

**Heading off to college can change a person's masturbation routine. How do college students handle it?** For many, college is a stepping stone to "real life." It may be the first time living away from home, having to cook for oneself, and sharing space in a dormitory with strangers. That's exactly how Dwayne, 20 and an Ivy League junior, first experienced college life. "I come from a small town where everyone knew everybody else. At home with my parents I had my own room and had all the privacy I wanted or needed. All of a sudden, here I am on this big, impersonal campus in a large city, rooming with 4 guys I had never met before." With the change in his privacy situation also came a major change in his personal habits. The then-17-year-old Dwayne could no longer go from the shower to the bedroom in the buff. He could no longer play his favorite music at top volume. And — perhaps most distressing to him — he could no longer spontaneously masturbate.

"For a long time, masturbation was a form of stress relief and pleasure," he says. "When I got to college, I couldn't even take that for granted any longer. Someone could walk in on me." While Dwayne did not give up masturbating, he had to learn to plan his sessions very carefully. "I had to make sure no one else would be around if I did it in the bunk area. Mostly, I started doing it in the shower."

Dwayne is by no means the only college guy who had to learn to "do it" in private. "I panicked," says Barry, 21. "I had a close call one evening. My roommate had gone out on a date, which apparently did not go very well, because he came back around 10:00. I was lying there, buck naked, masturbating. When I heard the key in the door, I practically ejaculated right then and there from nerves! I was able to jump up and grab a towel and throw it around my waist. When my roommate came in, I pretended I had just gotten out of the shower. To this day I wonder if he thought it was strange that I wasn't wet! It's a good thing he didn't ask any questions."

For Barry, that nearly embarrassing situation opened up a whole new avenue for him in college. "I got off on the thought of someone catching me in the act," he says, with a mischievous gleam in his eyes. "I've had several more 'close calls' in my current apartment."

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Jerry, 19, has taken the risk of getting "caught" one step farther. He finds secluded public places on his campus to whip it out. "Our library has a section we refer to as 'the dungeon,'" the sophomore engineering student says. "All the magazine back issues are stored there. It's a few flights down from the main library and rather dark. One evening I was going through some magazines for a research assignment and realized I was completely alone. I was feeling sort of horny, so I sat down on the floor, undid my jeans, and masturbated right there. I kept the magazine nearby the whole time so if I heard anyone coming I could easily throw it over my lap."

## *Masturbation: College Masturbation 101*

"In my fraternity, we had as part of our initiation a contest to see how long the new guys could go without masturbating," says Ian, 20. "Each guy was assigned a 'buddy' who followed him around everywhere for a week — even in the bathroom. Nobody made it more than a couple of days." As a result, Ian's fraternity decided on something a little different. "We had a challenge by which each guy had to masturbate somewhere in public on campus. Two guys would go with him as witnesses — and also as spotters to warn the guy if someone was coming."

It's not just the guys. Some female college students are also getting into the act of semi-public masturbation. Pam says that when she was in college, she discovered a bunch of empty classrooms down a secluded hallway. "You had to go through an extra set of doors to get to them, and the only times these rooms were used was for special seminars," the 23-year-old says. "Sometimes I would head over there if I had a particularly stressful day, go behind the main desk at the front of the room, lie on the floor, and have a great time."

Speaking of stressful days, any of us who have been to college know the pressures of exams, assignments, and social situations. "It's stress relief, plain and simple," says Dean, a freshman. "I masturbated at home because of stress, and I masturbate here in my dorm because of stress."

"When you're away from home, lonely, and don't have a girlfriend to satisfy you, what choice do you have?" asks Dwayne. In college, especially if you're in a competitive program, focusing on your studies takes time and attention away from the mating game. But what about college students who do date, either casually or in a steady relationship? How do "significant others" react to the masturbation issue? "I wouldn't be likely to talk about it with a date, especially if it's only a first or second date," says Brian, 19. "It just isn't something people tend to talk about in general." Jeff, 20, agrees. "When I go out for dinner with a woman it's not like, 'You look great tonight. I thought you should know that I masturbate. Please pass the salt.' Seriously, if a relationship gets to the point of physical and emotional intimacy then maybe I can see bringing the topic up. But in a casual dating situation, why would I? I've never been on a first date with a woman who started talking about her menstrual cycle!"

"I think it's a matter of common knowledge that most guys do it," says Brian. "It's one of those unspoken truths in life."

Once the area of physical intimacy is broached, sometimes talking about — and performing — masturbation is a logical step. "When my girlfriend and I got serious and began getting physical, we wanted to start slowly," says Warren, 21. "So one time when we were together and had our clothes off, I took her hand and showed her how to get me off. She didn't seem to mind, so she stroked me until I ejaculated. And then afterwards she asked me if I really enjoyed it — like, as if I was going to say no! I told her it this was something I do to myself quite a bit, and that it was very special to be able to share it with her."

David and his girlfriend had a slightly different experience. "We weren't living together — we weren't even sleeping together — but she had a key to my place and I had a key to hers, so we could be spontaneous. One evening I had masturbated and just fell asleep, without even getting up to clean up. Apparently my girlfriend decided she wanted to surprise me by coming over really late, so I heard this loud gasp or whatever, and I suddenly woke up, and there she was looking at me! I wasn't even covered."

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David said that although he assumed his girlfriend knew that guys masturbated, the reality of being faced with it was too much for her at first. "It put a strain in our relationship. I think she thought of it as being unfaithful in some ways — like she wasn't satisfying me enough so I had to take care of things myself. She kept asking me over and over, 'Why couldn't you come to me for that?' I told her we would do it when the time was right, and that I didn't need to use her as a receptacle to release my sexual tension."

David brings up an interesting point: Some college men, especially those in fraternities, are stereotypically thought of as young lotharios, using women as sexual conquest. But this isn't true of everyone. "Masturbation prevents me from mistreating women," says Colin, 19. "I've never been one to use a woman and then dump her, like some guys. Masturbating helps me release my feelings and tensions in a totally private, harmless way."

Indeed, masturbation in college is a reality as common as the places, situations, and reasons in which young guys — and gals — feel the need for some hand-to-genital therapy. Certainly the next time I revisit my local college campus I will view the libraries, bathrooms, and abandoned classrooms in a new light!

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