

Men, Touching Breasts, and Relationship Bliss -- A Boston Sex Therapist Tutorial



By Aline Zoldbrod, Ph.D.

Men, Here Is Some Advice About Female Sexuality.

Here's a tip for straight men in the middle of long term relationships: Want to have a happier sexual relationship? Take a good look at how you relate to your woman's breasts and consciously check out whether your ongoing relationship with her breasts is for her or for YOU.

One of the things that makes it so interesting to be a sex therapist is the access I get into the patterns and secrets of men and women's sexual and emotional lives. And I'm here to tell you that in long term, steady relationships, men often get it wrong when it comes to touching their female partners' breasts. I'd guess that in about fifty per cent of the time, if not more, men wildly overestimate if, when, or how much women enjoy having their breasts (and nipples) touched.

What makes me think that I know something about how women feel about how and when they want to have their breasts touched? Well, I make my living talking about sex for a start. I hear lots of private stories. In my work, I specifically and methodically elicit this information from couples.

I'm known for a developing a technique called "drawing your BodyMap" which explores and details feelings about how men and women want to be touched by their intimate partner. In this technique, each person draws an outline of their body, front and back, and colors it in according to how he or she wants to be touched. (It's a good idea to date the BodyMap, too.) For more information about BodyMap, see [Sexsmart Body Maps](#). The color scheme is similar to a traffic light, which is a good way to remember it:

- **Green** = Go for it, touch me here.
- **Yellow or blue** = Caution, I may or may not like this, depending on factors which I may or may not be able to predict.
- **Red** = No way, Jose. Stop! Stay away.
Then, the partners share the Body Maps. Any areas of red, or blue/yellow are discussed and explained to each other.

What I have learned from looking at hundreds of these female BodyMaps is that for many women, while hair, face, ears, neck, clavicle, hands, arms, legs, feet, back and buttocks are often green, breasts are often yellow -- the "caution" colors. Why is this?

There are several reasons. For some women, breasts are not their favorite part of their body. They don't like their appearance, or breasts aren't anywhere near their favorite pleasure zone. And women's feelings about their breasts can change over time. I've seen women who loved their breasts more or less after childbearing, for example. Most commonly, women tell me that their breasts are an area that they prefer to have touched only after they have warmed up, sexually, and have been touched affectionately in areas which are much less obviously sexual.

The number one rarely-noted faux pas I see in long term heterosexual relationships vis a vis breasts is men grabbing their partners breasts out of the blue when the men want to make affectionate or emotional contact. This just drives women wild. And not with lust, with irritation. A typical scenario is as follows. Maybe the man and the woman both work outside the house and they're home after a long commute back from work. It's hectic, trying to get dinner on the table. She's making a stir fry, standing in front of the stove with her hands near a bunch of sputtering oil. He is feeling amorous and friendly, and he's setting the table, and all of a sudden, he comes around behind her and grabs her breasts. But lo and behold, instead of his action being endearing, his partner screams at him that he's being a total jerk. He's hurt and confused. He just wanted to be close, to make contact. She thinks he's a complete idiot. She's busy cooking, she's doing something where she could be burnt, he startled her, and basically, she thinks he is a selfish idiot. One of my clients labeled this move "the smash and grab."

Another woman I have worked with, a mother with small children, reported a similar episode. Her husband came home from work. She was busy trying to care for their two young girls at what mothers call "the witching hour" when children are off the wall, tired, hungry and cranky, and they need to be fed dinner, washed, and put to bed. She was busy with the kids and with cooking. He entered the kitchen and came from behind, put his arms around her, and grabbed her breasts. She pushed him away. She was angry at his insensitivity and felt this behavior was much too sexual to do in front of the kids. She commented that she felt like saying to her husband, "This is NOT how you would touch me if you love me. This is how you touch me if you WANT something."

So guys, think before you grab. After the lust stage of the relationship is over, I swear, I think this way of initially approaching a beloved woman is more likely to trigger irritation, negative thoughts, and rejection than it is to create closeness and sexual longing.

A second breast-related error has to do with men's approach to women's breasts during actual foreplay and lovemaking once the relationship is established and out of the lust stage. Men tend to touch women's breasts much, much sooner than many women enjoy. If you do the BodyMap exercise with your partner, you can create a safe and intimate discussion of her sexual likes and dislikes and find out when and how she likes to have her breasts and nipples touched.

So, women, chime in, and tell me whether what I am saying describes how you feel. And if I'm right, or wrong, tell me. But if I'm right, for goodness sake, tell your partner!

Happy lovemaking,
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