

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid 54% of UA undergrad students are single or casually dating, 36% are exclusively dating one person and 10% are engaged or married. (2005 Health & Wellness Survey, n=2036)

Q. I had sex with my boyfriend for two years. Now my vagina is not tight. Is there any way to make it tighter? Thank you.

A. Unfortunately, it is all too common to hear a young woman referred to as “loose” when she is known (or suspected) to have engaged in sexual intercourse. And while it is true that first-time intercourse may break or stretch her hymen, no amount of intercourse will adversely affect (read: stretch) the natural shape and elasticity of her vagina.

Often when a woman voices concern about her vagina being loose, what she is really noticing is a lack of strength in her pelvic floor muscles – the muscles surrounding her vagina. To get a better understanding of this, a woman can insert two fingers into her vaginal opening and then contract her vaginal muscles as if trying to hold in urine. The tightening around her fingers is produced by her pelvic floor muscles. While loss of pelvic floor muscle strength is a common consequence of childbirth, it is not a side effect of intercourse. In fact, sex may even strengthen these muscles due to the involuntary rhythmic contractions they undergo during orgasm.

If you are concerned about pelvic floor muscle strength, a series of exercises known as Kegel exercises can increase muscle tone. As a bonus, many women who have been regularly practicing Kegels for six or more weeks also report increased sensation during intercourse as well as general increased genital sensitivity.

Here are some basic steps for Kegel-ing:

- Locate the muscles surrounding the vagina. This can be done by clenching your muscles to stop the flow of urine while peeing and then releasing them to let urine flow again in order to feel which muscles are working.
- Practice clenching and releasing these pelvic floor muscles anywhere from 5 to 10 times per day, repeating the Kegels ten times per session. Each clench should last approximately 10 seconds.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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