

Dr. McMinn's

Personal Pleasure Session for Women

A Note from Dr. McMinn

For many years as the Director of a large integrative and functional medical practice, and as a practicing physician, I have had the honor of listening to and treating women's health concerns. Some of the most common concerns that women bring to me are in the area of sexual health — low interest, difficulty getting aroused, delayed orgasm, or the inability to reach orgasm at all. These challenges can lead to frustration, diminished self-esteem, and real strain on intimate relationships.

After hearing these same concerns repeated by the majority of women who visited my practice, I committed myself — and our clinic — to taking them seriously. Physicians are quick to hand out “the little blue pill” for men's erectile dysfunction, yet as a profession, we have been slow to respond to women's equally legitimate sexual health concerns. At McMinn Clinic, we created a sex-positive culture where women could speak freely, without fear of judgment or shame — knowing they would be heard, taken seriously, and helped in a professional, evidence-based way.

Most experts agree that self-understanding, exploration, and self-pleasuring are essential to optimizing a woman's orgasmic potential. The journey has four key steps: understanding your body and anatomy, discovering your personal arousal triggers, removing the obstacles that stand in the way, and undertaking a process of sensual and sexual discovery. For many women, this discovery is most successful when pursued privately at first — without the added pressure or awkwardness of a partner present. Once you know what works for you, that knowledge becomes a gift you can bring back into your relationship.

This is a process. It takes time and commitment. Most women find the process to be deeply empowering. Think of it this way: your body is like a Stradivarius violin — one of the most magnificent instruments ever created. But even a Stradivarius needs a player who has practiced and has taken the time to draw out its full potential. In this case, you are both the instrument and the musician. At the end of the day, you are responsible for your own sexuality — and by addressing these issues directly, you claim the right to a lifetime of beautiful music.

Background and Core Principles

Your Mindset Matters Most

- Sexual pleasure is your birthright. You deserve it.
- Congratulate yourself for addressing this directly. Many women never do, and as a result they live with an unfulfilled intimate life.
- This is about you — your pleasure, your sexuality. Your partner can wait. Right now, this is all about you.

- It begins with your commitment to being sexually empowered, to whatever degree you choose.
- Cast aside “good girl syndrome” — the years of messaging that told you sex was bad and your body, especially your “private parts,” were something to be ashamed of.
- Ignore any internalized messages about “slut-shaming” that make women feel guilty for owning their sexuality. A sexually liberated woman is a healthy woman.
- Do your best to set aside self-judgments around religious upbringing, cultural values, or body image. If these are significant barriers, consider working with a counselor — it’s worth it.
- Use positive affirmations. Picture yourself as a sexy woman. Because you are.

You Are Not Alone — The Numbers

- A majority of American women report little to no interest in sex.
- Up to 20% of women have never had an orgasm.
- About two-thirds of women do not orgasm from intercourse alone. Most women require direct clitoral stimulation to achieve orgasm. This is normal. It’s biology.
- Women can experience performance anxiety too. The pressure to “perform” creates a negative feedback loop — anxiety makes orgasm harder, which creates more anxiety. Solo sessions sidestep this entirely.
- If a woman rarely or never orgasms, she often becomes less interested in sex. It’s a vicious cycle. Flip it: when orgasm becomes more reliable, desire naturally follows.

The Brain Is the Primary Sex Organ

- The most important sex organ in the body is not the genitals — it’s the brain. Desire, arousal, and orgasm all originate there.
- Fantasy is not just acceptable — it’s a powerful tool. Nothing is off limits in your own mind. Nobody else has to know any of your fantasies. They are all yours.
- Negative thoughts are the single biggest obstacle to pleasure. Learning to quiet them is one of the most powerful things you can do.

Common Obstacles to Sexual Function

- Fatigue is the number one cause of low sexual interest. After a full day of work, kids, and responsibilities, most women are simply too tired for sex. Better energy = better libido. See Dr. McMinn’s podcast on low energy (“Why Am I So Tired?”) at McMinnMD.com.
- Stress is a major libido killer. See Dr. McMinn’s podcast on stress management at McMinnMD.com, and download the Stress Plan and Stress Toolbox at McMinnMD.com on the documents page.
- Sleep affects virtually every aspect of health, including libido. Make restorative sleep a high priority.
- Hormone imbalances — particularly low testosterone — are a leading cause of low desire and difficulty with orgasm. More on this below.
- Mood disorders such as depression and anxiety can significantly impair sexual function.
- Certain medications are notorious libido blockers: antidepressants (SSRIs), birth control pills, beta-blockers, and benzodiazepines (Valium-type drugs). Talk to your provider about alternatives.

- Chronic illness, pain, and unresolved relationship issues all take a toll.
- The problem may be partner-specific. You may not be attracted to your current partner — but respond very differently to someone else. That’s worth acknowledging honestly.
- Gender identity questions may be relevant for some women and are worth exploring with a supportive provider or therapist.
- Being too busy is real. Intimacy gets crowded out. We find time to do the dishes — we need to find time for pleasure. Schedule it. Block it. Protect it.

Pain with Intercourse

- The most common causes of pain with intercourse are vaginal dryness and atrophy — often related to hormone changes.
- In most cases, this is treatable. If you have pain, see your doctor. Don’t simply endure it.

The Role of Hormones

- Hormone optimization is absolutely key. Testosterone is the single most important hormone for female sexual function — its effects on desire, arousal, and orgasm can be profound.
- Estrogen, progesterone, DHEA, and thyroid also play supporting roles.
- Work with a knowledgeable provider to have your hormones tested and optimized using bioidentical hormones where appropriate.
- Certain herbs may also support sexual function, including maca and ashwagandha.

The Pelvic Floor Connection

- Weakness in the pelvic floor muscles can reduce orgasmic response. A pelvic floor physical therapist can make a meaningful difference.
- Kegel exercises strengthen the pelvic floor and have been shown to improve orgasmic response. See the Kegel handout at McMinnMD.com under the documents section.
- Helpful tools include the Kegelmaster, the Elvie Pelvic Floor Trainer (which comes with a smartphone app), and weighted Kegel balls of varying sizes.
- See Dr. McMinn’s podcast on women’s pelvic floor health (“Pelvic Floor Health for Women”) at McMinnMD.com.

Preparation: Setting Yourself Up for Success

Get to Know Your Body

- Self-knowledge is the foundation of sexual fulfillment. You cannot optimize what you haven’t explored.
- Search “vagina anatomy diagram” and look at labeled images to familiarize yourself with your anatomy. Then, in a reclined position with a mirror and good lighting, explore your own body visually and with your hands.
- Locate your clitoris. This is critically important — the vast majority of women need direct clitoral stimulation to reach orgasm. The clitoris is located at the top front of the vaginal opening. Every woman’s clitoris is unique in size and sensitivity, so don’t worry if yours looks different from a diagram. See the “Clitoral Anatomy Diagram” in the documents section at McMinnMD.com.

- Use a vibrator during exploration — it can stimulate deeper nerve fibers that fingers alone cannot reach.
- See the document “Vibrator Types” in the documents section at McMinnMD.com.
- Use good-quality lubricant throughout your exploration. This matters.

Know Your Triggers

- Take out a piece of paper and write at the top: “What turns me on.” Make a list — be honest and specific. No holding back!
- Then make a second list: “What turns me off.”
- Now do something about both lists. Introduce more turn-ons into your life. Remove or reduce your turn-offs. This is an act of self-care.

Build Your Arousal Toolbox

- You must become aroused to maximize your orgasmic potential. Arousal doesn’t just happen — you create the conditions for it.
- Your “arousal toolbox” might include erotic books or short stories, erotic audio content, or visual erotica — whatever genuinely turns you on.
- If you’re a verbal person, explore erotic fiction or romance novels. If you’re more visual, find video content that resonates.
- For a curated list of resources, visit McMinnMD.com, go to the documents page, and download the “Sex Resources” document.
- Follow your own biorhythm. If you’re exhausted at night, try morning pleasure or an afternoon session when your energy is higher. Don’t force it into a time slot that sets you up to fail.

Consider Helpful Supplements and Medications

- There are over-the-counter warming arousal gels such as Promescent Female Arousal Gel that may enhance sensitivity and also serve as lubricant.
- Your medical provider can prescribe “scream cream” — a compounded topical formula that increases blood flow to the genital area, including the clitoris. Apply approximately 20 minutes before activity. Most compounding pharmacies carry various formulas for this.
- A testosterone gel or cream applied to the clitoris about 30 minutes before activity can be helpful for some women. This requires a prescription and is typically obtained through a compounding pharmacy.
- Although off-label for women, some studies suggest that medications like sildenafil (Viagra) and tadalafil (Cialis) may improve orgasmic response by increasing blood flow to the clitoris. Ask your provider.
- Work with your doctor to minimize any medications that may be blocking your sexual response — especially antidepressants, birth control pills, beta-blockers, and benzodiazepines.
- Conversely, some medications may improve libido, such as bupropion (Wellbutrin). Discuss this with your provider.
- A clitoral pump such as the Eros CTD can help draw blood into the clitoris, increasing sensitivity.

- Some well-designed studies have shown that cannabis can heighten arousal and facilitate orgasm in some women. If you live in a state where it is legal, this may be worth exploring — but be aware that too much can have the opposite effect.
- Some women find that a glass of wine before a session helps lower inhibitions. Use thoughtfully — too much alcohol blunts the sexual response.

The Self-Pleasure Session

Set the Stage

- Block out dedicated time — plan on about 45 minutes. Treat this as an appointment with yourself. In the early weeks, aim for 2–3 sessions per week. Frequency accelerates the learning curve.
- Choose a space where you feel completely safe. A locked door is non-negotiable — you need absolute confidence that you will not be interrupted or overheard.
- Create your environment. Comfortable temperature, soft or sexy music, lighting that feels good to you, a candle if that's your thing. Make it a space you want to be in and come back to.
- Remove all distractions: pets out of the room, phone on Do Not Disturb, the mental to-do list set aside. Full focus.
- A relaxing bath beforehand can help you transition out of your daily stress and into your body.

Activate Your Arousal

- Before you touch yourself, prime the pump. Open your arousal toolbox — read some erotica, watch something that turns you on, let your mind wander into fantasy. This is the arousal phase, and you cannot skip it. Orgasm follows arousal; it does not precede it.
- Let go of any thoughts about your partner's pleasure. This is not that session. This is yours.
- Tune out negative self-talk. “You're too fat.” “This is naughty.” “You should be doing something else.” None of that is welcome here. Gently redirect every negative thought and get back to sensation.

Explore and Pleasure Yourself

- Apply lubricant generously and begin exploring your body with your hands and a vibrator. A vibrator is not a shortcut or a crutch — it stimulates nerve endings that hands simply cannot reach effectively.
- Focus your attention on the areas that feel good. Follow the pleasure. There is no wrong direction.
- Nipple stimulation releases oxytocin and can be a surprisingly powerful arousal pathway for many women. Battery-operated vibrating nipple clamps are available from retailers like Adam and Eve and free up your hands for other exploration. Amazon also carries many sex toys these days, or you can find them at a local sex shop.
- The clitoris is your primary destination for most women. Give it patient, consistent, direct attention.
- Some women also find G-spot stimulation to be intensely pleasurable, especially combined with clitoral stimulation. The G-spot is located on the front wall of the vagina,

approximately 2 inches in. Use fingers, a dildo, a bullet vibrator, or a penetrating vibrator. Search “G-spot location” for diagrams.

- Try gently rocking your hips as pleasure builds. Relax into the sensation rather than chasing it.
- Breathe slowly and deeply. As arousal mounts, shift to more rapid, panting breaths. Allow yourself to make sound — moaning can actually amplify arousal for many women.
- Tighten and release your pelvic floor muscles intermittently. This can intensify sensation.
- Experiment with tensing other muscle groups — legs, arms, fists, pointed toes. Some women find this significantly intensifies orgasm.
- Try different positions. For instance, some women find face-down to be the most effective position for orgasm. Experiment without judgment.
- Closing your eyes may help you stay inward and focused on sensation rather than getting distracted by your environment. However, some women may find that watching an erotic video also helps.
- For more information on vibrators, visit McMinnMD.com, go to the documents page, and download the vibrator guide.

Stay Present — Let It Happen

- Once you begin, stay with it. Don’t fight it. Don’t analyze it. Don’t switch strategies every few minutes. Commit to the process and let it unfold.
- Be process-focused, not goal-focused. The goal is not orgasm — the goal is pleasure and self-knowledge. If orgasm happens, wonderful. If it doesn’t, you have still learned something real about yourself. Just enjoy the ride.
- Don’t try too hard. It’s counterproductive to force it. The paradox of orgasm is that it often happens when you stop chasing it.
- “I can do this” is your mantra. Be patient with yourself. For many women, this is a skill built over time, not a switch that flips the first session.
- Consistency is the key. Keep doing the sessions. Progress compounds. If orgasm doesn’t happen this time, that’s OK — maybe it will next time. In the meantime, you have given yourself pleasure and learned about your body.

After the Session

- Once you’ve developed this self-knowledge, you own it. You can take this confidence and body knowledge into your relationship with your partner — sharing what you’ve learned and guiding your partner toward what actually works for you.
- Online you can find orgasm coaches and pleasure coaches who specialize in this work. It makes sense to have an expert guide you. Search “orgasm coach” and read reviews carefully to find someone reputable.
- For additional reading, visit McMinnMD.com, download the “Sex Resources” document, and look under Nonfiction Books for titles like *The Orgasm Loop*.

The good news is that with a focused, personalized program, most women can become reliably orgasmic. The commitment you’ve made by reading this far is already a step in the right direction.

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