

# sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

**factoid** 41% of UA students who are single or dating have not had sex in the last school year. (2005 Health & Wellness Survey, n=2036)

**Q.** I think that I enjoy sex less when I'm under stress, which seems to have negative repercussions. I usually feel tired or more anxious about the stress I was trying to avoid in the first place, and end up functioning worse. Is this normal?

**A.** Although other sexual health issues may grab more headlines, the effect of stress on sex is a very common concern that almost everyone will have to face at some point. As an unavoidable fact of life, stress takes a toll on us both emotionally and physically. And while it's far from the only thing stress affects, few things are as uniquely sensitive to our emotional and physical balance as sex.

We all know that some amount of stress is normal, and is often necessary for us to be at our best. But when stress begins to pile up, it can create a negative cycle that takes away our desire for sex as well as the enjoyment we derive from it. In this cycle, anxiety from other areas negatively impacts our sex lives, and feeling "sexless" in turn reinforces that anxiety. To further compound the issue, frustrations about sexual performance in the midst of this stress tends to make matters worse.

The best way to deal with these concerns is to target the sources of stress, instead of hoping that sex itself might serve as a way out. Be honest with the fact that you don't feel sexual at the moment – by effectively addressing the factors that create stress, you will find that those emotions will come back in due time.

Keep in mind that remedies for stress are all around. Adequate sleep, plenty of exercise, a healthy diet and time management are all good places to start. If relationship or family matters are contributing to stress, or if you just want someone to talk to, a counselor can help. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Campus Health has a highly trained staff and can be reached at 621-3334.

Have a question? Send it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

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