

Physical affection is a critical ingredient in healthy marriages. Without it marital relationships can become unhealthy and die.

Lack of physical affection in the beginning of a relationship is usually not an issue.

As time wears on, the hormones that initially drive this behavior start to decrease. The overwhelming urge to be constantly in contact with each other declines. As the hormones wear off, the amount of affection starts to decrease.

A healthy marriage does not need the high amount of physical affection that is present when a couple first starts dating. ***A healthy marriage does require short, frequent acts of physical affection.***

A few ideas to increase the amount of physical affection include:

- * Sit next to each other. Don't allow anyone, including children, to sit between you.

- * Get back into the habit of holding hands on walks, watching TV, etc.

- * Each time you return home, seek out your spouse and give him or her a kiss.

- * Make sure at least one of your hugs last longer than 10 seconds every day.

- * Learn how to give a massage and practice frequently on your spouse.

One of the most powerful ways to express physical affection in marriage is through physical intimacy.

When you were first married, finding the time and energy to be physically intimate was never an issue. Now, finding time and energy is increasingly difficult.

As unromantic as this may sound, you need to start scheduling times to be physically intimate.

When you have scheduled a time, be sure to prepare yourself. Conserve

your energy and avoid topics that could lead to a conflict.

To receive the greatest benefit for your marriage, you need to make love and not just have sex.

Having sex is when the act is ONLY about YOU and YOUR physical needs. Making Love is about meeting each others physical and emotional needs.

Having sex feels great physically but is not emotionally fulfilling. Making love to your spouse can result in a state of physical and emotional ecstasy that having sex can never achieve.

To achieve this state of ecstasy both you and your spouse should concentrate on the love you feel for each other while meeting each others physical and emotional needs.

By making love more and having sex less, you will grow closer to your spouse and experience more joy and happiness in your marriage.

Action Plan

We have suggested a few ideas on how to increase the amount of physical affection expressed in your marriage. Now it is your turn to come up with a few ideas.

Make a list of four things you will do to increase the amount of physical affection in your marital relationship.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Take some time each week to add new ideas to your list.

In addition, ask your spouse how you can better meet his or her emotional and physical needs when making love.

Visit healthymarriage.org to read the other topics in this pamphlet series.



Did you know on average, children, women, men and communities do better on every positive social outcome such as physical and emotional health, education, safety, financial, etc., when a couple has a healthy marriage?

All couples want a healthy and happy marriage. Many couples have been able to figure out through years of trial and error what it takes to form and sustain a healthy marriage. By studying these couples, researchers have identified the relationship skills and knowledge used to keep marriages healthy.

This pamphlet is part of the research-based Healthy Marriage Pamphlet Series which is designed to teach the relationship skills and knowledge to help couples form and sustain healthy marriages.

We need your help distributing these pamphlets. Feel free to photocopy this pamphlet, or visit www.healthymarriage.org to download and print the other topics in this series.

Marriage

Increase the Joy
Decrease the Misery



Affection

A Key to Unlocking the Door to
a Healthy and Happy Marriage