



SEX BOMB

RUNNING'S A POWERFUL WAY TO BOOST YOUR LIBIDO AND UNLEASH YOUR INNER (SWEATY) SEX BOMB, SAYS **RHALOU ALLERHAND**

From the intense high of achieving a race day PB to the misery of those occasional, mysterious off-days, running can be an emotional rollercoaster. As recreational sports go, it's one that brings out every side of us – from the best to the worst. But is running also good for your sex life? Sweaty Lycra, shin splints, sock marks and sports bras as tight as corsets probably don't make you feel in the least bit sexually inclined. But once you're out of your spandex, running is in fact a very sexy sport. Don't believe me? There's ample evidence that pounding the pavements will improve your bedroom performance and your sexual desire. A happy runner and a healthy sex life are intrinsically linked. And I don't just mean ogling toned athletes in tight shorts!

BODY OF EVIDENCE

Once you've mastered the art of running – and by mastered, I mean noticed how hot your Lycra-clad bum looks after a few months of running, not how many miles you can run in a week – your self-esteem will naturally start to surge. It's hard not to feel good about yourself when your muscles firm up and your clothes fit better. Body confidence is one of the many blessings that running brings, plus it's a good incentive to peel yourself off the sofa and pull on your trainers when it's dark outside.

As well as putting a spring in your step, feeling good about yourself after exercising often leads to an increased urge to get up close and personal with your significant other. A study in the journal *Peak*

Performance, American Fitness showed that people who take part in high-impact exercise are considerably more likely to engage in regular sexual activity, due to an increased sense of desirability thanks to an improved body image.

Miriam, a journalist from Leeds, agrees. 'I get hit on the most while I'm running or when I've just finished and I'm all sweaty,' she says.

'You exude this glow that I think is a real turn on for a lot of men. But whether or not anyone hit on me, I'd still feel great. Running makes me feel I have control over my body; it makes me feel powerful and that in itself is sexy.'

Ruby, a PR consultant from west London, says everything improved when she took up running, including her sex life. 'Feeling better about my body made me feel sexier, but also gave me the confidence to make new friends,' she says.

'My running club is like a dating agency for active people!'

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

If you have a demanding job or have a variety of family commitments, finding time to train can feel like

hard work, never mind juggling the addition of an active sex life. But running regularly can actually benefit your libido. 'It's a misconception that people don't have time or energy to exercise,' says sport and exercise psychologist John McDermott. 'Physical activity will help regulate energy levels and improve sleep patterns, which will help to increase your stamina and energy. This will only have a positive effect on your sex life.'

As well as psychological benefits such as mood elevation and increased self-esteem, McDermott believes that running can also have a physiological impact on your performance between the sheets.

'Running improves cardiovascular health,' he says. 'This gives you more energy, better stamina and increases blood flow to the genital area, which improves sensation and desire.'

It works both ways, and the endorphins produced having fun



SEXERCISE



- 30 minutes of running at a nine-minute mile pace burns 309 calories.
- 30 minutes of sex at a fast and furious pace burns 168 calories.
- 30 minutes of cycling at a moderate pace burns 144 calories.
- 30 minutes of pelvic tilt toning exercises burns 90 calories.
- 30 minutes of laundry burns 39 calories.

(Source: www.weightlossresources.co.uk)

between the sheets can actually benefit your running too. 'When we feel happy we are more likely to want to have sex and get intimate with our partner,' says women's nutritional health expert Dr Marilyn Glenville (www.marilynglenville.com). 'During love making we also produce feel-good hormones, so there is some suggestion that this enhances physical performance when running.'

Getting the timing right is crucial though. 'Testosterone has been linked to increased sexual desire and genital

'BODY CONFIDENCE IS ONE OF THE MANY BLESSINGS THAT RUNNING BRINGS'

arousal in women, and also short-term moderate to intense exercise has been shown to increase levels of testosterone,' says McDermott. 'But these changes immediately following exercise will be temporary, heightened at around 30 minutes after exercise, and will diminish from that point.'

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

If you're struggling to balance running with your love life, there are steps you can take to re-evaluate your routine. 'If your training is taking over your life, try sharing exercise with your partner,' says McDermott. 'If priorities have shifted, training together will help.'

Ruby found that running benefits her sex life. 'When I'm training for a race, it can feel like a whirlwind fitting it all in,' she says. 'But when I run, or generally exercise more, I definitely have more energy and this has transferred into the bedroom. Most Sundays, my boyfriend and I go for a morning run and then spend the afternoon in bed!'

Ella, a keen runner and IT manager from London, also found training with her partner had a positive impact on their relationship. 'Running is a big part of my life, so whoever I am with needs to understand my love and need for it and probably do it with me,' she explains. 'Plus, one of



Set aside some special time alone for you and your partner

the bonus effects of running is that you get a hard body and now that I have a runner's body, I'm more into being with someone who is also fit.'

Miriam agrees. 'My partner also runs, so running is something we can do together. It's a shared passion and it definitely attracts us to each other more. But what matters most, is keeping everything balanced. When I'm on my deathbed, I probably won't say, "I wish I'd run that extra 10K I missed that time." I will however, probably regret not sharing enough intimate moments with the man I love. Love and running are two pretty good things to have to balance out though!'

So what better reason do you need to go out for a run, ladies? Running really is sexy! Just don't forget to stretch afterwards... ☑

TOO TIRED FOR SEX?

RELATIONSHIP EXPERT RACHAEL MCCOY (www.rachaelis.com) OFFERS THESE TIPS ON MAKING TIME FOR YOUR LOVE LIFE



A balanced diet, plenty of water and enough sleep are all major factors when it comes to a healthy sex drive, so look after yourself.

Allocate time. It's so easy to get caught up with daily life. Set aside some special time for you and your partner. Creating time alone, with no interruptions, is very important yet often neglected. It will give you the freedom to give each other 100 per cent attention.

Be strong and disciplined with yourself and know that your mind, body and spirit is just as important as your career.

Experiment with your new fitter, healthier body and enjoy your newfound confidence. When you balance your work, exercise regime and sex life equally, you can transform your relationship, confidence levels and happiness in general.