

## Great Sex Without Intercourse: A Creative Alternative For Couples Over 40

By Michael Castleman

We live in a sexual culture focused on intercourse. To many Americans “sex,” *means* intercourse—with the man able to raise and maintain a firm erection and the woman’s vagina naturally well-lubricated enough for comfortable accommodation of the man’s erection. Pornography, the leading source of sex education, is fixated on huge, rock-hard erections and the in-and-out of intercourse. Viagra and the other erection medications currently have sales of \$2.5 billion a year.

There’s nothing wrong with intercourse—assuming that it’s consensual and well-lubricated, and that men understand that only about 25 percent of women are consistently orgasmic during it. But our culture fixation on sex-means-intercourse leaves many men and couples over age 40 feeling inadequate, and frustrated. Even with erection drugs, a considerable proportion of men over 40 have trouble raising erections persistent enough and firm enough to allow vaginal intercourse.

### **The New Sexual Frontier for Older Couples: Erotic Fulfillment Without Intercourse**

Fortunately, there’s an erotically fulfilling alternative that offers older couples relief from the pressures and frustrations of intercourse-dominated sex—lovemaking *without* intercourse.

Sex without intercourse requires both the man and woman to make adjustments—and at first, many couples find them disconcerting. But sex without intercourse allows lovers over 40 to enjoy hot, fulfilling lovemaking for the rest of their lives no matter how long they live.

It’s actually quite easy to enjoy great sex without intercourse. As far as non-genital sensual play is concerned, great sex minus intercourse involves the same leisurely, playful, whole-body touching, caressing, and massage that sexuality authorities recommend to lovers of all ages. But genitally, it leaves vaginal intercourse behind,

and focuses instead on all the *other* ways couples can enjoy genital sex: hand massage (your own hand and/or your lover's), oral sex, and sex toys, particularly penis sleeves for men, and dildos and vibrators for women.

For many couples, great sex without intercourse means experimenting with new approaches to mutual pleasure. This novelty can feel strange at first. But novelty is a key element in sexual zing. In other words, if you incorporate new approaches you both enjoy, lovemaking without intercourse can feel hotter than ever.

### **Age-Related Sexual Changes: Men and Women Are Out of Synch**

Typically, after 45 sex becomes more challenging for men than women. Young men are generally eager for sex. They're often so consumed with sexual energy that young men are often said to have "only one thing on their minds." While erection problems are possible in young men (usually the result of illness or major life stresses), most young men raise erections easily. Their main problem is postponing ejaculation.

Meanwhile, women tend to have their most challenging sex problems before age 30. Young women often feel ambivalent about sex, on the one hand, curious about it and perhaps eager to experience it, but on the other, conflicted about the many ways society judges them harshly for being sexual. If they're too reluctant, they're "prudes." If they're too eager, they're "tramps" or "sluts" and they become saddled with "bad reputations." Complicating matters, there's no clear definition of what it means to be "too" reluctant or "too" eager.

Many young women also have difficulty becoming sexually aroused, and having orgasms. Our culture exhorts women to be *desirable*. Preoccupied with the challenges of appearing attractive, many young women don't pay much attention to their own *desire*. Fortunately, as the years pass, most women become more comfortable with who they are sexually, and learn to enjoy lovemaking.

Fast-forward to the years after 40. Women face a few menopausal sexual issues, notably, vaginal dryness and for most, some decline in libido. In the vast majority of cases, dryness can be eliminated fairly easily with the help of a sexual lubricant. And while desire usually diminishes in the early years of menopause, it often rebounds to some extent by 60. Most post-menopausal women are still capable of enjoying sex and don't want to see lovemaking disappear from their lives and relationships.

Meanwhile, as men grow older, they face more daunting sexual issues. Erection capacity declines. Starting around 40, some men find they can no longer raise firm, or even partial erections simply by imagining sexual scenes. This becomes a problem for most men after 50.

In addition, as time passes, it takes increasing amounts of manual and/or oral stimulation for older men to raise erections and maintain them long enough to have intercourse—if they are able to have intercourse at all. Many men find these changes very upsetting. They remember decades of trying to keep erections down. Suddenly, they have trouble getting them up. They recall decades when just about anything could get them sexually aroused. But after 40 or 50, quite often even an alluring, willing lover who suggests having sex may not arouse them.

This is totally normal. As men age, the nervous system loses some of its sensitivity to sexual stimulation. Touch that gave men firm erections at 22 might not do much for them at 59. And even in healthy men largely free of the deposits that limit blood flow through the arteries and cause heart disease and most strokes, older arteries still narrow somewhat and less blood flows into the penis. As a result, it becomes more difficult to raise and maintain firm erections.

Erection decline can be postponed with a healthy lifestyle (more fruits and vegetables, less meat and cheese, regular exercise, weight control, and limiting alcohol), and ameliorated to some extent with erection medication. But as the years pass, many men find that erection capacity declines despite a healthy lifestyle, and that they need larger doses of the drugs to gain any benefit. At some point—age 65 or 70 or 75—even high-dose erection drugs may not help much any more.

As erection function declines, some men decide they've reached the end of their sexual rope. Raised in our intercourse-focused culture, they can't imagine sex without erection, without intercourse.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Sex can still be fun and fulfilling even when intercourse is difficult or impossible. Surveys of men who lose erection capacity— young men involved in serious motorcycle accidents and older men who have experienced erection loss because of prostate cancer surgery—show that it can take several years for men to adjust to sex without intercourse. But over time, most men who are open to sexual alternatives learn they can still enjoy sexual pleasure without erections and without intercourse. Eventually they learn to enjoy lovemaking without genital union. As time passes, they often say they feel as sexually satisfied as they did when they had erections and intercourse.

## Great Sex Without Intercourse—For Men

Hand-massage of the penis is a major part of sex without intercourse. Many men over 40 find that they can raise their firmest erections through masturbation. But they often find that being stroked by their lover doesn't have the same effect. One option is for the man to show the woman how he likes to be stroked by demonstrating it for her. If a man has never masturbated in the presence of a lover, this can feel awkward for both of them. It's an adjustment to masturbate before an audience. But self-stimulation in front of a lover serves an important function. It *demonstrates* clearly which strokes turn her man on, and helps her provide the most stimulating caresses. It also deepens the couple's intimacy. Intimacy involves self-revelation. What's more self-revealing than showing a lover how you enjoy sex with yourself? Once the woman knows exactly what her man finds most arousing, she can provide what he finds most pleasing. She can also enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that she's giving him what he truly wants.

Fellatio is also a major component of great sex without intercourse. Forget the telephone poles women suck in porn. The fact is that men can enjoy considerable pleasure from having their penises sucked even if they are only partially erect or even flaccid.

Contrary to popular mythology, a firm erection is *not* necessary for ejaculation and orgasm. It's quite possible to ejaculate with a partial erection or no erection—if the man receives sufficient stimulation, for example, fellatio with one of the woman's hands stroking the shaft of the penis while the other gently fondles his scrotum.

Couples engaged in non-intercourse lovemaking might also want to try penis sleeves, artificial vaginas or mouths that, when lubricated, feel remarkably close to the real thing. A man whose erections are not firm or persistent enough for real vaginal intercourse may be able to slip his penis into a sleeve. Penis sleeves can be easily incorporated into partner lovemaking. Sex toy marketers sell sleeves. Visit the sex toy store affiliated with this site, [mypleasure.com](http://mypleasure.com).

## Great Sex Without Intercourse—For Women

Hand massage of the vulva and clitoris and cunnilingus are certainly available to couples with men who can't manage intercourse. In fact, at every age, women are much more likely to be orgasmic from hand massage and/or oral sex than from intercourse. Only 25 percent of women are reliably orgasmic during intercourse. Three-quarters of women of all ages *need* direct clitoral stimulation to experience orgasm.

Meanwhile, for women who enjoy feeling filled up, dildos and vibrators can be a godsend when the man has difficulty with erection. The woman can use these toys on herself with the man watching or gently holding and caressing her. Or the man can insert the toys. Most women prefer to have the toy and the vagina well lubricated before slow, gentle insertion. Or the man might use a strap-on dildo for more of an intercourse feel. Sex toy marketers offer dildos, vibrators, and strap-ons. Visit [mypleasure.com](http://mypleasure.com).

### **Great Sex for Life**

For older couples whose sex lives have been dominated by intercourse for decades, it can be a challenge to discover the joys of great sex without intercourse. The transition requires adjustments by both lovers that take some getting used to. But lovemaking without intercourse allows older lovers to remain sexual and enjoy erotic, mutually fulfilling lovemaking for the rest of their lives—even if they live to 100.

For individualized help coping with age-related sexual changes, consult a sex therapist. To find one near you, visit [aasect.org](http://aasect.org), the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists, or [sstarnet.org](http://sstarnet.org), the Society for Sex Therapy and Research.