



# Stone Naturopathic Patient Newsletter

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## 5 Natural Ways to Lift Your Libido

It's hard to admit to yourself. Even harder to talk about. But there it is: your sex drive has taken a dive and you don't know why. You're likely embarrassed, confused and upset. Try not to be. Over the course of a lifetime, it happens to lots of us for lots of reasons.

Studies show that as many as 43% of women and 31% of men experience a drop in libido at some time in their life. Without a doubt, this has an impact on your overall physical and emotional health, as well as your relationship with your partner. Ironically, those same three issues are often the underlying factors in a low sex drive, which can be attributed to lifestyle and relationship problems, age-related hormonal changes, stress, physical disability, and certain medications. But there is help. Before venturing into unknown territory with a mass-marketed "quickie fix," consider a variety of holistic approaches to help lift your libido.

**Take Specialized Herbs.** Several herbs have been studied for their positive impact on low sex drive, insufficient hormone levels, and performance problems, such as erectile dysfunction or inability to achieve orgasm. Herbs to consider are Panax Ginseng, Yohimbe, Maca Root, and Dong Quai. Each one works differently and some can interact with other medicines. It's important to first consult with a qualified health professional before trying any herbal remedy.

**Get to the Point with Acupuncture.** Shown to be a beneficial complementary therapy for sexual dysfunction, acupuncture can help boost libido by stimulating physiological systems in the body that are involved in sexual response.

**Talk about Sex.** Sometimes what's not going on in the bedroom has a lot to do with how you and your partner communicate. From the honeymoon period, to being together for decades, sexual needs can and do change. Have honest, open conversations. Consider engaging the services of a sex therapist, who can guide you toward strategies that will lead to more fulfilling and intimate times together.

**Enjoy Forbidden Fruits.** While there are few specific studies on the aphrodisiac effects of fruits, for centuries different cultures have touted the stimulating benefits of foods such as avocados, figs,



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pomegranate, dark chocolate, watermelon, and strawberries. The most likely effect of having these foods in your diet is that they provide vitamins and minerals necessary for peak performance of the whole body. Why not experiment with pomegranate wine and dark chocolate nibs to get you in the mood?

**Move that Body.** Exercise improves circulation, creates sexy muscles, helps manage stress and promotes positive body image. When you feel good physically and emotionally, you're more likely to be in the mood for love. Also, working out with your partner can stimulate the sexual energy between you.

Healthy lifestyle practices provide the best foundation for enhancing sexual prowess. When the body is unhealthy, it may not respond optimally to the use of holistic approaches, which are intended to work synergistically with your natural ebb and flow.

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## **The Fig: Sweet. Succulent. Sensual.**

One of the "Seven Spices of Israel" and referenced in many religious texts as a sacred fruit, the fig (Angeer), is rich in nutrition and history.

For centuries, figs have been referenced in mythology and traditional medicine as a powerful sexual supplement. While they have yet to be adequately studied as an aphrodisiac in humans, some animal studies show figs can increase sperm count and motility. Additionally, they are a great source of dietary fiber, vitamin B6, copper, potassium, calcium, manganese, and the antioxidant vitamins A, C, and E.

The fig offers a unique combination of textures - chewy flesh, smooth skin, and crunchy seeds. California figs are typically harvested June through September. European varieties are available into the fall months. The majority of figs are dried fruits that can be enjoyed anytime of the year.

When selecting dried figs, they should be plump and soft. They will keep for long periods in a cool, dry place. When choosing fresh figs, which are beautifully delicate, select those with deep color, little bruising and sweet fragrance. Keep them in the fridge and plan to eat them in one or two days; don't wash until ready to eat. If figs are not yet ripe, keep them at room temperature to ripen.

Figs can add a sweet sensation to just about any dish. But the high fiber can produce a laxative effect, so don't overdo it.

**Featured Recipe:** [Roasted Fig & Goat Cheese](#)

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## **Boost Your Mojo with Maca Root (*Lepidium meyenii*)**

Maca is a Peruvian superfood used in traditional medicine to balance male and female sex hormones. It's regarded as an aphrodisiac and has fertility enhancing properties. In animal and human clinical trials, Maca has been studied for effects on sexual desire, reproductive hormone levels, and sexual performance.

For example, in a study with healthy men age 21-56, Maca was compared to a placebo. Two different doses of Maca were given and testosterone was measured at 4, 8, and 12 weeks. The men also completed assessments of sexual desire and mood. Even though treatment did not show an effect on testosterone levels, there was an improvement in self-reported sexual desire from 8 weeks of treatment. This effect was independent of reports of depression, anxiety, or testosterone levels. The researchers concluded Maca improved sexual desire.

In a study comparing rats that did and did not have ovaries, researchers concluded Maca has "balancing effects" on sex hormone levels and has potential for correcting physiological symptoms associated with post-menopause and possibly pre-menopause.

A study of rats with erectile dysfunction (E-D) showed, for the first time, the aphrodisiac effect of Maca. There was an increase in mating and in the number of female mice with evidence of sperm deposited. Additionally, there was a decrease in the time between erections in rats with E-D.

While research continues, it's clear Maca can be used as an herbal alternative for individuals seeking a non-pharmaceutical solution for sexual health concerns.

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## **Enhance Sexuality With Yohimbe (*Pausinystalia yohimbe*, *Corynanthe johimbe*)**

The bark of the West African Yohimbe tree is rich in a biologically active substance called yohimbine. Indigenous tribes and medical herbalists have used both the crude bark and purified compound as an aphrodisiac. Modern clinical studies suggest Yohimbe may be effective in the treatment of sexual dysfunction in both men and women. For 75 years, it has been an accepted treatment for male erectile dysfunction (ED). In fact, in the late 1980's the FDA approved Yohimbe as the first plant-based drug for treating impotency. It quickly earned a reputation as the "herbal Viagra."

Yohimbe is believed to be effective in treating sexual dysfunction due to its ability to increase the flow of blood to the penis, which helps promote sexual arousal and erection. It also works by increasing the body's production of norepinephrine—a hormone essential to the formation of an erection.

Yohimbe is also believed to stimulate nerves in the pelvic region. This can lead to an increase in sexual sensation and stamina. In a study of men without ED, Yohimbe had an effect on sexual vigor and length



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of erection. In post-menopausal women, Yohimbe increased sexual arousal when taken in conjunction with the amino acid L-arginine.

Yohimbe can interact with certain pharmaceuticals such as cardiac medications, as well as tyramine containing foods such as cheese and red wine. Be sure to consult with your personal physician before taking Yohimbe and do not exceed the dose recommended by your health practitioner.

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## **Got the Bedroom Blues? Consider Sex Therapy**

Talking about sex and intimacy can be awkward for most people - unless you happen to be Barbra Streisand performing in the movie Meet the Fockers! All kidding aside, when there's a problem in the bedroom, a trained sex therapist can quickly put you/your partner at ease and help identify the root causes of sexual concerns.

Sex therapy helps people address concerns about sexual function, intimacy and arousal, sexual preferences and orientation, and issues associated with chronic conditions such as illness or disability. It can be effective for individuals of any age, sex, or sexual orientation.

Sex Therapists are professionals with an advanced degree, as well as specialized training in human sexuality and relationships. Typically a physician, psychologist, social worker, or licensed counselor can become credentialed through the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT).

### **What Happens in a Sex Therapy Session?**

A sex therapist does not have physical contact of any kind with clients. He or she will engage you/your partner in therapeutic discussion to understand your concerns. The therapist may offer interpersonal communication strategies, teach relaxation and stress management methods, and ask you to use educational resources such as books, videos or apps.

Keep in mind that difficulties in the bedroom are often linked to other underlying issues, such as stress, anxiety or depression. Sexual function can also be affected by chronic illness, medication side effects, surgery or aging. Your therapist will introduce appropriate strategies for addressing these underlying factors. This can lead to enhanced intimacy and better sexual relations within a few weeks.

A qualified sex therapist can be found through AASECT, or by asking your family physician for a referral.

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### **References**