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“How to Buy Lingerie for a Woman”

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Summary

Introduction

For many men who routinely claim to fear nothing, the phrase “gift-giving occasion” can strike terror in the heart. Chances are you’re reading this because there’s a holiday coming up, and you’re expected to buy your wife, fiancée, or girlfriend something that symbolizes your love for her. That’s a tall order indeed, and there’s a lot riding on your ability to choose the perfect gift.

You’ve gone the chocolate, flowers and jewelry route in the past, and you’ve even done the “cute” thing and bought her a sweet little stuffed animal. Well, now you’ve decided that it’s time to go further, into a world of femininity where you’ve hitherto feared to tread. You want to buy her some lingerie (insert sting of horror movie music here).

Relax. It doesn’t have to be stressful or difficult. All you need is the right information and the right attitude, and you can buy your loved one something that will put a smile on her face and make you the hero of the hour instead of the lousy gift-bringing goat you’ve been so many times before. Just follow the following simple guidelines and lingerie-shopping nightmares will be a thing of the past.

Lesson One: This is for Her, not You.

When buying lingerie for your special someone, the quickest and surest route to the doghouse is to choose something that really turns you on. As a man, one of the biggest mistakes you can make when picking out lingerie is to buy something that is going to make you happier than it will her. As hard as it may seem, you have to try not to think like a guy. Turn off those sexy images in

your head and try to imagine her reaction when she opens the gift box, not your own reaction when you see her wearing the item for the first time. If you look at something on a rack or in a catalogue, does it make you think of sweet romantic nights, or is the image a little closer to an X-rated video? If it's the latter, you should probably pass on the item. In the end, you want her reaction to be "Oh, it's so beautiful!" not "You're crazy if you think I'm putting this thing on!"

Lesson Two: Play Detective

Before you begin shopping, you'll need some specific information. Lucky for you, all you have to do is play the snoop. One day when your wife or girlfriend isn't around, take a few minutes to check out her closet and drawers. Examine the lingerie and underwear that she already owns, as it contains most of the information you'll need to take with you to the store.

The first thing to note is the size, as your gift won't go over too well if she can't wear it. Since men are used to straightforward sizing based on inches (size thirty-six pants fit on a thirty-six-inch waist) the numbers and letters found on lingerie tags likely won't make sense to you. No problem. Just write them down. Bras have both a numbered size and a cup size (e.g. 36C), and you should note both. Panties and other items will be either run from small to extra large sizes or have a number that has nothing to do with inches (e.g. 7). Fill up your detective's note pad with everything you see on the tag; it'll all make sense to the sales clerk.

Other things to note are colors, fabrics and styles. Is your lover a basic black or white type, or does she like pinks and reds or even flower prints? Are most of her unmentionables made of cotton, or does she seem to favor silks or satins? Is it utilitarian, or does it have a lot of lace? Would you categorize it as simple, sensual, or hot-to-trot? The best bet is to write everything down so you'll know how to spot the stuff she likes once you're in the store.

Remember that you don't have to buy her duplicates of what she already owns, but you should definitely stay in the same ballpark. If your significant other leans towards flannel nightgowns, you probably shouldn't make the leap to see-through panties or

garter belts. Avoid anything that would make her look cheap, or looks like it would be uncomfortable to wear.

Another good way to gather information is to subtly test the waters in the months leading up to the gift-giving occasion. If you're watching a romantic movie and the heroine appears onscreen in a sexy silk teddy, ask your wife or girlfriend if she would wear something like that. If you're a somewhat braver soul, you can simply state your appreciation for the lingerie in question and try to gauge her reaction. If the two of you stroll by a display window on the street or at the mall, look for her reaction to what the mannequins are wearing. You want to learn to think like her, so pay some attention and remember what she says. Pretend you're just curious about her likes and dislikes; don't act like it's a big deal. When gift-buying time comes, you'll be ahead of the game.

Lesson Three: A Lingerie Primer

Okay, you've done the detective bit and written everything down from sizes to fabrics and colors. But you're still afraid of showing up in a store and sounding like an idiot. Well, it will help to know the basic terms of the lingerie world, so here's a quick look.

- **Bras and Panties.** The bread and butter of the lingerie industry, these items are often sold in matching sets, and can run the gamut from shy and demure to very racy. Be aware of your honey's usual panty choices; don't buy her a pair of **thongs** (the kind with just a narrow strip or fabric in back) if she likes the big comfortable kind that cover up everything. Bras can be difficult items for men to buy, as women often go bra shopping for entire days, searching high and low for the exact fit, style and level of support. Various styles include **soft cup**, which is all fabric, **underwire**, which have plastic or metal wires below the cups for added support, **push-ups** which give can lift the breasts or give extra cleavage, and **demi-bras**, which have smaller-sized cup which show off the tops of the breasts.
- **Bustiers.** This is a special type of bra that has no straps but gives extra support by extending down to the waist. Sometimes they include vertical plastic strips (long ago made of bone) that push the breasts upward. They are often worn with garters, stockings and matching panties, and may be a bit too hot for most gift-giving occasions.

- **Teddies** are one-piece garments worn in the place of separate bras and panties, and they don't usually require exact sizing. If bra and panty sets are comparable to bikinis, then teddies are similar to one-piece women's bathing suits. A **Teddiette** is just the top part of a teddy, and is usually worn with matching panties.
- **Tap Pants.** Usually made of silk or satin, tap pants are little shorts that fall somewhere between panties and boxers. They have tight elasticized waists and loose legs.
- **Camisoles** are like little slips that hang down to the waist. They look good when combined with tap pants.
- **Chemises.** Longer than a camisole, a chemise is a short gown, sort of like a slip. They are held up by thin spaghetti straps and rarely hang lower than the knee. Longer examples are simply called **gowns**. Shorter versions that reach just to the hips are called **Baby Dolls**. Chemises and gowns occupy a zone between sexy and innocent and are often good choices for gift giving. A good bet is a **Peignoir**, which is a matching set of a short gown and a matching robe.
- **Body Suits.** Take away Supergirl's cape and boots, and you've got a body suit. This is a one-piece form-fitting item, sometimes made of lace, that covers a woman from neck to toe. Firmly on the hotter side of the lingerie scale, this is not the sort of thing to get if you're loved one has been hinting at a comfortable robe or nightgown.
- **Garter Belts.** Any man who's flipped through the average lingerie catalog understands the sexy appeal of garter belt sets. A mainstay of women's undergarments before the invention of pantyhose, garter belts are thin strips of fabric worn about the waist with little elastic hook-and-strap devices that attach to the tops of stockings (to hold them up). While most men find these very sexy, some women find them uncomfortable or even a bit dirty. If there's any doubt in your mind about your sweetheart's reaction, stay away.
- **Robes.** Probably the closet thing to a sure bet in gift-giving, robes range from **Wraps**, which are shorter and lighter numbers, to the classic full length items, to silky Japanese **Kimonos**. Robes can be both alluring and classy, which is exactly what you're aiming for.

Lesson Four: Shopping: Customer Service is the Key.

You've gathered your information, and now you know enough about ladies underwear to fake your way through a conversation with Frederick of Hollywood himself. Now it's time to shop. These days, you can buy nice lingerie almost anywhere, from Internet sites to big discount stores. If this is your first time, however, your best bet is going to a fancy department store or a lingerie specialty shop like those found in your local shopping mall. At this point, a helpful and informed staff is far more important than a low price, since saving a few bucks won't mean much if you buy the wrong thing. Besides, the discount places are where women shop for their everyday stuff. This is going to be a gift, so don't be too frugal.

Pick a shop that seems to have a large, friendly and professional staff. If it's just one busy person at the register, try someplace else. You want a comfortable, relaxing and well-lit place that has salespeople strolling around, chatting with customers. These people are trained to help you and usually know how to make a potentially awkward situation much less stressful or embarrassing. They've seen and heard everything before, and have likely dealt with the world's most clueless men, so if you remain calm and act confident you've got nothing to worry about.

At most specialty boutiques, the salespeople will not only answer questions and offer advice, but will actually help you shop. Take advantage of this. Help them to help you by offering lots of information. Tell them about the things your wife or girlfriend likes to wear, and let them show you things in the same styles. Take out your detective notebook and talk about sizes, mentioning all the letters and numbers that you saw on the tags.

Have other important information ready, such as the color of your sweetheart's eyes and hair, her general bodyshape (be honest here, your goal is not to impress the sales staff), and even her hobbies and interests. Lingerie salespeople know all the little secrets, like the fact that redheads look great in shades of light green, and blondes look better in black. They'll know which items will flatter your lover's figure and which fabrics will please her. You may like to argue with your mechanic about auto parts or try to one-up your carpenter with tales of your craftsmanship, but buying lingerie is one situation where you want to bow to an expert. Although the final decision is yours, don't be afraid to

follow their lead. Lingerie is not a hard-sell industry, and these folks are after your repeat business, so you can trust them. If they want you to come back, they're not going to suggest something your sweetheart will hate.

While your browsing, it's also advisable to keep the occasion in mind. For a wedding or honeymoon present to your new wife, you want to suggest beauty and class, without giving anything humdrum or everyday. Try camisoles or tap pants, which are neither too normal nor too dirty. For Christmas, Hanukkah or birthdays, comfort is the key, and you should buy something slightly less sexual, like a robe or peignoir. On Valentines Day, you can usually push the envelope a bit and buy something a tad sexier, like a teddy or a lacey bra and panty set. But don't go too far; few women like to open something trashy.

Summary

It's not so daunting after all, is it? To be the big hero and buy your loved one something that she'll absolutely adore, you simply need to do the appropriate snooping, write down all the facts and figures, and present yourself to the staff of your local lingerie boutique. While following their expert lead, just keep in mind that this is a present for her, and not for you. Always err on the side of innocence rather than sexiness, and if she'd prefer something a little bit hotter, the two of you can have a fun time shopping together.

“How to Give a Massage – Beginners”

Introduction

Lesson 1: Preparation

Lesson 2: Five Tips for Beginners

Lesson 3: Six Basic Strokes

Lesson 4: A Good First Massage

Lesson 5: Sensual Massage

Summary

Introduction

Life is rough. A normal day can be filled with tension, stress and frustration, and this can take its toll on the body in the form of aches, pains and tightened muscles. But before you reach for the value size bottle of ibuprofen, you might want to consider a relaxing and pleasurable alternative: massage.

The art of massage is centuries old, and although it probably began in Eastern cultures, it was the Swedes who perfected it in the nineteenth century. The idea itself may even be instinctual; it's a natural reaction to want to rub where it hurts. The benefits of a good massage can be numerous, from stress reduction and relief of fatigue to the promotion of circulation. It works on a physical, mental, and for some people, even a spiritual level, and can be a satisfying part of your health regimen or just a pleasurable way to end the day.

For all of its benefits, therapeutic massage can also be easy to learn. The following tutorial is aimed at massage beginners, and will teach you the basics of giving your partner a satisfying massage. In just five easy steps, you'll be rubbing away tension and pain and practicing an ancient and very beneficial healing art.

Lesson 1: Preparation

Before you begin a massage, you must make sure that everything, including you, is properly prepared. Think ahead and have everything ready and nearby so that nothing will interrupt the massage itself.

- **Environment and Mood.** The first step in any massage is to create the right setting. The massage surface itself should be

somewhat firm, so if you have a particularly soft bed, the floor might be better. Make sure the spot you choose is clean, quiet, and above all warm. Since your partner's body temperature will drop during the massage, you should heat the room up beforehand. Drafts or cold spots also tend to make muscles contract, which will nullify your massage work. Avoid harsh lighting; you might want to use scented candles instead, as they not only produce a soothing light, but the perfumes can help create a relaxing mood. Make sure the space is private and eliminate all outside distractions. Provide plenty of clean towels or sheets. Soft, relaxing instrumental music selections or nature sound recordings are often very helpful. If you keep relaxation and comfort in mind, you should have no trouble creating an appropriate setting for massage.

- **Oils.** For a proper massage, you will need massage oil. Oil provides a smooth surface for your massage and helps you create a rhythmic flow of strokes. Various kinds of oil, some of which contain essential oil fragrances, can be purchased at specialty mall shops, department stores and health food stores. You can also learn to mix your own massage oil by adding tiny amounts of fragrance to almond, grapeseed or sunflower oil. Be sure to warm the oil up in your hands before putting it on your partner.
- **Prepare Yourself.** Before you start on your partner, make sure that you are relaxed, focused and in a peaceful mood. You might want to put aside five or ten minutes for yourself before you begin the massage to “find your center.” Make sure your hands and body are clean and your nails are trimmed. Don't wear clothes that you can't afford to get oil on.
- **Communicate.** Talk to the massage recipient before you begin and make sure you both understand what to expect. Ask about specific areas of tension and pain, and be aware of any injuries. Make sure to build an atmosphere of trust. Discuss the issue of clothing. Although it is easiest to work on someone who is nude or wearing just underwear, this could be awkward in the person receiving the massage is not your lover.

Lesson 2: Five Tips for Beginners.

1. **Massage Towards the Heart.** One of the main goals of massage is to stimulate circulation, so you want to send the blood towards the heart rather than out to the extremities. Help that pump do its job!
2. **Stay in Touch.** Try to keep your hands on the massage recipient at all times. Don't break the flow of the massage by constantly stopping and starting. Keep a good rhythm.
3. **Start Gently.** Begin the massage with soft touches, and move to firmer strokes as you continue. Take it slow and don't rush; a really effective massage takes time.
4. **Keep Quiet.** Don't ruin the mood with a lot of chatter. Speak softly, and only when you need to. Your job is to communicate with touch, not words.
5. **Be Responsive.** Be aware of your partner's reactions to your strokes, and alter the massage to make him or her happy. Respond to specific areas of tension or ache, and don't force anything.

Lesson 3: Six Basic Strokes

Although becoming a professional massage therapist requires the mastery of dozens of individual strokes (and techniques vary between types of massage), here's an overview that covers all the basics strokes that you, as a beginner, will need to give a deeply relaxing massage.

1. **Stroking (Effleurage).** The simplest and most natural of all massage strokes, Effleurage is perfect for openers. You simply glide your hands across the body, using flat hands on the back and cupped hands on the legs and arms. The rhythmic stroking movement not only relaxes the person receiving the massage and lets him or her get used to the massager's hands, but readies the body for deeper work.
2. **Kneading (Petrissage).** Any stroke that squeezes or grips the muscles is called Petrissage. This stroke includes **Kneading** and **Wringing** (squeezing with both hands in opposite directions) and works particularly well on the shoulders, calves, thighs and buttocks. Grip the muscles firmly, then knead and roll them with slow deep movements, keeping your hands working together in a rhythm.

3. **Knuckling.** In **Circular Knuckling**, often used on the upper chest and shoulders, you press your knuckles into the muscles and use a rotating motion to ease tightness and tension. **Straight Knuckling**, in which your knuckles are kept in a line (like in a loose fist) and worked smoothly along the muscles, works well on the buttocks and thighs.
4. **Tapping (Tapotement).** A mainstay of Swedish massage, Tapotement refers to a number of percussive movements. In **Pummeling**, you pound the fleshy areas of the body (buttocks and thighs) with the sides of your loose fists, dispersing tension and stimulating blood flow. Similar to this is **Hacking**, where you use the edges of your flattened hands in a light karate-chop motion. Keep your hands loose and your wrists relaxed and maintain a slow rhythmic pace. These strokes can be effective on muscles that are strained or cramped.
5. **Friction.** This refers to a variety of strokes that let you use your fingers and thumbs to work deeply into muscles, using varying amounts of pressure. **Circling** uses deep pressure and slow rotation as you press your fingers into areas along the spine and lower back as well as the shoulders and calves. **Thumb Rolling** works well on the upper back and lets you use your thumbs to push into the flesh with a steady rhythm. **Feathering** is a good end move, and involves lightly dragging your fingertips down a person's back.
6. **Vibration.** This involves shaking the muscles rapidly, using flattened hands or fingers. Use this stroke sparingly to promote circulation.

Lesson Four: A Good First Massage

As you practice different techniques, you'll figure out what works best for you and your partner. In the meantime, here are some good ideas for a first massage.

Start with a back rub. Have your partner lie flat and place one hand on his or her back. Use your other hand to pour the warm massage oil over your hand and onto the back (use this technique to apply oil when needed, as it always keeps on hand on your partner's body) and start with some basic gentle Effleurage strokes to get things moving. Place your hands flat on both sides of the spine and stroke upward and then out towards

the shoulder in an inverted “J” motion. Then reverse this, bringing your hands down the sides of the back and then in towards the spine. Try different pressures and find the amount your partner likes.

Next try some Petrissage on the lower back. Place the heels of your palms on either side of the spine and knead outward towards the sides. The lower back is also a good spot for some deeper Circling. Place your fingertips together and rotate them in the groove next to the spine. Moving down, the fleshy areas of the buttocks are a good place for basic circular Effleurage, as well as kneading and the percussive strokes like pummeling and hacking.

Move on to the neck and shoulders. The shoulders are ideal spots for deep circling and some squeezing Petrissage. Try grabbing the muscles between the shoulders and neck and kneading them between your fingers and thumb. This also works well with the muscles at the back of the neck. Necks and shoulders are often tension spots, so spend a lot of time here.

Using both hands and lots of oil, try some basic Effleurage strokes on the backs of the legs. Always remember to move towards the heart to increase circulation. Keep your hands flat while stroking the sides of the legs, and rounded over the calf and thigh muscles. Increasing the pressure a bit, the Straight Knuckling stroke works well on the back of the legs. The calves and thighs are also good spots for wringing, where you use both hands to knead the muscles in opposite directions. Finish up with some light feathering on the back and legs, and you’ve completed your first massage.

If you wish to continue, you can use the basic strokes on all areas of the body, including the chest, head, arms, hands and feet. In time you’ll find that the strokes will become instinctual, and as you learn the individual traits of your partner’s body, you’ll get better and better at making pain and tension melt away.

Lesson Five: Sensual Massage

For couples in love, erotic partner massage can be a relaxing and very sensual way to stay close. Use the same basic strokes as in therapeutic massage, but take more time to explore pleasurable sensations. You might want to start things off with a bubble bath or shower, and sexy aids like feathers and soft

fabrics are great for stimulating the skin. Remain comfortable, follow your partner's signals, and when you switch roles from the massaged to the massager, be sure to give as much as you receive. Unlike other forms of massage, sensual massage produces a strange mix of relaxation and excitement that most people find very pleasurable.

Summary

You've taken your first step into the ancient world of therapeutic massage. Now that you know the basics, real expertise will come with practice. If you truly enjoy giving and receiving relaxing massages and want to learn more, you might want to consult books on the subject, buy an instructional video or even take a class in advanced techniques. Frequent massage can be a healthy and relaxing addition to your life, so keep practicing and have fun!