

# Why Women Want to Have Sex

Women have sex for numerous reasons, including love, pleasure, jealousy, loneliness, physical attraction, boredom, curing a headache and even duty.

These reasons are not arbitrary and most come with an evolutionary explanation. That's the word from psychologists Cindy Meston and David Buss, both professors at the University of Texas at Austin, who wrote the book "Why Women Have Sex." During a three-year study period, Meston and Buss interviewed 1,006 women from 46 states, eight Canadian provinces and three European countries, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Israel and China. Each participant was asked if she had ever had sex for any of 237 reasons. And while all 237 reasons represent why women seek sex, the most surprising finding is how dramatically the sexual experience influences a woman's self-esteem. "Some sexual experiences that women in our study reported just had devastating effects and long-lasting negative effects on their feelings of self-worth," Buss explained to CNN. "But then for others, their sexual experiences provided the soaring height of euphoria and made them feel alive and vibrant.

"Among younger women in their 20s, a quiet sexual revolution is taking place. Forget the age-old stereotype that they should be more chaste than men. "Many of the women were having sex purely because they wanted the experience, they wanted the adventure, they wanted to see what it was like to be with men of different ethnicities," Meston told CNN. "Some women said they wanted more notches on the belt. They simply wanted to get rid of their virginity.

"Meston and Buss say there are more factors governing a woman's sex drive than a man's. Here are some of the differences:

The factors that make men attractive to women, such as personality, self-confidence and status, are less important to men when they are choosing a woman for sex.

Women are more selective in choosing a sex partner than are men. They consistently show preferences for men with symmetrical bodies, which is a subtle sign of genetic fitness and status.

"Kissing is an emotional litmus test," the authors write in the book. Translation: While men will have sex without kissing, it is a rare woman who will do the same.

Sexual arousal is more complicated for women than for men.

Sex can ease the pain of menstrual cramps and headaches.

84 percent of wives, compared to 64 percent of husbands, have had sex out of a sense of duty.

