

STEP 4

SEX & INTIMACY



Non-Sexual Touch Exercises

One of the best ways to nurture this budding trust is to do the nonsexual touching exercises listed below. All are twenty minutes in length, and I encourage you to do them as homework this week and in the following weeks. They will help you to (1) emotionally nurture your spouse and yourself, (2) rebuild trust, and (3) reinforce boundaries.

Remember, these exercises must not lead to intercourse! Though it might sound crass to be so blunt, it's important that this restriction be clear. A large portion of couples in this predicament confuse intercourse with love; that's the whole point of doing these exercises—to learn to associate caring touch itself with love. Giving caring touches *as expressions of love* is very important now. For now, during the rebuilding process, it's very important to keep caring touches and sex separate.

Hand... Foot... Head

Here are three twenty-minute exercises you can practice this week; each day do a different exercise. The exercises will focus touches to the hand and forearm, foot and leg, and head and shoulders of your spouse.

Before doing the exercises themselves, answer the following questions.

As I read through these exercises, what are my first impressions?

Do any of them appear to be difficult to do? Which ones and why?

How willing will my spouse feel about this exercise and why?

Three Touching Exercises

	Exercise One	Exercise Two	Exercise Three
<i>Focus</i>	Hand, forearm	Foot and leg	Head and shoulders
<i>Boundary</i>	The elbow	The knee	The shoulders
<i>Position</i>	Seated beside other, arm resting in giver's lap	Giver seated on couch, with legs of receiver resting on lap	Giver sitting with back against a wall or headboard; receiver lying faceup between spouse's legs, with head on small pillow
<i>Activity</i>	Light, slow, predictable touches	Massage with lotion	Light, slow, and exploratory touches and massage
<i>Time</i>	5 minutes on each side of hand and arm	10 minutes per leg	5 minutes on right side of head, 10 minutes on face, 5 minutes on left side of head

Source: Adapted from Cliff and Joyce Penner, *The Gift of Sex* (Waco, TX: Word, 1981), 141-45.

Negative Thought Patterns

Below is a list of fifty negative thoughts and feelings that often occur before and during the touching exercises. They come from a checklist developed by a northern California research group, BSTG (Berkeley Sex Therapy Group).¹ Look through the list and see if any jump out at you. Especially read through this list after doing a touching exercise either as the giver or the receiver. Then discuss with your spouse those feelings and thoughts that seem to parallel your own.

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Place a checkmark in each blank that applies to the thought and feeling that you have said or could imagine saying in doing these exercises.

Script Lines Checklist

- _____ 1. I feel uncomfortable.
- _____ 2. I think your stroking feels mechanical.
- _____ 3. I feel I'm supposed to like everything you are doing.
- _____ 4. I am worried about what you're thinking.
- _____ 5. That doesn't feel good, but I don't even know what would.
- _____ 6. It feels like you're being too careful.
- _____ 7. It feels like you're trying too hard.
- _____ 8. I resent that you aren't enjoying this more.
- _____ 9. I don't know why we're doing this.
- _____ 10. I wish it was OK to ignore you.
- _____ 11. I feel hopeless about ever turning you on.
- _____ 12. Right now my mind is blank.
- _____ 13. I wish I felt more like stroking you.
- _____ 14. I wish I could enjoy your stroking.
- _____ 15. This is a chore for me.
- _____ 16. I'm not feeling anything.
- _____ 17. I don't feel like talking.
- _____ 18. I feel a million miles away.
- _____ 19. This seems difficult and complicated.
- _____ 20. I feel turned off.
- _____ 21. I'm afraid you're going to feel rejected if I don't enjoy this more.

- _____ 22. I feel like you need me to be more involved.
- _____ 23. I want something, but I don't know what it is.
- _____ 24. I don't think I'm going to like anything we're doing today.
- _____ 25. I think I'm mostly doing this because I'm supposed to.
- _____ 26. I'm beginning to feel impatient.
- _____ 27. You seem preoccupied (or far away).
- _____ 28. I feel like there's something else I want to say, but it's not in any of these scripts.
- _____ 29. I'm afraid I'm not going to do a good enough job.
- _____ 30. I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed.
- _____ 31. I keep getting distracted.
- _____ 32. I wish we could play hooky from this.
- _____ 33. My mind keeps going off into fantasies.
- _____ 34. I feel obliged to do as much for you as you have done for me.
- _____ 35. I'm afraid you are getting bored.
- _____ 36. I'm afraid you won't tell me if you don't like something.
- _____ 37. I feel like we both have to succeed at this.
- _____ 38. I'm feeling lazy, but like I'm not allowed to.
- _____ 39. I'm feeling that there's too much I don't like.
- _____ 40. I'm afraid of discouraging you.
- _____ 41. I'm feeling too finicky.
- _____ 42. I'd feel like a pest if I said everything I wanted.
- _____ 43. I'd like to take a break.
- _____ 44. I'm afraid you'd get mad if I stopped doing this.
- _____ 45. I wish this wasn't so important.
- _____ 46. I feel like there's something you want, but I don't know what it is.
- _____ 47. I feel like I should appreciate what you are doing more.
- _____ 48. It feels like something just went wrong, but I don't know what it is.
- _____ 49. I can't seem to concentrate on what I'm doing.
- _____ 50. I hate these script lines.