Q. What is the best way to perform cunnilingus? I’ve heard about different techniques, but I’m still unsure on how to go about doing it, and I’m pretty sure there’s a bit more to it than just going down and hoping everything’s going to turn out okay.

A. As you suspect, when it comes to having (and giving) a pleasurable sexual experience, the “hope” method is frequently doomed to failure. Instead, equip yourself with some basic information provided below.

Cunnilingus (oral sex) involves using your mouth and tongue to stimulate your female partner’s genitals (“fellatio” is oral sex performed on a male). If you are not already familiar with the female genitalia, studying up might give you an advantage. Scarleteen – Sex Education for the Real World (<www.scarleteen.com>) offers excellent information about sex and bodies. Click on “Skin Deep” and then “Pink Parts: Female Sexual Anatomy” for a detailed de-briefing of female genitalia (click on “Man’s Best Friend: Male Sexual Anatomy” for details on male genitalia).

To truly find out how to perform the best cunnilingus, go straight to the source – your partner. Only she will know the gradual nuances of what feels good, and where, and how. Don’t be afraid to ask her – both before and during cunnilingus – what she likes. And, pay attention to her bodily and verbal signals as you try new maneuvers.

Q. What is the best way to hold back an orgasm for a guy? My girl keeps complaining about “how short our time is”, and I want to give her what she wants.

A. The “best way” is highly individual. Condoms can do the trick for some men by decreasing sensitivity. Slowing down, changing positions, or stopping and reverting to sexual play other than intercourse helps others.

If your girlfriend’s concern is that she doesn’t get a chance to orgasm during intercourse, consider employing other strategies to help her. Many women find it difficult to orgasm during vaginal intercourse, but can readily do so through oral sex, manual stimulation, masturbation, etc. To slow down your orgasm and give her more of the satisfaction she craves, devote more time to foreplay before moving on to actual intercourse.