

Sexual Temperament Questionnaire

(adapted and abbreviated from the SESII-W)

INHIBITORS

Unless things are “just right” it is difficult for me to become sexually aroused.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

When I am sexually aroused, the slightest thing can turn me off.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

I *have* to trust a partner to become fully aroused.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

If I am worried about taking too long to become aroused or to orgasm, this can interfere with my arousal.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

Sometimes I feel so “shy” or self-conscious during sex that I cannot become fully aroused.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

TOTAL (out of 20) _____

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EXCITORS

Often just how someone smells can be a turn on.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

Seeing a partner doing something that shows his/her talent or intelligence, or watching them interacting well with others can make me very sexually aroused.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

Having sex in a different setting than usual is a real turn on for me.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

When I think about someone I find sexually attractive or fantasize about sex, I easily become sexually aroused.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

Certain hormonal changes definitely increase my sexual arousal.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

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I get very turned on when someone wants me sexually.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all like me	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me	Exactly like me

TOTAL (out of 24) _____

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LOW SIS (0-6)

You're not so sensitive to all the reasons not to be sexually aroused. You don't tend to worry about your own sexual functioning, and body image issues don't interfere too much with your sexuality. When you're sexually engaged, your attention is not very distractible and you wouldn't be inclined to describe yourself as "sexually shy." Most circumstances can be sexual for you. You may find that your main challenge around sexual functioning is holding yourself back, reigning yourself in. Staying aware of potential consequences can help with this. Around 15% of the women I've asked fit this range.

MEDIUM SIS (7-13)

You're right in the middle, along with more than half the women I've asked. This means that so whether or not your sexual "brakes" engage will be largely dependent on context. Risky or novel situations, such as a new partner, might increase your concerns about your own sexual functioning, shyness, or your distractibility from sex. Contexts that easily arouse you are likely to be low-risk and more familiar, and any time your stress levels - including anxiety, overwhelm, exhaustion, depression - escalate, your brakes will reduce your interest in and response to sexual signals.

HIGH SIS (14-20)

You're pretty sensitive to all the reasons not to be sexually aroused. You need a setting of trust and relaxation in order to be aroused, and it's best if you don't feel rushed or pressured in any way. You might be easily distracted from sex. High SIS, regardless of SES is the most strongly correlated factor with sexual problems, so if this is you, pay close attention to the "sexy contexts" worksheets in the chapters that follow. About a quarter of the women I've asked fall into this range.

LOW SES (0-7)

You're not so sensitive to sexually relevant stimuli and need to be a more deliberate effort to tune your attention in that direction. Novel situations are less likely to be sexy to you than familiar ones. You're a person whose sexual functioning will benefit from

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adding a greater intensity of stimulation (like a vibrator) and daily practice of paying attention to sensations. Lower SES is also associated with asexuality, so if you're very low SES, you might resonate with some components of the asexual identity. The women I ask are probably higher SES than the overall population - they're women who are interested enough in sex to take a class, attend a workshop, or read a sex blog - but still about 8% of those women fall into this range.

MEDIUM SES (8-15)

You're right in the middle, so whether or not you're sensitive to sexual stimuli probably depends on the context. In situations of high romance or eroticism, you tune in readily to sexual stimuli; and in situations of low romance or eroticism, it may be pretty challenging to move your attention to sexual things. Recognize the role that context plays in your arousal and pleasure, and take steps to increase the sexiness of your life's contexts. Fully 70% of the women I've asked fall into that range.

HIGH SES (16-24)

You're pretty sensitive to sexually relevant stimuli, maybe even things humans aren't generally very sensitive to, like smell and taste. A fairly wide range of contexts can be sexual for you, and novelty may be really exciting. You may be a person who likes having sex as a way to de-stress – higher SES is correlated with greater risk for sexual compulsivity, so you may benefit from paying attention to the ways you manage stress. Your sexual functioning may benefit by making sure you create lots of time and space for your partner; because you're sensitive, you can derive intense satisfaction from your partner's pleasure, so you'll both benefit! About 16% of the women I ask fall into this group.