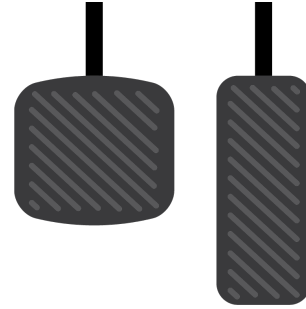


# Brakes and Accelerators

## Exercise



This is a classic exercise in the sex therapy field that is typically valuable - and sometimes surprising to couples. Agree as a couple to work on this together, though it can be beneficial for yourself if your spouse isn't willing to join you.

Sexual arousal (and sexual desire) are not light switches where they are either on or off. It's more like driving a car with accelerators and brakes.

**Sexual Accelerators** are those things that excite us – even in subtle ways. They are the “turn ons”. Accelerators add energy to arousal.

**Sexual Brakes** are those things that tend to hinder sexual excitement. They are the “turn offs”. Brakes tend to remove energy from arousal.

There is great value in identifying your own Brakes and Accelerators and sharing them with your spouse. The following worksheets are designed as a simple guide to assist you.

- 1) Find time to work on filling out the worksheets on your own. You might decide (as a couple) to do them one stage at a time or all together. Allow yourself plenty of time though. List out those things that serve as breaks to your arousal and those that serve as accelerators.
- 2) Schedule a time to share your answers with each other. Take turns sharing items. Work hard to stay curious in exploring what your spouse is sharing with you.

Remember:

- Your, and your spouse's, brakes and accelerators may not be stereotypical.
- Reach beyond the obvious. Lack of sleep, not hearing from you all day, playing with the kids, dressing up, telling me what you love about my body, talking less...
- It may be a brake in one stage and an accelerator in another.
- It may be a brake one week, and an accelerator in another. Help your spouse learn when to know for each.
- If you have trouble talking through them, back up and work on general communication skills first (<http://lovetakeslearning.com> is my favorite).

Stay curious, cherishing, and affirming with each other.



**BRAKES**

*(I am more turned on when..)*

**ACCELERATORS**

*(I am more turned off when..)*

**Setting**

Cultural, relational, and sexual context



**BRAKES**

*(I am more turned on when..)*

**ACCELERATORS**

*(I am more turned off when..)*

**Seduction**

What “draws you in” or “pushes you away”?



## Brakes and Accelerators Exercise

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**BRAKES**

*(I am more turned on when..)*

**ACCELERATORS**

*(I am more turned off when..)*

**Spark**

Initiating the sexual event



## Brakes and Accelerators Exercise

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**BRAKES**

*(I am more turned on when..)*

**ACCELERATORS**

*(I am more turned off when..)*

**Sensation**



## Brakes and Accelerators Exercise

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**BRAKES**

*(I am more turned on when..)*

**ACCELERATORS**

*(I am more turned off when..)*

**Surrender**



## Brakes and Accelerators Exercise

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**BRAKES**

*(I am more turned on when..)*

**ACCELERATORS**

*(I am more turned off when..)*

**Reflection**