

# Bring the Sexy Back

When an intimate experience is interrupted, it sucks the hotness right out of the room. Regain the romantic momentum with these tips.

By Andrea Bartz



→ Romance is a delicate thing—even when you're completely caught up in the moment, an unexpected factor (a yappy Yorkie, an obnoxious car alarm, a Girl Scout knocking at the door) can instantly kill the mood. But you don't have to let the sparks evaporate into thin air. "If you're thrown off by an interruption, your partner will be too," says Jeremy Nicholson, Ph.D., a psychologist in Boston. "Acting as if the distraction is no big deal will cue your man to get right back to business." Read on to glean strategies for bouncing back, stat.

Embrace the comedy, prevent a tragedy.

**Mood Killer:** Your boss calls while you're getting busy, and you'll be totally screwed if you don't answer.

**THE FIX:** Before you pick up, mollify your man with a preemptive thank-you. Tell him you love how awesomely supportive he is of your career and how much that means to you. "When you attribute a positive trait to someone, they want the self-esteem boost, so they'll live up to it," explains Nicholson. After you hang up

with the head honcho, reiterate the compliment and then use it as a transition back into the mood: "You are amazing. Now where were we?"

**Mood Killer:** You're enjoying a romantic dinner when your clueless relative or friend spots you and asks if she can pull up a chair.

**THE FIX:** Act quickly—the longer this person lingers, the more difficult it will be to ask her to leave. The key is

to give her a little love while immediately making it clear to your date that he's number one. "Try, 'It's so wonderful to see you, and I really want to catch up, but I want to give you my undivided attention—and right now he has it,'" suggests Nicholson. Then give her a hug and promise to call or e-mail the next day. Just be sure not to slam your pal as she trots off—à la, "I swear, does she not have any self-awareness?" Guys are more attracted to upbeat





## Scenarios that Can't Be Saved

When these happen, you should just cut your losses. Better luck next time!

**You're caught in the act—by his mom.** For the most part, parental intrusion demands that you get dressed and do damage control.

**Two words: gastrointestinal distress.** Remember the *30 Rock* episode in which Liz Lemon invites Jon Hamm's character over for a Valentine's Day cheese stew? It doesn't end well.

**The condom breaks.** Stop as soon as you notice and plan on picking up some Plan B in the morning. It's hard to get back in the swing when you're paranoid about pregnancy and STDs.

**One—or both—of you had about four too many cocktails.** Sweet nothings are less sweet when slurred. Chug a glass of water and call it a night before you unintentionally say the wrong thing and put your relationship on the rocks.

**Mood Killer:** The big birthday present he gave you is a big letdown.

**THE FIX:** Eighty-six the Oscar-worthy performance. Instead of fake gushing, appreciate the intention of the gift, says Cooper. Forget the hot mess of a present and stay positive (and stave off tears) by focusing on the many kind, sexy things your guy has done for you in the past. "It's an object, after all, and not worth ruining the time you're having together," says Cooper.

To prevent a repeat offense, wait a few weeks, then talk openly about what kinds of gifts are meaningful to you and why. And next time you two are shopping, point out stores and even specific stuff you like, plain and simple. "Guys love direction," says Cooper. "They want to know they're going to make you happy."

**Mood Killer:** You're pretty sure your roommate hears you going at it.

**THE FIX:** If you're the noisy one, try slipping his fingers into your mouth or nuzzling his neck or shoulder. "You can satisfy the urge to moan with another oral fixation," says Cooper. "Men want to know you're experiencing pleasure, so biting his shirt, for example, will turn him on." Or make the

whole thing into a sexy game: Tell him you're going to have silent sex (a finger to your lips plus a meaningful look is a good cue) and focus on your other senses as you refrain from making noise. "It feels sneaky, which ups the erotic charge," says Cooper.

If general motion is the source of your less-than-subtle soundtrack, switch to oral sex or another position that precludes creaky bedsprings.

**Mood Killer:** You're about to have sex when you realize you didn't shave or bathe today.

**THE FIX:** "Unless we're talking about gross negligence, most grooming concerns are nonissues," says Nicholson. "To put it plainly, guys do not notice this stuff as much as you think they do." In fact, many men find a woman's natural odor to be a huge turn-on.

But if his enthusiasm isn't enough to make you feel hot, take control: Suggest you shower or take a bath together, or light some candles (the glow is universally flattering) and get assertive. Guide his hands and mouth to your smoother parts so you can stay comfortable and focused, says Cooper. He'll love your take-charge attitude.

**Mood Killer:** You're completely creeped out by his dog/cat/turtle watching you from the other side of the bedroom.

**THE FIX:** While you're well within your right to politely request that Fido retire to the living room, experts agree this is more about you than about the blank-eyed pet. "There will always be distractions," says Cooper. "Here, the onus is on you to get into the erotic zone." Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and fantasize about the guy you're in bed with or even a hot celebrity in your favorite sex scene. Focus on the sensations, and as you get more and more turned on, you'll naturally forget all about what (or who) else is in the room. ■

personalities, research shows, so your frustrated trash talk could be a turnoff.

**Mood Killer:** He's being overly attentive in bed ("How is everything? Is this position OK? Did you like that? No? Do you need some water?"), and it's stressing you out.

**THE FIX:** Silver lining alert: At least your partner is focused on your pleasure and is eager to get things right. Little does he know his queries are

quashing your libido. "Most guys don't realize how much focus and concentration sex requires for women, because they don't need nearly the same amount," says Sari Cooper, a couples and sex therapist in New York City.

To correct course, drop your voice to a whisper and purr, "You're doing great. I'll show you with my hands if I want something different." Then kiss him—a surefire way to shut him up and help him take the hint.