

Masturbation fantasies? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I am curious about men's masturbation fantasies. Specifically, I am wondering what men think about when they are looking at an adult magazine or videotape and masturbating. Are they thinking about being with the woman they are looking at, or what?

Wanna understand

Answer

Dear Wanna understand,

So you're curious about what men think about while masturbating, huh? Without the ability to read minds it's impossible to know exactly what's running through their brains and it can be unique for each person! Sexual fantasies, or mental imagery that's considered sexually appealing and arousing for someone, are dependent on the individual, regardless of sexual or gender identity. Masturbation fantasies could come from childhood, cultural messages in the media and pornography, past experiences, or even the hamburger the person had for lunch! There's no "normal" or "abnormal" when it comes to fantasies, but the investigation of some similarly curious researchers can give us some insight on sexual fantasy patterns of different groups.

There seems to be a fair amount of overlap found in the sexual fantasies of men and women. That being said, men reported fantasizing more about sexual domination and impersonal sexual relationships than women, and women reportedly fantasized more about sexual submission and romantic interactions. Some other common fantasies amongst men included giving and receiving oral sex, having sex with multiple partners or with strangers, watching others have sex, having anal sex, and having sex with younger people. While the majority of participants indicated that they were straight, some indicated that they identified as gay or bisexual. However, the fantasies that people had didn't necessarily align with their sexuality, with some of those identifying as straight having fantasies about people of the same gender. When it comes to those who are asexual, it's common to never have a sexual fantasy at all, and of folks that do have sexual fantasies, asexual people are more likely than sexual people to have fantasies that don't include other people. However, it's key to note that the research focuses on the gender binary, using the terms men and women, and doesn't provide information on those who identify as a gender other

than man or woman, making this a limitation of the research. Additionally, research generalizes to groups of people and doesn't speak to whether or not a given person finds a specific fantasy arousing.

Overall, there's a wide range of sexual fantasies that people experience, some folks fantasize more than others, and there are more similarities in reported fantasies than differences. While fantasies can be interesting to analyze, they don't always correlate with sexual practices or interest — someone may fantasize about something while masturbating that they wouldn't want to do in real life. Additionally, while the research may offer up some clues about what men (and others) fantasize about, the data can only go so far when it comes to understanding what imagery gets people going, as self-report data isn't always reliable. If you know some men who are open and comfortable with the idea, you could try asking them directly, otherwise men's fantasies can only really be left up the imagination.

Alice!

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