

|Cosmo talks sex|

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Is porn making you both bad in bed?



IF PORN IS THE TICKING TIME
HERE'S HOW TO RECLAIM THE

BOMB IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP,
LOVE LIFE YOU DESERVE





Do you need to re-educate your man in bed?

70%
of men aged 18-34 use internet porn at least once a month.

68%
of couples who used cyber-sex said it had caused one or both of them to lose interest in real sex.

10%
of all adults admit having an internet sex addiction – nearly a third of these are women.

28%
of visitors to porn websites are female.

50%
of porn users report at least one negative consequence of their use.

Around
£1,930
a second is spent on online porn.

Crushing confidence

Alongside having their libidos quashed, experts also believe men suffer performance anxiety because of the 'impressive' feats they see in porn (usually with intimidatingly massive members). But it's not just men whose confidence is being compromised. Over half of the women in our survey** claimed porn had made them feel insecure about their bodies. Plastic boobs, tidy labia and a lack of pubic hair means most professional porn bears little relation to the wobbly reality of real-life sex.

And one shocking fact uncovered by research is that boys now first see porn, on average, at the age of 10, which suggests that they're growing up with a distorted view of what real women look like.

"More and more young people (girls as well as boys) are learning about sex through porn, and it's having a devastating effect on their perception of themselves and their bodies," says psychosexual therapist Karen Lobb-Rossini. "As a result, there's been an increase in women requesting a labiaplasty and suffering from body dysmorphic disorders."

Sexual saboteur

Women are also expected to perform acrobatics in the bedroom by men who use porn as their sexual touchstone. Despite the best efforts of websites like Makelovenotporn.com to highlight the difference between 'porn world' and 'real life' ("Things are pretty straightforward in the world of hardcore. Real live sex, not so much," it says), two thirds of the experts we surveyed agreed that women are under pressure to perform like porn stars. And in many cases this means sex that focuses on the man's pleasure, and performing acts that are uncomfortable (eg, anal penetration) and sometimes

dangerous. "I see young men who are disappointed by first-time sex because it's not what they expected," Karen says. "Young women are also seeking help because they're not enjoying sexual pleasure. Kissing and cuddling can be viewed as unusual, and porn-style sex with no intimacy as the norm."

Even more worryingly, 8% of you say you've felt pressured into doing

something a partner has seen in porn. "When I started dating again after a long-term relationship, I was surprised by what men expected in bed," says Alice*, 34. "My ex wasn't into porn, but some of the men I've slept with since have taken it for granted that I'll be into things that, presumably, they've seen in explicit films."

"One guy even said my boobs looked like a porn star's and took it as a personal affront when I refused anal sex. We split when he secretly tried to film us on his phone having sex. When I challenged him, he just said, 'I knew you'd say no. I wondered if porn encouraged him to expect certain things from women.'"

The future of porn

Despite this already-grim picture, experts say things are likely to get worse. "Some young men find approaching women terrifying," says Carol. "They're used to chatting online, and even talking sex, before they've met, so approaching a woman 'cold' feels alien. And as technology advances, this inability to connect face-to-face could be a real issue."

The latest sex-tech innovation is the Mojawijo vibrator, which comprises two parts – for him and her – that can be connected to a Nintendo Wii remote control. Using Skype, couples can have virtual sex. If it takes off, it could make human interaction even less necessary for porn fans to get their kicks.

So is there a way back if he's become desensitised to sex that doesn't involve a modem? "It is possible to reconnect," Carol says. "But it isn't always easy, as it's often sexual boredom and perhaps a fear of real intimacy that turns people to porn in the first place."

The fear of coming across as prudish stops many women putting their foot down. But if it's becoming a problem in your relationship, it might be time to turn off his computer and ask him to interact – face-to-face. ♦



First off, we're not prudes or killjoys – we just want what's best for women. And Cosmo is increasingly concerned about the effect porn is having on women and men's sex lives. We've touched on the subject before, and you've told us how porn is changing the way you relate to your man. A growing number said you felt under pressure to perform acts you were uncomfortable with, and that the anatomy of female porn stars left you questioning your own body image. We even heard that some men are less interested in sex when in a relationship.

So we asked 68 top sex and relationship therapists what they thought was happening. Shockingly, 86% agreed that the use of porn has had a negative effect on our relationships, with over 90% seeing an increase in relationship problems due to porn in recent years. Psychosexual therapist Carol

Featherstone says, "Traditionally, it's women who are sometimes 'not in the mood'; but, thanks to porn, I'm seeing more men suffering from delayed ejaculation or erectile dysfunction. The client might have started with soft porn, which escalated into more hardcore material – to the point where he's not stimulated by his partner, or has to fantasise about porn to orgasm."

"Since specialising in sex addiction five years ago, I've realised it's becoming a big problem. The men I see (and the majority are men) aren't letches; far from it. But porn can affect their ability to form relationships with real women, rather than those on their laptop."

Easy access

Long gone are the days when men got their first taste of porn by stealing a look at saucy magazines. Today, thousands of videos are uploaded to porn sites daily. Most of them show women having extreme sex,

devoid of intimacy so penetration can be easily captured close-up. As a result, 'vanilla' sex is becoming less desirable, while porn addiction – once nearly unheard of – is on the increase.

"Porn ruined my first major relationship," says Ella*, 24. "He said he never watched porn, and I didn't question that. But he consistently rejected me to go and lock himself in a room, making excuses such as having work to do. I eventually stumbled across graphic pictures saved on his computer while I was writing an essay. When I confronted him about it, he confessed to hiding a porn addiction and deliberately turning me down to look at it. I walked out after three years together."

"Fortunately he got psychotherapy after we split and, as far as I know, he's back on track. But I'd never take him back – there's no trust there now."

A study on porn failed to find a single man in his 20s who hadn't seen any

BY ROSE NULLENDER. PHOTOGRAPHS: ANTONIO PETRONZO. HAIR AND MAKEUP: ROSSINI DONAGHY. *THESE NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED. **SURVEY OF 68 TOP SEX AND RELATIONSHIP THERAPISTS AND 56 MEN UNDERSTANDING AND ADDICTION AND THOSE WHO WANT TO HELP THEM BY PAULA WALL (09 89 9011 0000).

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ONLINE

Has porn had a good or bad effect on your sex life? Tell us at cosmo.mail@hearst.co.uk