



Dear Sex Counselor,

I'm transmasculine. Do you have suggestions for self-pleasuring that I might try?

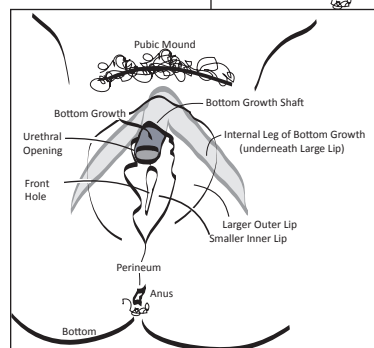
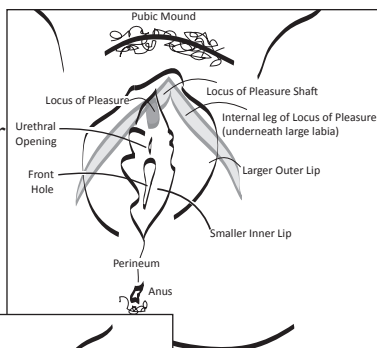
Why Self-Pleasure?

Self-pleasure, also known as masturbation, specifically refers to touching yourself sexually in a way that feels good. There is no one right way to self-pleasure, and as long as it doesn't hurt, there's no wrong way either. You can do it alone, with a friend, or as part of sex play with a partner. Masturbating for your own pleasure, on your own terms, is a way to deepen your relationship with your body and mind and learn more about your sexual response and preferences after beginning T.

Besides feeling good, self-pleasure strengthens your pelvic floor muscles, revitalizes genital tissues, fights insomnia, reduces depression, and releases emotional tension and stress. Self-pleasure helps you learn to play with your arousal level and influence when you have an orgasm. If you play sexually with others, this can make partner sex more enjoyable and last longer. Self-pleasure can also serve as a healthy, risk-free sexual outlet when a partner is tired, ill, or otherwise unavailable. It is also a great way to take the edge off of what many people experience as a sharp increase in libido/sexual desire after beginning T.

On Your Mark...

Take a tour of your anatomy:



Get Set...

Here are some things to think about before diving in:

Give yourself permission to play and experiment.

This is about exploring and discovering what feels good, not crossing a finish line as fast as possible. You might enjoy trying that too, but don't forget to enjoy the scenery along the way.

To lube or not to lube.

T or not, lube keeps things slippery, reduces friction, and intensifies sensation. Some people love lube, some don't, but enough like it to make it worth a try. Experiment and find the right amount and type for you. Use too little and you might find yourself getting sore from too much rubbing, while too much can reduce pleasurable friction and decrease sensation.

T: It is very common for people taking T to experience **exterior genital and front hole dryness** and a decrease in flexibility and plumpness (called atrophy) of the front hole walls as well as the exterior genitals. T reduces blood flow to the genitals, so people on T often don't produce as much of their own lubrication as they did pre-T. Lube can be especially helpful to reduce unpleasant friction and dryness during self-pleasure and partner play.

What to use for lube? You can use:

- **Saliva**, although you might need a lot since it dries out quickly, and is not very slick.
- **Water-based** lubricants can soak in quickly depending on how dry your skin is and can get sticky after awhile; just add some saliva or water and they'll become slick again.
- **Silicone** lubes are more expensive, but a little goes a long way and they hold up well even under water. Plus, silicone doesn't absorb into the skin, so no matter how dry you are. Silicone won't dry up or get tacky.

A warning: very few silicone lubes are safe for use with silicone or soft, squishy toys. If toys factor into your play, it is best to stick with a water-based or water-based-and-silicone-hybrid lubricant. Another solution is to cover and protect any toys you plan to use with an unlubricated condom and apply a condom-compatible silicone lube to the outside of the condom.

Go!!!

Erotic inspiration begins in your mind. Turn up the heat by fantasizing while focusing on the sensations you're creating in your body. Let your mind wander to whatever you find sexually exciting, and let your hands

roam around your body. If you don't want to fantasize, focus on the sensations of your hands touching your skin. Nobody ever needs to know what thoughts turn you on. Using fantasy can be especially important to people undergoing transition as they navigate shifting and/or expanding sexual attractions and interests. Fantasies are a completely safe, solitary place for you to explore what arouses and excites you. You can think about a totally different storyline every time, or you can stick with a favorite scenario that works for you. Your fantasy can be quite vague, or specific and explicit right down to the last detail; it's up to you. Try moving your body in the ways you would be moving in your fantasy for a dose of realism. Other ways to fuel your imagination include looking at erotic pictures, reading erotic stories, or watching erotic movies.

Play with your sensitive spots: your face, neck, chest, belly, thighs, anus, lips, fingers, toes...and any other part of your body that likes touch. Squeeze, rub, brush or tickle your skin. (If you had top surgery, chances are good that you will no longer have any sensation in your nipples. This is not to say that nipple or chest stimulation can't still be incorporated into self-pleasure.)

When you're ready, bring your focus (and your hands) to your genital area, and explore the sensation of touching there. See the box (flip page) for specific genital techniques.

Once you find a kind of touch you really enjoy, **stick with it for a while**, and see how your body responds. Let yourself play this way for as long as you like. Experiment with letting your arousal build, then giving yourself a little rest. This brief pause allows your arousal to lessen a bit prolonging the process. The longer you spend on the buildup to orgasm, the more sensitive and responsive your body will become. Once you are able to control your arousal level by starting and stopping, or by changing the speed and intensity of stimulation, your partner play can last as long as you (and your partners) find pleasurable.

Orgasmic Experiences

As you continue self-pleasuring, you may experience an orgasm. For some people, this will happen after just a few minutes of pleasuring; for others it takes longer. When you approach orgasm, you are likely to experience a buildup of pleasurable sensations, increasing

continued next page

A note on language:

The language around trans and gender non-conforming bodies is evolving rapidly and is far from settled. Highly-gendered, traditional Latin terms and euphemisms are limiting. Yet we don't have many affirming terms for body parts. This is a guide to concepts and terms used in this brochure. If any of these terms do not suit you, please substitute words that feel most affirming and accurate for you.

Dysphoria—The feeling that your body does not align with your gender identity. Dysphoria can result from touching, thinking about, or otherwise interacting with certain body parts (genitals, secondary sex characteristics) and processes (i.e. menstruation or ejaculation), or can more generally be discomfort with the gendered language, interactions, and/or social roles expected of you because of your *perceived* gender.

'T'—**Testosterone** hormone replacement therapy applied topically or injected intramuscularly.

Transgender—Having a gender identity that differs from that which was assigned at birth. This can mean someone:

- female, but was assigned male at birth (AMAB);
- male, but was assigned female at birth (AFAB);
- whose gender falls somewhere between traditional male/female binary identities (non-binary or gender non-conforming).

Being **transgender** is the opposite of being **cisgender**, meaning that someone identifies as and is comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Anatomical terms:

External genitals—What you might call or have previously called your vulva. Includes outer lips (labia majora), inner lips (labia minora), Locus of Pleasure/Bottom Growth (clitoris; see below), urethra, front hole (vagina), and perineum (the area between the front hole and the anus).

Locus of Pleasure—What you might call or have previously called your clitoris or clit is a highly-innervated and sexually sensitive structure located at the apex of the external genitals. In this brochure, we will use *Locus of Pleasure* when referring to people that *will not or have not yet* started testosterone.

Bottom growth—What you might call or have previously called your clitoris or clit. For people who start taking T, the shaft and head often increase substantially in size, generally increasing from 1" to 1.5-2" in length, hence the term *bottom growth*.

Front hole—What you might call or have previously called your vagina. Refers to the internal, tubular potential space that ends at the cervix inside. The front hole expands inside when a toy or body part enters the front hole opening and is surrounded by pelvic floor muscles.

Some things to try:

- Grip your bottom growth between your thumb and forefinger and stroke down the length of the shaft from the base to the head. Try incorporating a bit of tugging into this motion, and experiment with different grip strengths.
- Place your thumb atop the shaft of your bottom growth and your fingers underneath, essentially making a fist around your bottom growth. Experiment with the same stroking/tugging technique mentioned above.
- Rub circles or stroke on the sides, shaft, and/or head of your bottom growth with a fingertip (or two, or three... whatever feels best to you). Note which areas feel best when stimulated this way, and/or how this type of sensation differs from others.
- Gently rub the underside of the head of your bottom growth and notice whether that increases arousal or sensation.
- Rub the sides, shaft, and/or head of your bottom growth with your palm.
- Split your fingers into a "V" shape, and lay them over your external genitals with your bottom growth/locus of pleasure at the point where the V comes together. Rub up and down, side to side, or in circular motions with your fingers contacting either side of the shaft of your bottom growth/locus of pleasure.
- The legs of your bottom growth/locus of pleasure run in a wishbone shape under the skin on either side of your external genitals. See how pressure against these legs creates different sensations from stimulation of the head or shaft of your bottom growth/locus of pleasure.
- Experiment with caressing/rubbing other areas of your external genitals, such as the area around the opening to your front hole and the perineum. Stroke or caress down the length of the tissue that connects your bottom growth/locus of pleasure to the rest of your external genitals with your thumb and forefinger.

Some examples of self-pleasure which tend to be heavily gendered by binary societal notions, but can be used by everyone:

- No hands. Try thrusting against a pillow, or rubbing against a mattress. This might be a good option for you if you find direct contact with your genitals to be dysphoria-inducing, and is a nice way to stimulate your locus of pleasure regardless of hormone status.
- If you are interested in front hole and/or anal penetration, try incorporating them either separate from or together with external stimulation using your fingers or a toy.
- Experiment with the running water of a shower head or tub faucet, and notice how your bottom growth/locus of pleasure responds to the steady water pressure.

muscle tension, and excitement. Orgasm is different for everyone, but many describe an intense sensation of pleasurable release, along with a series of muscle spasms and throbbing sensations deep inside the pelvis and or at the base of the bottom growth.

Not every self-pleasure session **will be** or **needs to be** the same. You may also find that it changes day by day, or that the amount of time it takes for you to experience sufficient buildup and arousal to reach orgasm is different from what you were used to pre-T.

People taking T often notice that their orgasms start to change. Sometimes they shift from more prolonged, fuller-body orgasms to shorter, more intense, and more genital-focused orgasms. You may also find that the type of stimulation you require in order to orgasm changes, too. This change in sexual response can be a great opportunity to learn what new or different types of stimulation help you to achieve orgasm--all the more reason to self-pleasure!

If you are a person who reaches orgasm more quickly, consider taking your time instead. With pleasure as the goal, why not hold off on the orgasm, and instead play and explore for longer? If you have an orgasm, but want to continue play, go ahead and continue to stimulate yourself and see if your body wants to have another orgasm. If you feel very sensitive at first, try changing to a less direct or intense kind of touching for a little while.

No matter how long it takes for you to reach orgasm, or if you do not reach orgasm at all, we encourage you to play for as long as you wish. There is no time limit on pleasure. And the longer you tease yourself before orgasm, the stronger the orgasm may feel.

FAQs

I like to do what I've always done. Is that wrong?

There may be ways of self-pleasuring that you have enjoyed in the past but that feel somehow incongruous, inappropriate, or off-limits now that you have started using different pronouns, taking T, or have otherwise begun socially or medically transitioning.

While it can be extremely affirming to adopt methods of self-pleasure that feel more in line with your shifting body and identity, if a particular self-pleasuring technique still feels great to you and doesn't cause excessive discomfort or dysphoria, there is no reason not to use those successful techniques.

Will self-pleasure ruin me for partner sex?

No. Liking to touch yourself doesn't mean that you won't like being touched by someone else. Instead, it means you're adding *new tools* to your pleasure kit. As you begin to navigate new sexual arousal patterns, sensations, pleasure and preferences in your sexual response on T or post-social transition, you'll be better able to communicate your desires to a partner.

However, there is one potential pitfall worth mentioning: it is possible to train yourself to be able to achieve orgasm only with one specific type of stimulation, so vary your technique every now and then to avoid getting into a rut.

Are toys just for cis people?

Absolutely not! If you're curious, go ahead and play. Vibration adds arousing stimulation and lots of people of all genders and bodies enjoy incorporating it. Other toys to consider are anal toys, dildos, nipple clamps, and self-pleasuring sleeves made for transmasculine people who have experienced bottom growth. There are various masturbation sleeves on the market made specifically for trans men who have experienced bottom growth on-T. These toys can be used for stroking/penetrating (depending on the sleeve and the amount of growth you have experienced), and offer varying degrees of suction to simulate oral sex. A sleeve might also be a good choice for you if you find direct contact with your genitals to be dysphoria-inducing, as they work essentially the same way as masturbation sleeves typically marketed to cis men.

If penetration is an option for you, lube is important to use. Since your front hole may not self-lubricate as much as it did before T, and the rectum does not self-lubricate at all, lube helps enhance pleasure without too much friction.

Packers can also be incorporated into self-pleasure as a great way to sync your mind and body with a lifelike visual and tactile aid.

Further resources:

sexualityresources.com Browse our online store and read informational articles about sex and sexuality.

Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource Guide for the Transgender Community ed. Laura Erickson-Schroth *A fantastic resource for anyone in the trans community and/or cisgender allies who want to learn how to support and affirm the trans people in their lives.*

Self-Pleasuring for Transmasculine People

This brochure is specifically intended for transmasculine people who have begun using testosterone (T). There is also information relevant to transmasculine people who have opted not to start hormones, or who desire to start hormones but have not yet. This brochure does not include information on self-pleasure for people who have undergone phalloplastic (bottom) surgery.

~explore, define, and strengthen your relationship with your changing body through self-pleasure

~there is no wrong way to be trans

~derive affirming pleasure from your body no matter where you are on the spectrum



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