

## Self Sensate Focus (women)

Read through the following instructions in their entirety before beginning the exercise. The goal of this exercise is to become more aware of your body through touch. This exercise is a body-centered exercise in which you are encouraged to “try on” a sexual identity. There is an important feedback loop from you genitals to your brain such that as you are noticing sexual arousal in your body, this may be interpreted in your mind as being sexual signals, which then further increases the body’s arousal. As you are focusing on the different parts of your body, imagine to yourself that you are a sexual, sensual, loved woman who enjoys her sexuality.

Start by closing your eyes and focusing your attention on all of your senses. First focus on the areas of your body where you have sensation, noticing what these sensations are (warmth, coolness, tingling, itchy etc). Now move to the area that you have altered sensation and again begin to visualize these areas and tune into the sensations you may or may not have here.

Next move on to your genitals. Imagine to yourself that you are sexy and loved as you focus on this part of your body. Are you aware of any sexual or even non-sexual sensations in your labia, clitoris, or vagina? Try to contract your vaginal muscles and notice if that gives you a heightened sense of pleasure. Focus on any sensations produced in your genitals and take note of how that feels.

Next move your attention to the rest of your upper body including your breasts. Describe the sensations in these parts of your body to yourself. Try on the positive sexual identity as you’re noticing signs of vitality in those parts of your body. For the next few minutes just move your attention to all of the different things that you feel in your body, while maintaining the image of yourself, in your mind’s eye, as being a sexual and sensual woman.

If you are distracted by troubling thoughts, just notice them and move your attention back onto your body. Try not to be hard on yourself if you find this difficult.

Try to practice this exercise at least once per week.

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<sup>12</sup>Masters W H, Johnson V E. (1970) *Human sexual inadequacy*. London, Churchill.