

Returning to Sexual Activity

Sexual activity is an occupational domain that can be an important part of development and identity. Chronic illness, disability or medical interventions can impact how you may participate in sexual satisfaction.



Consent

Consent means you and another person are actively agreeing to be sexual with each other. (Planned Parenthood, 2021).

Setting boundaries and maintaining open communication establishes a safe and respectful environment.

Remember: It is your body, and your word is what goes, no matter what, each and every time.



Communication

Everyone involved needs to feel comfortable. Knowing yours and your partner's means of communication will keep an open line to express your concerns, questions, and ideas to build trust and intimacy.

Physical Changes

Range of motion

Reduced or restricted range of motion can impact many aspects of sexual activity including dressing or undressing, going on a date or engaging in sexual activity or intimacy. Try preparing your body with having a warm bath, stretching prior to sexual activity, having a massage and/or increasing the room temperature. Pillows and cushions can help with maintaining or altering joint angles in addition to managing pain or discomfort.



Strength & endurance

Try different positions, pacing, sharing or changing the role of the active partner and choosing a time when you have the most energy. Straps or slings can support off-loading pressure to joints.



Sensation

Individuals with altered sensation may consider pressure relieving mattresses/cushions, changing positions frequently and/or using different toys/equipment with various textures/sounds/smells.

Bowel and bladder

Establish and maintain a regular bowel and bladder program and try to open your bowels or bladder prior to a date or sexual activity.

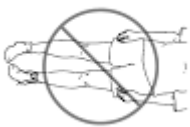
Physiological changes

Changes to blood pressure may occur during sexual activity especially when changing positions. Symptoms can include heavy sweating, light-headedness, visual changes, or difficulty breathing. Adjusting the bed/ equipment, clothing or your body may help bring your blood pressure back to your normal range.



Medical Conditions

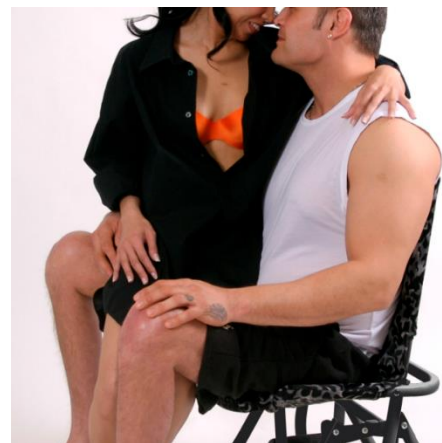
Joint Replacement



There may be temporary restrictions following joint surgery to allow adequate healing. After discussing with your doctor for medical clearance, ensure that the positions chosen fall within those restrictions. Any items that fall to the ground should be placed on higher surfaces or far away from walking paths to avoid trip risks. Involving your partner to assist with undressing can be a part of foreplay.

Paralysis

Whether a paraplegic or quadriplegic, a variety of positions, toys or medications can assist with sexual activity. Although a change to your mobility may impact your sex life, try to enjoy the exploration and discovering of new positions and sensations.



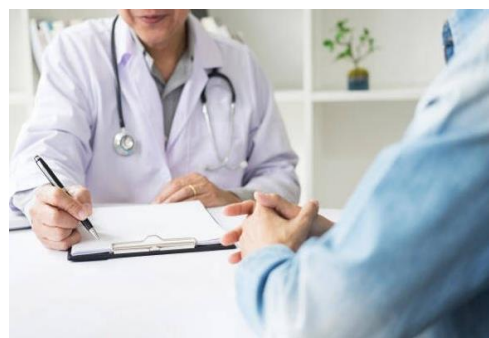
Degenerative conditions

As the body changes over time, it is important to listen to its needs. Continuous adjustments may be needed but that will only add to the mysterious elude of exploring with your partner!

Other Factors

Medication

Your medication can impact your sexual drive, sensation and/or engagement. Taking other medications to participate in sexual activity may also interact with the medications you are currently taking. Speak with your GP or pharmacist about the medications you are taking or thinking of taking.

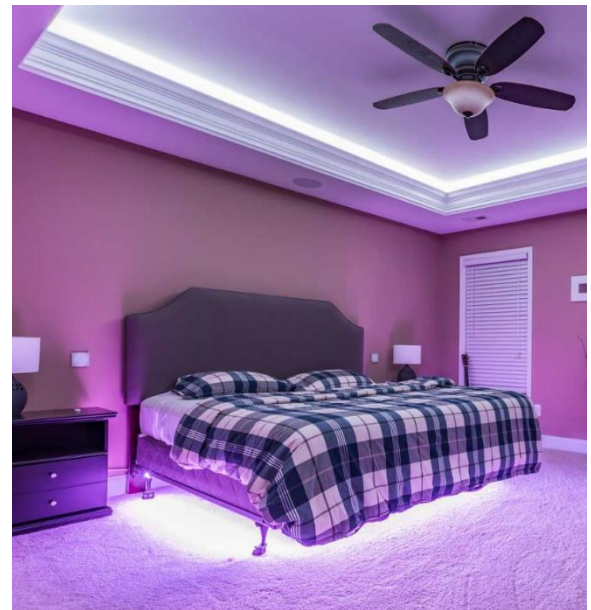


Mental health

Intimacy does not have to be solely physical. Emotional intimacy builds trust and compassion between individuals. It is important that overall health and wellbeing are also looked after. This includes getting good sleep, maintaining a healthy diet, and participating in some regular exercise.

Things to consider

Consider the environment you will be engaging in. Is there enough space for you, your partner, and any additional equipment? Does the bed need to be in a certain place and height to ensure safe positioning? Is there specific lighting and temperature setting?



More information

For further information, or advice, about any item contained in this information sheet, please contact Independent Living Centre Tasmania Inc.(ILCT):

- Call 1300 452 827 to speak to a health professional.
- Visit our website www.ilct.com.au or email info@ilct.com.au.
- ILCT visits communities around Tasmania. Contact ILCT to find out when we will be in your area.

ILCT provides Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech Pathology, and Allied Health Assistant services, on a fee-for-service basis. Our team delivers comprehensive assessments and support that may include assistive technology, home modifications, communication aids, and other tailored interventions to enhance independence and quality of life.

ILCT specifically provides supports to those aged over 18, who are Tasmanian residents and are of any culturally-diverse background. ILCT are a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Independent Living Centre Tas Inc. (ILCT) acknowledges the generous support of the Tasmanian Government – Department of Health through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, and the Australian Government – Department of Health and Aged Care through the My Aged Care – Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). Their ongoing contributions enable the continued provision of these information sheets and our information services.

Disclaimer

Independent Living Centre Tasmania Inc.(ILCT) is a not-for-profit organisation and does not sell, design, or manufacture equipment or products. Information provided by ILCT is intended as a general guide only, and may not be comprehensive, or up to date. Whilst every effort is made, to ensure accuracy, ILCT cannot guarantee that all information provided is correct. Any pricing information is indicative only and may be subject to change. Users should contact suppliers directly for current pricing and product availability. The inclusion of product or service information does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by ILCT. Individuals are responsible for making their own informed choices and are strongly encouraged to seek professional advice before selecting equipment or services. ILCT accepts no liability for any loss, damage, or injury arising from the selection, or use of products, or services, based on information provided. Users must always follow any professional advice received and the manufacturer's instructions for use.

© 2025 ISSA-01



**Independent
Living Centre
Tasmania**