

# Sensate Focus: Get Out of Your Head and Into Your Body During Sex

## What Is Sensate Focus?

Sensate focus can be considered “mindfulness” for sensual touch because it places an *intentional focus on touch, without expectations, judgment, or pressure*. Sensate focus exercises can help one learn to be fully in the body during sex rather than in one’s head “spectatoring” (being aware of one’s self as if an observer), which can inhibit sexual arousal and orgasm.

## Non-Demand Touching

Sensate focus uses non-demand touching, which means you are touching with *no particular outcome or expectation in mind*. This is different from sexual foreplay. You are not trying to arouse the other person or even to pleasure them. Allow yourself to experience and enjoy touch for the sake of touch.

## Preparations

Sensate focus sessions should be scheduled ahead of time so you can mentally and physically prepare yourself and your environment to fully engage in your senses. Consider what will help you get in the mood, such as sensual music (no lyrics), candles, or lotions. Eliminate potential internal and external distractions like taking care of your to-do list first to clear your mind and turning off your phones.

## Rules of Sensate Focus

You and your partner will take turns as the giver and receiver of touch for 10 to 30 minutes each before switching. As the giver of touch, you will touch, stroke, and kiss your partner anywhere on their body except the genitals and breasts. Avoid any touch that leads to orgasm or intercourse.

The following guidelines will help you and your partner attune the physical sensations of intimate touch.

1. Pay attention to the following sensations as both the giver and receiver of touch: temperature (warm/cool), pressure (hard/soft), and texture (smooth/rough).
2. Refrain from talking as it will take you out of your body and into your head.
3. If your mind wanders, gently redirect your attention back to the sensations of touch listed above.
4. Take turns as the giver and receiver of touch that last long enough to move past any initial internal or external distractions, at least 10 minutes and up to 30 (20 to 60 minutes total) but stop or switch if you get restless or cannot redirect your attention back to the physical sensations.
5. As the receiving partner you can give your partner feedback through body language instead of words (no talking). Redirect your partner’s touch, by putting your hand over theirs to gently guide it toward certain types of touch in places that feel good or away from those that don’t.