt what it's like to live as an animal in a human worlddurrrp, and not just part time for hotel furry conventionsblrrrrp. Unzip my fur suit to scratch my backmeowwwr & show me a newRrrrr path to a pleasurable post-human life?



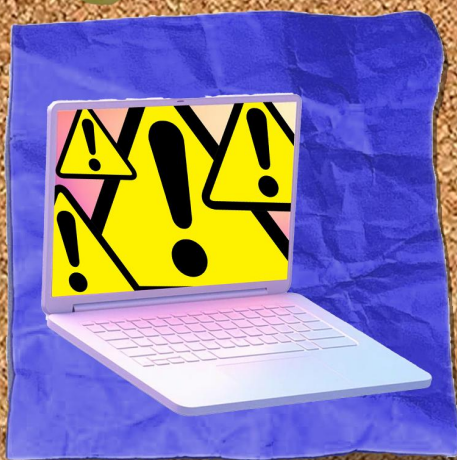
LONELY POLYSEXUAL  
JOCK(STRAP) SEEKS A  
PANSEXUAL PANSY & HOT FUN.

ASL: 21 YEARS OLD, BIGENDER, ON  
THE BEDROOM FLOOR OF A  
BACHELOR S PENTHOUSE SUITE  
LOOKING 4 SUM1 WHO DOESNT  
CARE ABT WHATS IN MY PANTS. I  
LOVE A PRETTY BOY WHO CAN USE  
A STRAP RIGHT.

FIND ME IN THE PILE OF LAUNDRY  
ON THE BEDROOM FLOOR, READY 2B  
USED.



**ASL\*: AGE,  
SEX(UALITY),  
LOCATION**



<b> Hacker 4 Helicopter seeks  
platonic dates </b>

<p> You identify as a helicopter. I  
have a h@cking k!nk .

(style="font-style:blue;") Let's meet  
over a coffee and build more  
mechanical genders for  
Piers Morgan to get angry about on  
good morning Britain.

(/style="font-style:blue;")  
Meet me in the crop circle in the  
fields behind my house? </p>



# FAQ'S

## FAQ! Trans Joy Feels Awkward, Doesn't It?

My skin crawls when someone asks me for my pronouns at a social event. The statement 'trans joy' makes me feel nauseous, and when someone tells me my gender is valid, I want to crawl in a hole and die. As a trans person I am surrounded by these statements, and sometimes I secretly embrace them, but I don't know what this physical repulsion is that I am feeling. Do you?

What you are experiencing, my friend, is called CRINGE. It's when the sincere gesture of being included in something feels like too much. Almost like you don't deserve it. Maybe a little too cheesy for the 'too cool' fashion queer crowd? My advice to you is to embrace the cringe, because it's just a more or less easy way for people to express that they care about your well-being. In my opinion, being cringe IS the new 'cool', because if we keep thinking that everything is cringe, then we will never do anything! What's wrong with someone checking in on you? Making sure that they are perceiving you correctly? Okay, if it's a dramatic performance by a guilty cis person, then I get where you are coming from. But what if it's from someone who is just trying to do their best then embrace the live-laugh-tinge mindset. Find some down time and create a self affirmation that feels good to you to offset the mainstream ones. You could take anti-nausea meds the next time you go to an event filled with 'trans joy'? Don't miss out because of the cringe, attend things in spite of it.

## FAQ! I Am Tired Of Gendered Shopping Experiences!

When I am shopping for clothes in high-street shops, I constantly get directed to whatever gendered clothing section customer service reps think I belong in. It changes all the time depending on how I present. I politely thank the person because I don't know how to tell them that I am actually in the right section. I need more clothes, but I've boycotted the shops recently - any advice?

Ah, mainstream shopping spaces uphold the binary in the most uninvited ways sometimes. My advice is to take a break from the high-street shops (fuck fast fashion anyways) and try other avenues. Charity shops are a good place to start. You have more free rein: their changing rooms are usually gender neutral, and even though they have gendered sections, they aren't labelled - and usually you can find a mix of styles in each section anyhow, because a lot of vintage clothes are difficult to categorise. Try online shopping too. Scout the things you want from high-street brands, and then search for them discounted on Vinted ☐ For online shopping, my advice is to always know your measurements. You might want to turn to the clothes that you already have, too. Try re-categorising your clothes for new visual inspo, or try some fun DIY (hand sewn patches or fabric paints), or swap clothes with your friends for free. If all the above fails, and you are determined to make high-street shops work for you, then at least customise yourself a huge do-not-disturb badge for your jacket so they leave you alone: a new DIY project to make cis people feel uncomfortable?



### FAQ! Can I Identify as a Detransitioner?

I have identified as a trans guy for the past 5 years (and socially and medically transitioned). Lately I have been questioning my gender again. I have come to the realisation that I am actually not a man, but a nonbinary person who likes to present more masculine. I also identify with the detransitioner label but I am worried that many people will have negative associations with that word. I don't want to be ousted from my local trans community. How do I hold on to both my detransitioner and nonbinary identity in spaces where it might make people uncomfortable?

We all know mainstream de-transitioner narratives are bullshit. Rather, I like to think of it as RE-transition, because gender, for some, is fluid and changeable. There are so many ways of being and becoming trans. Right wing media loves to center detransition stories as 'evidence' that trans people don't know themselves, taking the position that gender identity is always fixed. But you are exemplary of the creative and complex experience that gender is. It sounds like identifying as part detransitioner is important for you, so hold it close. Those who get it will stay by your side and on this basis, your true community is formed. Are you worried that people won't take you seriously as a nonbinary person who has medically transitioned to present as a man? I am sensing maybe there's some hesitation about how you are being perceived in particular spaces. Don't forsake your identity to make others comfortable. Contextualising detransition as retransition into a new gender experience is something that a lot more people can relate to than is publicly talked about anyway. We all know that presentation doesn't always equal gender. So, identify as nothing, identify as everything, identify as too complex to be explained. I dare you.

### FAQ! I Am Sick Of My Aunt Being On Trans- Spying Missions!

I live with my millennial aunt who is obsessed with figuring out which celebrities and TV characters are actually secretly transgender. I can't turn on the TV without her wrangling me into agreeing that Spongebob Squarepants looks trans for example. Why is this happening to me? Please help me find an answer to this absurd behavior.

It's no coincidence that your older millennial aunt is obsessed with discovering whether celebrities are trans or not. This obsession is known as transvestigation. I think the early 2000s spy craze might have something to do with the millennial urge to spy on peoples' gender. Remember how popular The Matrix, Inspector Gadget, James Bond, Spy Kids, and Harriet The Spy were back in the day? Plastic spy kits proliferated at Toys R' Us and the fish-eye lens in cinematography became a popular source of imagery in this cultural moment too. It was all very panoptic, with the brainwashing concept that we all needed to keep an eye on each other to make sure we didn't stray from cultural or social norms. Maybe your aunt is obsessed with figuring out if Jennifer Aniston is really just a man, because that's the only way she feels like she can get close to trans people - who knows? Probably best to remind your aunt that you aren't into spy cosplay and that the next time she wants to open her gob with a new transvestigation theory, you can tell her that figuring out if people are trans or not, is not only none of her business, it's not only plain rude, but it's literally (K)impossible to figure it out. See what I did there?





# BLAME

## IT ON YOUR

# SIGN

What's your zodiacgender? Zodiacgenders are used to describe one's gender related to the traits of a zodiac sign. Your zodiacgender may feel like their own star sign, or someone else's. Blame the fact that you are annoying on your zodiacgender: it's perfect.

### Ariesgender

You actually identify as a furry, and your current style obsession is wearing ram horns and shoes shaped like hooves. Your guilty pleasure is visiting the city farm on Sundays and collecting retro porn magazines. This year you are experimenting with using they/them pronouns, but your frenemies tell you that you look more like a 'she/they'. You decide to abandon all pronouns and turn your focus to ramming hot he/him lesbians all year round instead.

### Geminigender

Polysexual, polygender, polyamorous, polycore! Geminigender is gendering! Forget sticking to one gender, forget sticking to one lover, forget committing to anything. You like to create new genders and sexualities daily because you get bored quickly. Your favourite is geminigender because you love yourself. Your addiction is dating ADHD femmes, and on the weekend you love to wear clown makeup. You can find your clown face in the busy smoking area at the day rave sharing random facts about Victorian ghost twins that live in your home, to anyone who will listen.

### Taurasgender

You should identify as stubborngender. You don't like people telling you who you are, unless it's being called a good boy in bed. Except no one knows this because you usually mask as a top – and not even a service one. You like shaved heads, sensory rooms, stim toys, and an expensive order of avocado toast, just to *feel* something. Your gender doesn't really feel fluid, you mostly just feel like a butch with a staple leather jacket that you wear on every occasion – including to your own wedding.

### Cancergender

You smell like lemongrass and patchouli and love to write poems about how your gender feels like a watercolour painting of a cottage resting in long grass. You are always deep in your feels and heavily relate to being genderfluid, because your sense of being is always in flux. You have a soft spot for neopronouns and love to be referred to as water/waterself, but any water-inspired pronouns will do, because you don't like confrontation. You have dreams of living by the sea with four hairless cats and your introverted gamer bisexual girlfriend named Sonic.



## Leogender

Mostly bigender, because you basically identify as a hot guy or a hot gurl and gender is not really ever that complicated as long as people perceive you as hot. Your claim to fame is performing, starring in and playing all the support instruments in your one person girly pop band. Luxury streetwear, shots of cinnamon-flavoured Whiskey and having a foot fetish are sooooo Leogender. You let people know they should grab your autograph quick, because you are getting famous soon (no one knows if this refers to your band, or for selling feet pics).

## Libragender

The scales are constantly moving up and down so your gender is always a balancing act. You secretly identify with being goblingender but your coworkers will only settle on seeing you as a bit of an elf, because it's cuter, and you can't argue with THAT. You are known to correct people when they misgender your friends, and you have an aptitude for mutual aid organising. Your favourite hobby is forming penpalships with other trans people living overseas. You met most of them on a Reddit thread exploring queer homeopathic remedies for lactose intolerance.

## Sagittariusgender

You hate horses, but you love centaurs, and have an affinity for fantasy novels and hentai porn. You love a good debate, but not when it comes to your identity so people have to get your gender in order to be friends. You love a good intellectual debate, a good wank with clever dirty talk, and a good sub who can stay on their knees. You secretly are very sensitive, have a vast crystal collection and write love letters to the hot nonbinary lesbian barista at your local coffee shop. You have been meaning to ask them out for 6 months now, but you are just too busy to care IRL.

## Aquariusgender

No one gets you, so naturally they don't get your gender at all. It's like if Bojack Horseman and the alien toy from Toy Story had a baby. But no one gets those references either. You love switching up your pronouns and right now you just use all and any because what even is gender? You are a smart-ass with a penchant for avoidant heteroflexible skater boys who collect butt plugs with sassy pony tails, *only because* they 'look cool'. You experience major gender envy when it comes to Pokémon (like are you serious Mew!?) and you love replying to everything that anyone says with 'that's soooo gender'.

## Virgogender

You overthink everything including your own gender, and those of others. But you know for sure that you like nice things and don't like change too often, so you mostly settle on ze/zem pronouns and love to dress in a way that makes your gender look expensive and tailored. You are a bit of a control freak so you spend most of your time ensuring others perceive you right. You are a pansexual baddie that loves a vacation to Paris with your goth trans fag boyfriend who's homemade focaccia bread is really out of this world.

## Scorpiogender

God you are so emo. You love wearing red contact lenses and black faux fur and you are mostly into having groupies with gay xenogenders. You like to consult your Dungeons & Dragons themed tarot cards to see what gender you feel like identifying as each month. You are very suspicious of cis people and prefer to surround yourself with other people who identify as a zodiacgender. You tell people you love listening to death metal and dating dragongenders romantically, but you secretly just love listening to Billie Eilish and blocking and unblocking your ex every few months in the name of self-care.

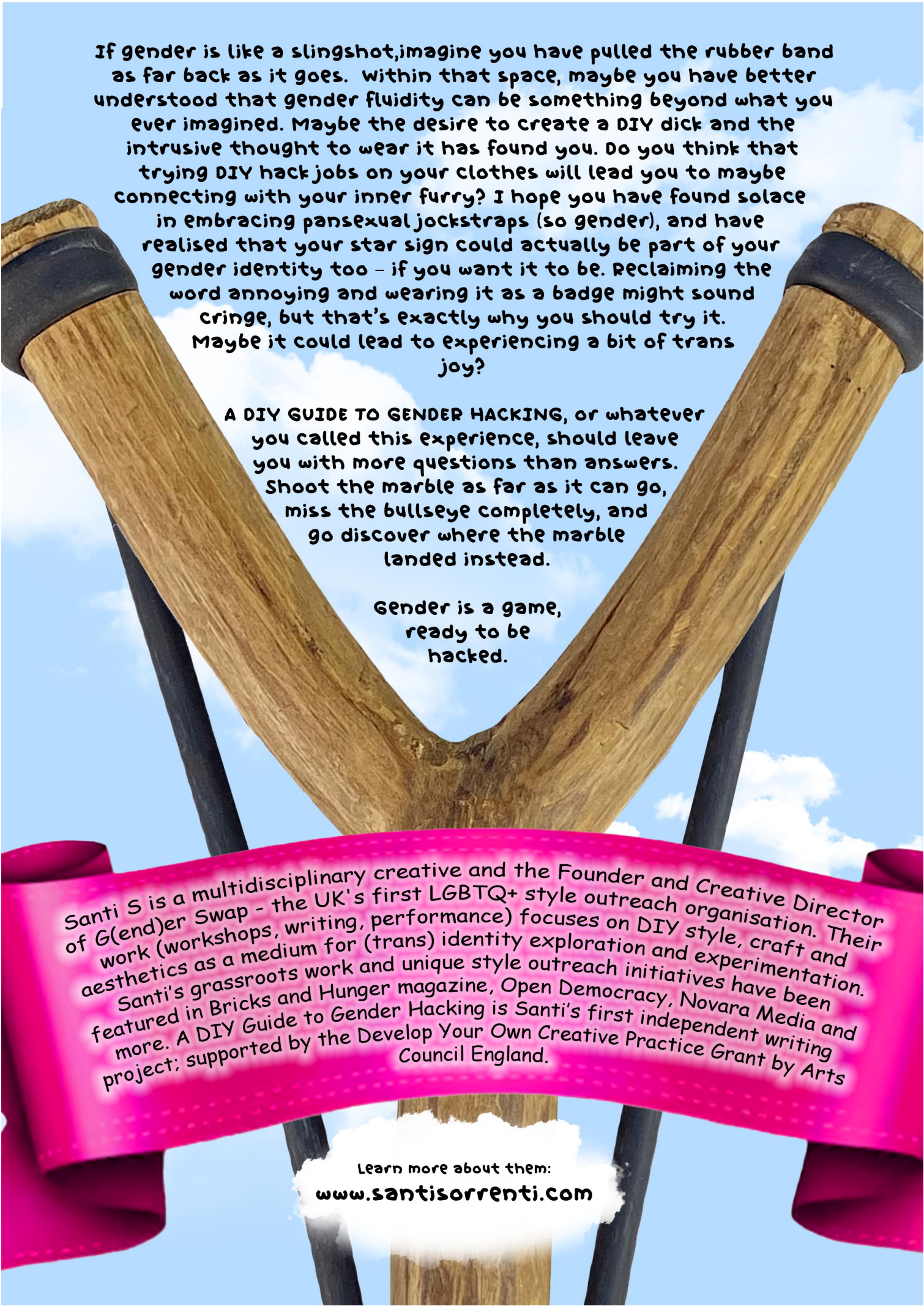
## Capricorngender

Can you identify as money? It's one of the things you love the most, which is why you love working the pole at the bar for old money gays in your jockstrap for mega tips. You enjoy a luxury five-step skincare routine, and twirling the ends of your fine T-stache. You enjoy ritual, consistency, and monogamy as a concept. Your gender feels like a Renaissance painting, a pashmina scarf, a brand new pair of Miista boots – and a shiny new dildo still in its packaging (pegging finance bros gives you gender euphoria!).

## Piscesgender

Anime trans girly girl who loves eating sesame snaps and reading graphic novels. Forget people – you like being alone in your constructed fantasy worlds, or chatting to new friends on Discord. You like learning about new gender pride flags and fan girl-ing over hot T Boys on Tik Tok. You wear baggy jeans, have a huge plushie toy collection and like wearing those headphones that have the cat ears attached to the top. We can only use the pronouns fish/fishself for you because not only do you love your gender, but your favourite Studio Ghibli film is Ponyo – the best!





If gender is like a slingshot, imagine you have pulled the rubber band as far back as it goes. Within that space, maybe you have better understood that gender fluidity can be something beyond what you ever imagined. Maybe the desire to create a DIY dick and the intrusive thought to wear it has found you. Do you think that trying DIY hack jobs on your clothes will lead you to maybe connecting with your inner furry? I hope you have found solace in embracing pansexual jockstraps (so gender), and have realised that your star sign could actually be part of your gender identity too – if you want it to be. Reclaiming the word annoying and wearing it as a badge might sound cringe, but that's exactly why you should try it. Maybe it could lead to experiencing a bit of trans joy?

A DIY GUIDE TO GENDER HACKING, or whatever you called this experience, should leave you with more questions than answers. Shoot the marble as far as it can go, miss the bullseye completely, and go discover where the marble landed instead.

Gender is a game,  
ready to be  
hacked.

Santi S is a multidisciplinary creative and the Founder and Creative Director of G(end)er Swap - the UK's first LGBTQ+ style outreach organisation. Their work (workshops, writing, performance) focuses on DIY style, craft and aesthetics as a medium for (trans) identity exploration and experimentation. Santi's grassroots work and unique style outreach initiatives have been featured in Bricks and Hunger magazine, Open Democracy, Novara Media and more. A DIY Guide to Gender Hacking is Santi's first independent writing project; supported by the Develop Your Own Creative Practice Grant by Arts Council England.

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