Masturbation ? too much of a good thing? [1]

(1)
Dear Alice?

I don't know if it's stress or what, but lately I feel the urge to masturbate five or six times a day (and I do). This has been going on for about two months now. I'm a twenty-four-year-old man who doesn't get it any other way lately. Should I be concerned?

Signed,
Humble

(2)
Dear Alice?

If a person masturbates once or twice a day, over a long period of time, like two to three years, would there be any side effects for this person? Or maybe, are there any long-term side effects?

Signed,
Curious Student about Masturbation

Answer

Dear Humble and Curious Student about Masturbation,

When you get the urge to self-indulge, feel free to go for seconds or fill 'er up as many times as you like. Masturbation habits vary tremendously from one individual to the next. There are people who never masturbate, those who masturbate two or three times in their life, those who masturbate three or more times a day, and everything in between. Many people masturbate throughout their lifetime without any side effects, other than pleasure. If masturbating isn't increasing the stress in your life (work, school, relationship, family, etc.), just enjoy yourself!

If you're not sure how you feel about your current masturbation practices, you may want to ask yourself a few questions. To Curious Student about Masturbation, what was your usual pattern of masturbation in the past? Did anything else in your life change two months ago? You mentioned stress. Is this stress about being in school, leaving a job, moving, or ending a relationship? To Humble, what may have sparked the recent changes in your masturbation patterns? Does masturbating get in the way of other activities or relationships in your life?
Does masturbation make you feel good, bad, energized, or disconnected? There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these questions. Rather, the key is to be honest with yourself about what works for you right now.

There are a certainly a few directions you can take at this point. One, unexpected as it may seem, is to masturbate more often and see if you feel any differently. Another is to try masturbating one or two times less per day and see how that makes you feel. How about scheduling masturbation dates? This would give you a specific time frame for the activity so that it doesn't take time away from other endeavors. Also, it would make you conscious about each time you are masturbating, what triggered the need to release, and whether or not there are discernible patterns.

You could consider changing your style of masturbation. Try using lube so your goods don't become raw or irritated. Can you find ways to try maxing out the pleasure you get from each experience with yourself, perhaps by varying speed, pressure, or alternating hands? All of this should give you more information about your needs, desires, wants, and make the masturbation experience more deliberate.

Humble, if the real issue is that you have some emotions related to not "getting it" any other way (sex, orgasm, relief, or intimacy with another person), then masturbating probably won't do the trick. Like exercise, masturbation is a great stress-reliever, but it won't help you move past bigger issues. Psychologically, there might be something you could do to become more available or more receptive to a potential partner. Don't exclude counseling as an option if you feel stressed or concerned about your relationship status.

It seems as though a little self-reflection might go a long way in determining your self-pleasure schedule. Once you're comfortable, self-service can be a happy and healthy part of life.

Alice!

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Resources
Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [10]
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