

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 is widely considered to be a healthy and low-risk sexual activity. Masturbating multiple times a day generally doesn't have any side effects; further, it also doesn't cause any long-term health effects. 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 others that dabble in self-pleasure with a frequency that lies somewhere in between. Many people masturbate throughout their lifetime without any side effects, other than pleasure. That being said, if you find that it's getting in the way of your daily activities or if your body is irritated, you may want to cut back a bit. 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 Humble, 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? What are some ways you're managing that stress? To Curious Student about Masturbation, does masturbating get in the way of other activities or relationships in your life? What feelings do you experience from masturbation? There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Rather, the key is to have an honest check-in with yourself about your masturbation patterns, the factors that may be motivating them, and how or if frequency of masturbating feels right for you or is more or less than ideal.

Humble, if the underlying concern 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 physical activity, masturbation can be a great stress reliever, but it won't help you address feelings associated with being in a relationship or being sexual with another person. If you find that you're looking for more than a sexual release, you may find the [Q&A Relationship, not just sex](#) [2] to provide some useful guidance.

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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Published date:

Sep 01, 1993

Last reviewed on:

Jun 26, 2020

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