

# Incredibly Large Dildos

by Meghan Marzella

**WHY WE LIKE IT:** *Marzella examines every inch of this issue exploring in depth some penetrating questions before reaching a decisive climax. Snickers aside, this is a cogently written, well researched essay that deals with the problem of sex education and its relation to the porn industry. You won't be laughing at the end of it—you'll be thinking seriously about the place of porn in society and what we can do to better educate upcoming generations when it comes to sex and sexuality. Quote: When we see toys that deviate from the average looking sex organs, we get intimidated. We see porn stars successfully using these massive dildos and we feel like our vaginas are "different." We see 12 inch dildos in a sex shop and we think our penises are too small.'*

Incredibly Large Dildos

Meg Marzella

My boyfriend and I recently took a trip to our city's local "adult outlet." A sex shop: an honest to god sex shop where they checked our ID's at the door. We were let in and immediately overwhelmed by, easily, the most pornography either of us had ever seen in our entire lives. Being in the store was somewhat intoxicating, as if they were pumping laughing gas through the vents. So, we made our way stumbling clumsily through the aisles, giggling and bumping into each other. We were the only people in the store other than the clerk, so the red embarrassment in our cheeks drained quickly, only returning when we were brought face to face with an especially obscene toy or product.

We oohed and ahed through the packs of nylon rope and fuzzy, cheetah-print handcuffs and past the shelves of vibrating cock rings, which ran parallel to a rainbow of condoms and lube; like an x-rated, adult version of Candyland. We sauntered through racks and racks of gay porn films and school-girl themed lingerie. It was all very silly and exciting until we got to the back of the store. It is hard to call anything there especially salacious when the entire store is plastered with porn from wall to wall, but the jungle of dildos that stood before us was as obscene as it gets. We stood there, afraid to get any closer. "No way. Are there guys that are really that big?" my boyfriend whispered to the empty store, and I just shook my head, mouth still agape.

The dildo began humbly: a phallic shaped rock for the Neanderthals, bread smothered in olive oil for the Greeks, and eventually gorgeous, bronze dildos in the Han Dynasty. Today's modern silicone dildo was brought to us in the 1970's by Gosnell Duncan, a man who sustained an injury that left him paralyzed from the waist down and therefore in need of a penile substitute.

His injury began his advocacy within the disability movement. Though he originally invented the silicone dildo as a substitute for people with disabilities, the modern dildo has become popular with people of all abilities, consequently resulting in a \$15 billion industry.

But, dildos aren't the problem; they and other kinds of toys help all kinds of people and couples enjoy their sex lives and personal sexuality in different ways. I mean that's why I was in the store in the first place. The problem is some dildos. The some dildos that are absolutely fucking massive. The ones that I can't fathom possibly fitting into a human vagina. The ones that made my boyfriend say, "Man will never beat machine." The ones that made me think, should I be able to fit that up there?

The average vagina (vaginal canal to cervix) is approximately 7 inches deep, give or take. In the U.S, the average erect penis size is 5.1 inches long, with an average width of 1.5 inches. However, most sex toy providers sell dildos that are up to a foot or more in length and about 3 inches wide (think about half an inch wider than a can of soda). So, if the average vagina can only accommodate around 7 inches, why is [bettystoybox.com](http://bettystoybox.com) telling me that I can save \$34.06 on the Au Naturel Big Daddy 14-Inch Sensa Feel Chocolate Dildo? Which, in case you were wondering, weighs in at a whopping 2.02 pounds. Upon further research, I'm finding that there really isn't a limit to how much you can stretch the human rectum (if you do so in increments of course), which explains some of the demand for these incredibly large dildos. A study from multiple hospitals in Stockholm found that 40% of retained foreign rectal objects that required surgical removal were sex toys (the other 59% was made up of things like bottles, cans, candles, and other phallic shaped objects).

I find myself at a point now where I understand the demand for larger dildos. Are all of these toys necessarily useful vaginally? Not really. Are these toys realistic for myself? No, but that doesn't mean that they aren't right for someone else. And I think that this is bringing me to what really scared me about being brought face to face with dildos of such stature. When we see toys that deviate from the average looking sex organs, we get intimidated. We see porn stars successfully using these massive dildos and we feel like our vaginas are "different." We see 12 inch dildos in a sex shop and we think our penises are too small.

The problem here isn't the sex industry or even the porn industry as a whole. Pornography is more readily available today (to a generation of media-guzzling visual learners) than it ever has been. A study by the University of New Hampshire found that in 2008, 93% of male college students and 62% of female college students had watched online porn before they were 18. Today's generation of teenagers don't have to try to finagle their way into an adult shop, they just have to open up a computer and lock their bedroom door. And still, this isn't the problem. There are many porn producers and kink communities that adult film stars have specified to be especially ethical with momentous importance being placed on consent and safety at all times. The problem is finding that porn. The problem is that teenagers are being exposed to unethical and unrealistic porn without their knowledge.

They're watching "barely-legal-lesbians-love-dick-all-girls-squirt" sex scenes where consent and safety aren't explicitly specified, where actors are performing sex acts that a lot of people aren't capable of, and where unattainable standards are constantly being presented. "Q.," a teenager

who was interviewed for The New York Times article, “What Teenagers Are Learning From Online Porn,” sums up the concept perfectly: “You are looking at an adult...The guys are built and dominant and have a big penis, and they last a long time. And if you don’t do it like the guys in porn, you fear she’s not going to like you.” The type of porn that teenagers are finding is leaving them to make assumptions about how they’re supposed to have sex before they are even ready to do so; assumptions like not having to ask to perform certain sex acts, that all men or women like sex in a certain way and it doesn’t need to be clarified, and that the sex they’re seeing in porn is what sex is supposed to be. Assumptions like if a porn star can fit this incredibly large dildo inside her, I should be able to too. This is leading to an assortment of problems. They can absolutely range in seriousness; the problem can be as surface as acting the wrong way toward a potential sexual partner because you thought that’s what they wanted, or as complex and serious as feeling pressured into sex or certain sex acts that you aren’t comfortable with.

As adults, we’re able to take a step back from the situation, even in the heat of the moment, and think, Is my partner comfortable with this? Is this something that both of us are enjoying? I want to try a particular sex act, let me have an open conversation with my partner to see how they feel about it. Teenagers can’t yet think like this. All they’re learning of consent in health or sex education (if they’re lucky enough to have it), is that saying yes to sex means yes and saying no to sex means no. Not, yes means yes to some things but if there’s anything specific I would like to try I should make sure my partner is comfortable with it. They watch porn and they’re curious and they want to experiment. That’s fine when they’re learning by an example of affirmative consent. But this isn’t the case. Though (most of the time) porn films are made by consenting adults, they don’t show the actors asking, “Can I kiss you?” or “Would you be comfortable with trying this?” or “Can I put a thumb in your ass?” They don’t often show the actors putting a condom on and half the time they don’t even show them having a goddamn conversation first.

I was a teenager once too, not knowing if a boy would like me if I gave him a bad blowjob and thinking my high school boyfriend might dump me if I didn’t put out. In the second grade, a girl named Becky took two stuffed animals and laid them on top of each other and told me, “That’s what sex is.” I remember actually having nightmares about my parents finding out that I “knew” what sex was, because I knew it was one of those things I wasn’t supposed to know. I remember thinking I was a badass when I lost my virginity. I remember telling myself that sex is okay. I’m an incredibly sex-positive person; safe, consensual sex is a perfectly normal, healthy part of life. But it is so delicate, so influenceable. I believed Becky that day in second grade that sex was two stuffed animals stacked on top of each other. The same way that I’m sure young teenage boys and girls across the world are believing that the porn they find online is what sex is supposed to be.

We like to deny the fact that we are influenced by what we see others doing. We like to think that everything we do is a novelty of our minds. But we cannot sit idly by when an impressionable demographic is getting such little and such bare-bones sex education, while being exposed to a world of unrealistic online porn. My partner and I made this trip to the sex shop because we both wanted to. We are still taking time to learn about one another's sexual preferences; the things we like and don't like. We are old enough now to understand that porn isn't an indication of the kind of sex we should be having; that there is good (real) porn and that

there is exploitive porn. An empty sex shop on a Sunday is a wonderful place to be when you're there with an open mind, when you know the limits and boundaries of your partner, when you know the difference between sex and porn.

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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *This essay was originally written in my Creative Nonfiction class for the wonderfully supportive Katie Marks. My classmates and I were prompted to write a piece centered around a specific item. Had my recent trip to the sex shop not been so prominent in my memory, I'm not sure what would have become of the prompt. The sex shop in my college town is almost always void of shoppers, but definitely full of the most absurdly sized dildos imaginable. It was an intimidating sight that made me stop and think about how a sight like that could leave an impression on a younger person with a less realistic understanding of healthy, comfortable sex. My sex education in school was minimal, but it was more than so many young people get.*

*When teenagers don't get a competent education on sex, they will find a way to learn themselves. And I hate to break it to you, but porn is not proper or realistic sex ed. Mom, Dad, if you ever find this essay please don't bring it up at family dinner.*

**BIO:** *Meg Marzella is an undergraduate student studying writing at Ithaca College in Upstate New York. She is an editor for one of the college's premier literary magazines and spends her time writing saucy and niche personal essays and creative nonfiction.*