

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid On average, Americans claim to spend 19.7 minutes on foreplay prior to sex. Worldwide, the UK tops the list with 22.5 minutes – so much for “No sex please, we’re British.” Source: 2004 Durex Global Sex Survey

Q. What is the average duration of intercourse – from entering the vagina to ejaculation – for men? I do not think I suffer from premature ejaculation, but have been bothered by not lasting very long. Does masturbating have anything to do with this?

A. The average amount of time spent during sex will vary widely depending on who you believe, even among credible sources. Some research cites a length of time between 3 and 10 minutes, others are anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour, and then there are those who claim the timeframe is much lower, at around 2 minutes. The difficulty in getting consistent information is that the time interval is not always clearly defined (e.g. does foreplay count?), or that people have trouble remembering or being objective about just how long things took. Plus, a societal average may not necessarily mean that much in the end, even if it could be determined. Couples have different preferences that work for them, and moods and circumstances may allow for more or less time depending on the occasion.

Although premature ejaculation is thought to affect up to a third of men under the age of 25, it usually goes away with time, experience, and achieving a level of comfort with sex and your partner. To help prolong sex try slowing down the pace, experimenting with different positions and taking deep, relaxed breaths. Focus on extending foreplay through kissing and massage, which can excite your partner without intercourse.

Contrary to persistent myths, masturbation is not a cause of premature ejaculation. In fact, it's the other way around: masturbating a few hours before sex is a good way to prolong ejaculation later on. The real causes of premature ejaculation are often fear and anxiety about sexual performance. Ironically, this stems from the belief that says men should be able have sex endlessly. Pure feats of endurance have little to do with sex itself, and most women do not find such behavior alluring anyway. After all, that's why sport has given us the extreme marathon, the cricket match and televised golf.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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