

4 Ways to Feel More Intimate with Your Partner

There are so many reasons why we enjoy having a romantic partner to share our lives with. But at times, we may take each other for granted and forget to take the time to connect with the person we love. The physical bond we share with our partners (and no, we aren't just talking about sex!) is precious and irreplaceable. How to nurture it? Keep these four ideas close to hand...

The art of the massage

Who doesn't love a massage? Science continues to discover benefit after benefit for this nurturing practice: it stimulates the immune system, reduces stress hormones, decreases anxiety, and improves the quality of our sleep.

A massage between couples can be as tame as a clothed shoulder rub, or something much more involved and sensual. Whatever option you choose, treating each other to a massage is likely to increase trust, induce relaxation, and create feelings of deep enjoyment. There are many books and resources out there for couples who want to learn how to massage each other more effectively, but one great one we found is [Melt: Massage for Couples](http://couplesmassagecourses.com/) (<http://couplesmassagecourses.com/>).

The daily cuddle

Stereotypical views of men and women hold that men are largely interested in getting down to the business of sex, while women are more interested in cuddling and foreplay. Research reveals a more complicated picture.

In a study of over 1000 long-term couples around the world, researchers actually found that cuddling and nonsexual affection were more crucial to *men* than to women when it came to relationship satisfaction. As for women, this kind of touching seemed to affect how *sexually* satisfied they were. So as a matter of fact, both men and women need cuddling, though not exactly for the reasons people commonly think.

From a scientific point of view, we know that close physical contact with loved ones releases the bonding hormone called oxytocin, which also relaxes us and makes us feel loving. Who doesn't need more of that? Spending time being physically close to your partner, whether it's cuddling up on the couch, holding hands and sitting close together at a movie, relaxing on a picnic blanket outside, or one of a thousand other options, is a no-brainer.

The make-out session

When was the last time you and your fiancé had a good old-fashioned smooching session? Is now a good time to start?

As we get comfortable in a relationship, we may not engage in quite as much kissing as we once did, back when things were new. But consider the many benefits. In one study, couples who were "assigned" to kiss more often for six weeks felt less stressed and more satisfied with their relationships. Kissing also makes us feel really great, sending feel-good hormones and chemicals coursing through our bodies. By the way, scientists also believe that kissing can fight cavities, burn calories, and increase our resistance to disease. Pucker up!

The post-sex spoon

If you and your partner are having sex, don't forget the post-coital spooning session. Research tells us that couples who take time to cuddle and spend time being close after sex are more satisfied in the bedroom and with their relationships. (This included talking intimately with each other as well as snuggling, by the way.) Experts believe that the moments after sex are a sort of unique moment when it's easy to amp up our relationships. Don't miss out.

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