

Spicing up Sex this Valentine's Day *Relate's top tips for revitalising our sex lives*

As Valentine's Day approaches and our love and sex lives are put in the spotlight, it can be all too easy to assume that everyone is madly in love and having passionate sex all year round – when the reality may in fact be very different. For many couples, especially those in long term relationships, sex can sometimes leave something to be desired. So Relate Cambridge is encouraging couples to try a few new things and enjoy reaping the rewards.

Relate counsellor Elaine Taylor said: "Sex is an important part of a relationship for many people, but the reality is that sometimes it gets a little dull. Day to day responsibilities can take their toll, with sex pushed to the bottom of the list. But the good news is that sex lives can almost always be revitalised – and it's worth the effort in the end!"

"Sex is about intimacy and it can be just as meaningful to hold hands, give each other a massage, or just cuddle together. If sex has fallen off the map in your relationship, it can feel impossible to get back there, so take it slow, start with little steps and don't put pressure on yourselves to do anything more than just setting aside time to really be with each other."

Here are Elaine's top five tips for spicing up sex this Valentine's Day and all year round:

- **Talk first, touch later.** If sex has become stale, it can be difficult to initiate. So get out of the bedroom and talk to each other in a non-pressured environment. Talk about what you like, what you don't, and what you'd like to try. That way, you know what to do when you move into the bedroom.
- **Don't always go 'all the way'.** Sometimes people resist kissing and touching because they are worried it will lead to sex and they're not sure they'll be 'up for it.' Get into the habit of enjoying each other without going all the way. Enjoy a passionate kiss before you go to work, or a sensual massage on a Friday night – it's all about reducing the pressure.
- **Initiate differently.** One of the trickiest things about sex can be how to get in the mood. If your general starting point is "how about it then?" you might want to mix things up a little. Start with a massage, or some fizz and chocolates in the bath. Maybe choose and watch a sexy film together, or tell each other about your fantasies.
- **Change the scenery.** It's an old favourite, but for many couples this really helps to spice things up. If you've been having sex in the same place for ages, a change of scene can make you feel less inhibited and a bit more playful. If the garden shed doesn't get you going (it is a little chilly at the moment), then opt for the sofa or the bathroom.
- **Anticipation, enjoyment, recollection.** Sex doesn't just have to be fun while you're doing it. Build anticipation beforehand by talking about your plans, or sending some sexy messages. And once you're done, enjoy the recollection of it by talking about what you liked with your partner.

Relate Cambridge provides information, advice and counselling on all aspects of relationships, including sex. For more information, go to www.relatecambridge.org.uk or call us on 01223 357 424.