

Stoking the fires; HOT NEW STUFF TO TRY UNDER THE COVERS

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Some people believe that having sex for reasons other than procreation is unnatural. You likely won't find a tickle trunk of sex toys in their bedside drawers.

But pleasure props have been around for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks fashioned them from wood and leather. Unripened bananas were commonly used in Arab and Polynesian countries. Immoral or not, "sexual well-being" products like vibrators and intimacy gels are now widely available at your local Wal-Mart or drug store.

Sex toys have gone mainstream. And, frankly, it's a good thing.

They're not only a safe sex alternative, but they put the power in our hands, quite literally, to explore the limits of our pleasure potential -- with or without a partner.

Just as Toys 'R' Us will never stop churning out shiny new playthings, the adult sex-toy industry will never falter in its quest to produce the hottest new pleasure device.

Consumer trade shows, like Toronto's Everything To Do With Sex Show running Oct. 20 to 22 at Exhibition Place, are a great place to check out the latest toys on the market. But for those who can't make it or are too modest or shy to be caught dead at such an event, I've compiled a list of some of the hottest new products out there, with prices and where you can get them online.

The Liberator ramp and wedge "bedroom adventure gear" has been described as "a slice of heaven" for people wanting a boost to their lovemaking. This sexy, efficient line of cushions is designed to help couples achieve and hold sexual positions "with less fatigue and stress."

It's a great alternative to piling pillows under your partner for better leverage. This is also an excellent solution for people with disabilities or mobility issues. Price: starts at \$170. Shop at www.liberator.com or www.comeasyouare.com.

The latest industry buzz is about how body confidence can put the fun and adventure back in your love life. If you're too worried about how you look in bed, how can you possibly relax and enjoy intimacy? This doesn't mean a boob job or a tummy tuck are in order. Self-acceptance is always a good start, but if you need a little help whipping up your mojo, Aradia Fitness offers classes across Canada in pole dancing, striptease and lap dancing to teach women to tap into their inner sexpot.

Or try their home DVDs, which offer a step-by-step breakdown of these seductive arts and a full-body workout. Cost: \$20 each or buy your own pole (\$490) at www.aradiafitness.com which also lists classes.

If sex has lost its lustre in your long-term relationship, a little creativity can help keep things alive in the bedroom. Don't be afraid to ask your mate, "Is this still working for you?" Honesty and openness (and, of course, a little tact) can open the doors to better sex and greater intimacy.

Fantasy apparel is hot this year -- and not just because Halloween is around the corner. Why not dress up and explore your alter-ego as a French maid, prep-school delinquent or mile-high captain? There's a great selection of costumes for your every role-playing fantasy at www.arentwenaughty.com. Prices vary.

If your creative muse is more of an artiste, why not worship the sacred canvas of your partner's body with Grrr! edible body paints (\$19.99), available by calling 1-888-475-1118.

Now for the famous -- but elusive -- G-spot. For many, this sometimes-tricky-to-find erogenous zone in women and men remains unexplored territory. (A guy's g-spot equivalent is his prostate.) To help out, try The Rock Chick, a hands-free vibrator and g-spot stimulator that will put you on the fast-track to ecstasy and turn you into a believer. It's available at www.romanticgifts.com for \$69.99.

And last, but definitely not least, The Cone. It looks like some new, trendy exercise device but this is definitely a toy! (With endless play possibilities, I might add.) You can sit on it, lie on it, prop it up against the wall, balance on it, whatever your fancy.

It's got 16 built-in vibe patterns (including an instant orgasm button) and because it only penetrates a little, it tightens the area in which it's used and may have benefits for muscle rehabilitation during post-pregnancy or for incontinence sufferers. Cost: \$140. Available at www.comeasyouare.com.

Remember, play safe, play fair and have fun. As long as you're not harming yourself or your partner in any way, the rainbow's the limit.

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