



**MORE COUPLES
EXPLORE INTIMACY
AND PLEASURE IN
LOCKDOWN**

Laura Nolan and Sam Booth opt for an eco-friendly sex life; below, fluffy handcuffs. Picture: Tim Hunter

Passion at play in the bedroom

SEXUAL WELLNESS

PATRICK TADROS

Fluffy handcuffs are bringing new meaning to being locked up in lockdown, with many couples turning to adult toys to spice up their love life at home.

New eBay Australia shopping data reveals sales of sex pillows have increased by 131 per cent, the Kama Sutra guide by 130 per cent, and sales of erotic fiction are up 174 per cent as people invest in their sexual wellness.

"Much like previous lockdowns, Australians are using this time at home for some saucy self care," eBay Australia's Sophie Onikul says.

"It's clear online remains our favourite way to grab a copy of the Kama Sutra or become engrossed in the latest erotic read, rather than having to face the person behind the counter."

People are eager to get their hands on the quintessential bedroom accessory, fluffy handcuffs, with eBay seeing sales rise by 91 per cent since the pandemic began.

Sex coach Cam Fraser says lockdown has intensified the desire for sexual wellness items.

"The prospect of being in lockdown for an extended period

of time has prompted people to take a further interest in self care, in addition to a greater acceptance and understanding that a good sex life is vital for maintaining mental wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle," he says.

So what are the top selling products?

SEX TOYS BOOMING

A number of sex toy manufacturers have seen significant growth in online sex toy sales.

We-Vibe saw a 180 per cent increase in sales in Australia last month compared to sales during last year's first lockdown.

Popular products include the Nova (rabbit vibrator) and the Chorus (couples vibrator).

"We're seeing Australians use their time in lockdown to explore their sexual wellbeing and experience new kinds of pleasure," We-Vibe spokesperson Johanna Rief says.

"We encourage everybody to talk openly and learn more about what makes them feel good, which is leading to an increase in self-discovery we've never really seen before."

Women's sexual wellness brand Womanizer saw a 200 per cent increase in sales compared to last year, with its top product being the Womanizer Premium with 12 intensity levels.



Keeping love alive

- **Prioritise time for intimacy:** Making sex a priority helps many couples have great sex consistently. Rather than expecting it to just happen, this practice includes a mindset shift of seeing it as an important part of a relationship and making time for it.

- **Create some sexual variety:** It's important to get out of your usual routine to enhance desire and enjoyment. Simple things such as changing positions, where you have sex, or even introducing toys can keep things interesting.

- **Practise self care and self love:** This can be any activity such as stretching, meditation, exercising, or other practices that promote mindfulness. These can bring you a sense of joy that can help lower stress or get out of your head.

Cam Fraser, Lovehoney ambassador & sex coach



CAM FRASER

Rob Godwin, director of Lovehoney Australia, says clitoral stimulators, suction toys and wands are also popular among couples.

"There has been increased demand for app-controlled toys, which isn't unexpected with people looking for a way to connect while they are physically apart," he says. "We have also seen Aussies

purchasing our Lovehoney Advent Calendars ahead of Christmas, which come with a variety of toys and lingerie. These are a great way of experimenting and experiencing new sensations either alone or with a partner."

GREEN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

During lockdown, Laura Nolan, 28, and partner Sam Booth, 30, opted for an eco-friendly sex life, investing in sustainable toys along with a couple's board game.

"The Green Sex movement is gaining a lot of traction with innovative products coming out that are sustainable and eco-conscious, which we absolutely love to see," Laura says.

"In an environment such as lockdown where it's so easy to slip into a rut and each day feels like groundhog day, trying something for the first time together brings us closer and adds something new outside of the usual day-to-day."

"We know that intimacy and pleasure have numerous benefits when it comes to mental health, reducing stress and general wellbeing. Keeping the spark ignited and the romance alive is not just important in the perspective of a couple but also as individuals."

Sam says: "Relationships are formed through bonding over shared experiences. We're just creating new experiences to bond over and strengthen our relationship."

CELEB HEALTH Q&A



WITH JONATHON MORAN

TIM FRANKLIN

The actor who played police officer Colby Thorne on *Home And Away* reveals why meditation is his daily essential

Do you get your five a day?

Listen, I give it a red-hot go, but I think my average is about three. Broccoli is my boy, little grilled eggplant parmi is delicious, honey and cinnamon carrots is also one of my specialty side dishes.

Have you ever dieted?

I have. For different roles and for personal goals, it's always fun to challenge your self control. I went full keto once, a lot of people tell me it makes you feel lighter and more energised, and it did but mainly it just made me feel hungry. I just finished up on a World War II film and I had a certain goal in mind for that as those guys were living off very little. So to help me feel more authentic, I wanted to achieve some sort of physical change for it so I did a lot of training and they set out a dietary goal for me and to be honest it was probably healthier than what I was eating anyway. It forced me to eat a lot more greens and fruit and vegetables and more lean meats. I always feel so much better doing that.

Sleep or sex?

Sleep is always coming in second. No matter the wake-up time.

What is your absolute blowout meal?

Southern fried chicken burger and a mountain of chips.

Have you had any operations?

No, touch wood.

Biggest health mistake?

Not meditating regularly enough. Giving yourself that time to simply sit and breath and check in with yourself is essential. It really helps me not to get tangled up in the chaos of the day. It is something that just sneaks up on me - I'll be going about my day and something will frustrate me or I will keep replaying an idea in my head of how something went. I won't let that idea or thought ruin my life. My best friend is clinically depressed so it is something that we all deal with daily and need to be aware of.

What regular vitamins do you take?

Vitamin D from the sun.

Health advice you would've given yourself 10 years ago?

Surf, swim, meditate and hike, Tim! Do what you love and do it as often as you can. The way I want to exercise and do things now is to just do something enjoyable, whether it is surfing or swimming. Exercise can be such a strained and daunting thing so you have to set realistic goals. Smaller goals that are achievable would be my best advice to myself.

