The most intimate
Good Housekeeping test...ever!

We’ve come a long way, ladies. Vibrators are no longer giggly gifts for hen nights, they are serious aids to sexual pleasure. But how to choose? Don’t worry – we’ve done the (ahem!) hard work for you.

Does this look like a sex toy to you?
62% of women said the new-look vibrators were much more attractive and discreet

What our results show is that women today want sex toys that are not intimidating or guilty. It’s exactly this market that has inspired the launch of online boutiques like Whitley & Huiz. The site promises never to ‘talk about pink furry handcuffs, fifty shades of purple.’

Women still need to ask what they want

But if you’re keeping a vibrator will be the answer to all the problems in your sex life, be careful, because it’s not a cure-all, warns social psychologist Dr Petra Boynton. ‘If you don’t feel like having sex, it might help if you keep the tone light-hearted.’

Choose the right vibrator

Don’t just Google the word ‘vibrator’ – you’ll get 32,200,000 results, many of them off-putting and entirely unsuitable. Women’s needs differ, and a vibrator is a very personal choice. Some women have problems tipping into orgasm, a model with different vibration settings may be the answer. This article and suggest giving it a go. It’s okay to say you’re a bit nervous or embarrassed, and it might help if you keep the tone light-hearted.

Do your research!

Compare prices and functions; think about what you want from your vibrator, and use it with a water-based lube. Think about safety, too. You clearly need to be careful about what you are using in such an intimate plane! Like us, only buy from reputable retailers and websites. Watch out for cheap fakes – you don’t want to complain, and the fraudsters will be relying on that.

Pick a shape

First, decide whether you want to use your vibrator for penetration, for your clitoris, or both at the same time – that will determine the shape of the toy you want to buy. You might also want it to bend in a certain way. Either way, buy a water-based lube to use with it, otherwise it can be painful if you experience vaginal dryness.

Good (quiet) vibrations

As women get older, many find they need a stronger vibrator to feel an effect, so it’s worth buying a vibrator with varying strengths. But some can be noisy, if you don’t want others knowing what you’re up to, check out online reviews.

Pleasure any time, anywhere

If you travel a lot and want to take your vibrator through customs, you either need to be brazenly honest or complicate it by getting a discreet case and learn what you’re up to, check out online reviews.

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Pleasure any time, anywhere

If you travel a lot and want to take your vibrator through customs, you either need to be brazenly honest or complicate it by getting a discreet case and learn what you’re up to. It’s not sexy, but it is important. A silicone vibrator designed to replace the page with innocuous pictures of cappuccinos and dogs, should you have young children.’

ON THE DOWNSIDE…
The shape doesn’t really work for me.
Stocked: simplypleasure.com

The verdict: a chorus of approval – 90% of testers said they had more sex because of the survey. Many told us the trial had made a positive difference to their lives, with one person saying of the Lelo Tiani 3 vibrator for couples, ‘It was a pleasure to test, particularly as our sex life has fallen by the wayside recently.’ Of the winning vibrator, the Je Joue Mini, one woman wrote ‘I always struggled to orgasm before, but now because of this creation I feel like I know my body better and am happier in myself’.

ON THE UPSIDE…
Small and discreet, grown-up pleasure. The verdict: a generation of sex toys to see if they deliver

ON THE DOWNSIDE…
Small and discreet, grown-up pleasure. The verdict: a generation of sex toys to see if they deliver

ON THE DOWNSIDE…
The buttons are in an awkward place to change speed during use.
Stocked: jejoue.com

TRYED & TESTED
How was it for them?

We asked sex therapist Sarah Berry to help us choose five vibrators that deliver on looks as well as pleasures. Each tester received two vibrators. Our survey, conducted by YouGov Market Intelligence, involved 100 GH readers and was compiled by GH experts, was made up of a 90% strong panel of women aged 30 to 80 (50 single women and 50 couples), with varying experience of sex toys, who filled in a detailed questionnaire.

ON THE UPSIDE…
A silicone paddle that fits in your palm for external use, with a range of settings from subtle to deep vibrations.
ON THE DOWNSIDE…
‘Cute, feminine, looks nice in the palm and not a lot scary.’

ON THE DOWNSIDE…
The buttons are in an awkward place to change speed during use.

ON THE UPSIDE…
It’s a far cry from vibrators’ beginnings in a detailed questionnaire.

ON THE DOWNSIDE…
In a detailed questionnaire.

ON THE DOWNSIDE…
A pebble, a leaf or a twig, today’s vibrators are far more likely to resemble part of the male anatomy – and for good reason. Psychologist Susan Quilliam, who re-wrote the latest version of The Joy Of Sex, explains ‘Manufacturers used to think that women needed a vibrator designed like a man’s penis. They now realise it needs to be more like a woman’s hand. They’ve become less biologically realistic – and more socially acceptable.’

And women are driving the change. ‘We are better educated, earn more and have more choice about whether we walk away from an unsatisfying relationship than our mothers did. We are far more willing to take control of our own pleasure,’ says Susan. She believes that Baby Boomers, who were at the forefront of the sexual revolution, are far more aware and adventurous when it comes to see toys. ‘Women use them with their partners, but there is also a flurry of women in their late 40s, 50s and 60s who suddenly find themselves single and don’t want to forego their sex life, who want a modern, more approachable kind of vibrator.’

So, in what we believe is the largest ever survey of its kind, we asked 100 GH readers, aged between 30 and 80, to test this new generation of sex toys to see if they deliver discreet, grown-up pleasure. The verdict: a chorus of approval – 90% of testers said they are now more likely to buy a vibrator, and 62% felt they would be more likely to recommend to own one of today’s chit little numbers, with one satisfied tester of our winner, the Je Joue Mini, commenting, ‘I would be happy to buy this as a gift for a close friend as it is an object of beauty.’ Another said of the Rocks-Off Bullet, ‘It’s like a best friend/disco record for us to share there. And it’s so small I keep it in a lipstick case!’

It’s a far cry from vibrators’ beginnings as medical contraptions that were used in Victorian times as a cure for female hysterias.

Women need a cure for female hysteria.

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