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Gym-dandy sex: Let's get physical

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Post Health Reporter

What's the best kind of foreplay?

Try push-ups.

It may not sound very romantic, but exercise can substantially improve the quality of your sex life, according to experts.

Especially exercise just before sex, researchers report in the

February issue of *Glamour* magazine.

The keys are better blood circulation and muscle tone — not to mention a better self-image.

"A man's erection depends on blood circulation — but so does a woman's arousal system," explained James White, a former professor of physical education at the University of California at San Diego.

"Vaginal lubrication and the

swelling of the clitoris are enhanced by increased blood supply."

White estimates that three to four hours of exercise a week can improve sexual interest and function.

Hormones also play a role.

"We know that increased testosterone levels are associated with a greater sex drive," said Rudolph Dressendorfer, director of the human-performance laboratory at New Mexico Highlands University.

"In women, after exercise, it rises sharply then falls before adjusting back to normal. And the increase in testosterone has the same effect on women as on men," he said.

Santa Monica psychologist and sex therapist Linda De Villers told *The Post*: "Just because there's a sex-exercise connection doesn't inevitably demonstrate that it's all due to physical change.

"There are psycho-physiologic changes, for example, in body image."

De Villers studied 8,100 women's responses to a questionnaire in *"Shape"* magazine.

After starting a regular exercise program, 31 percent reported they had sex more frequently and 40 percent indicated an increase in their ability to become aroused.

"Improved muscle tone, particularly in the pelvic region, can lead to heightened sexual pleasure," said sex therapist Jo Marie Kessler.