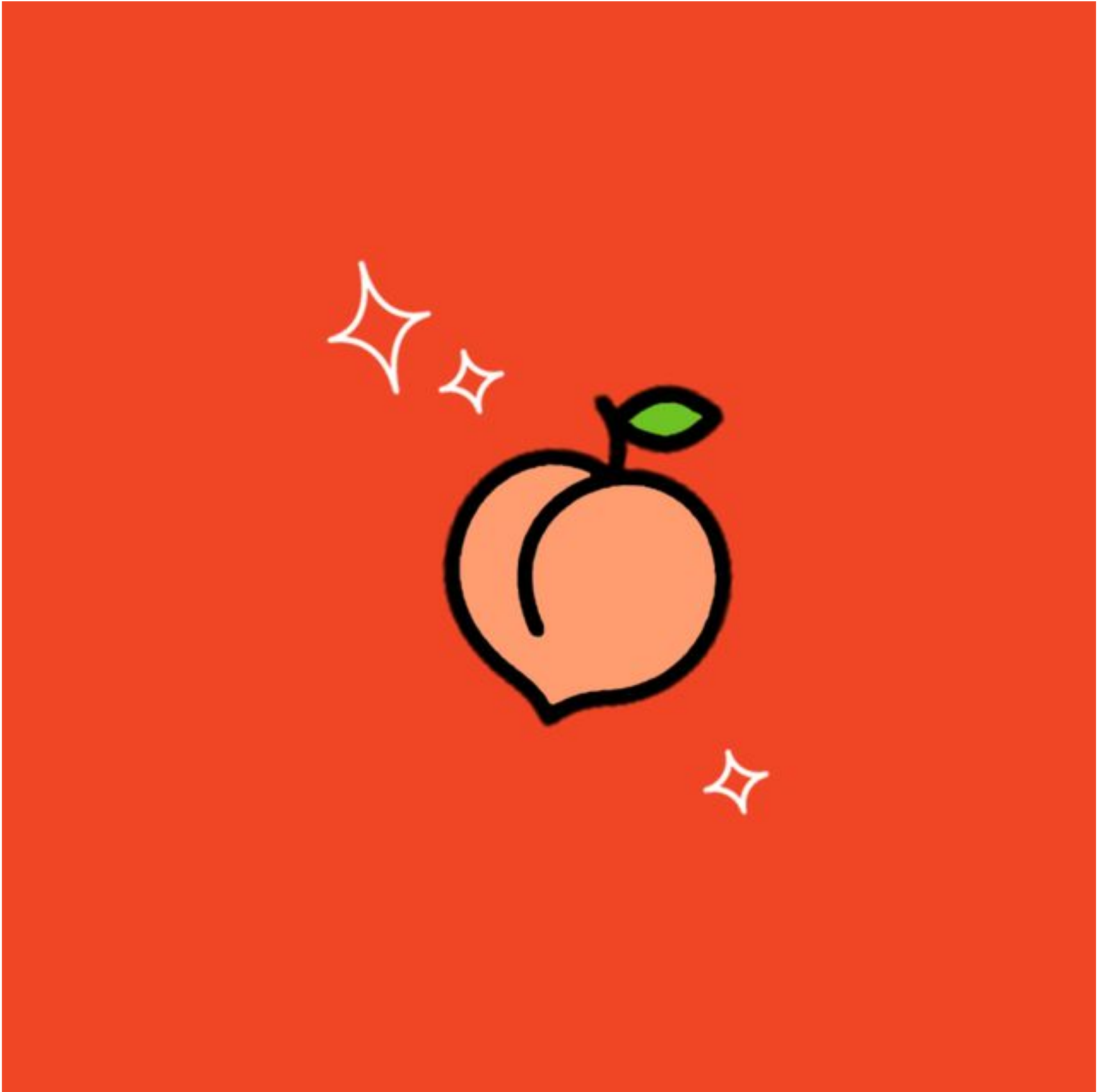


Everything You Could Possibly Need to Know About Anal Sex

Consider this your complete beginner's guide.

By [Anna Breslaw](#) and [Carina Hsieh](#) Jul 20, 2020



While pop culture might have you believing that anal sex is an act that can

just *happen* organically without tons of lube and prep beforehand, that's just not really how it goes. Sure, the ol' "sorry, I slipped and almost went into the wrong hole" thing happens sometimes, but it's rare that the slipping excuse would result in full-penetration in your ass — unless you had a LOT of lube involved on both your bum, your partner's penis, and even then, unlikely.

But if you're willing to dedicate some time to prepwork (aka [anal training](#)), do your research, and buy a few lubes beforehand, anal sex can be uber pleasurable. Who knows, it [might even become your favorite](#).

Yes, anal sex does require some [extra preparation](#), but aside from that, it's just another sex act. Whether you're still debating trying it out, or are already committed to doing it, here's everything you need to know about anal sex for beginners.

More from Cosmopolitan

[How to Buy a Suction Sex Toy | How to Sex Toy](#)

1. Know that anal play can very much be considered pleasurable for women, even though you might not have a prostate.

While the prostate and P-Spot is widely associated as being known for the reason why butt stuff feels so good for prostate and penis-having folks, there are plenty of valid reasons why anal could still be pleasurable for non-prostate having women as well.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

There's not a lot of information on cis-women's motivations and attitudes on anal play due to a lack of research surrounding the subject (hi science, get on it!), as [Amanda Cruz Gerena](#), counseling psychologist and sex therapist explains.

However, she adds: "the few studies that have centered pleasure in anal

play have found that what some cis-women find pleasurable is: the arousing sensation due to wonderful nerve endings, avoiding vaginal sex due to menstrual period, pleasing their sexual partner, the eroticization of pain or discomfort (which is likely related to the 'forbidden experience'), and arousing feelings of sexual submissiveness."

Remember, a pleasurable experience can be just as much mental as physical! If you're turned on by taboos and the power play experience anal can entail, that's valid too!

2. Know some background about what anal sex entails (aka lube) and some basic ground rules (ie, don't go from anal to vaginal without washing) before your first time.

For newbies, you'll want to prep and get lots o' lube ready before you go into things. Gerena suggests applying lube directly on the anus, as well as adding lube to what you'll be penetrating with (be it fingers, a toy, a penis, etc.). Unlike the vagina, the anus does not self-lubricate, meaning you'll be opening yourself (or your partner up) to potential tears and cuts in the skin as well as a whole lot of pain if you go it unlubricated.

If you're using condoms and toys, go with a water-based lube, as these are condom and toy compatible (oil and silicone based lubes can deteriorate the material in condoms or toys). "Researching for the right lube is a must," says Gerena — so don't assume the ol' trial-sized bottle of whatever you got from that sex store one time will be fine. It's worth the prepwork to look into a good anal-specific lube if you can.

3. Don't go from anal to vaginal in one session.

It's best to avoid going from anal to vaginal sex says Gerena. Why? Any bacteria found in your stool can increase your risk at acquiring infections like UTIs, bacterial vaginosis, yeast infections, and more. If you absolutely must go from anal to vaginal, "wash the penis, finger, or toy that was

introduced in the anus before introducing it in the vaginal canal," says Gerena.

4. Don't forget the condoms and dental dams.

Gerena says that dental dams are a good source of protection when you or your partner engage in rimming. Fecal bacteria is no joke and dental dams are absolutely worth the peace of mind.

5. If you haven't already tried dipping into anal training, try that first. Your muscles probs need it!

As the saying goes, "Don't go from 0 to 60 without [anal training](#) first," (just kidding, this isn't actually a saying, but it should be). Going from having nothing up your ass ever to suddenly a whole penis can be jarring (in many ways). You can make it easier for yourself by anal training or gradually introducing larger and larger toys into your anus to "train" your muscles to get used to it.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

6. Get your space ready.

The rumors are true: Anal does have the possibility of getting messy. Like anything sex related, when you're swapping bodily fluids, unwrapping condoms, using lube, there's the potential to stain or make a mess. If you want extra peace of mind, make sure the surface you and your partner engage on is comfortable and washable. "That way, you can focus completely on creating a memorable experience for yourself," says Danyell Fima, cofounder of [Velvet Co.](#)

7. Stay away from numbing creams.

Sure, the idea of a numbing cream that protects you from feeling any potential pain during anal is nice, but the risk for injury down the line is not

worth it. "Avoid numbing creams. I know they are tempting, but pain is your body's way of letting you know something is wrong," says sex educator [Wendasha Jenkins Hall](#), PhD. "If your anus is numb, you can't tell if any of your activities are causing damage. You can't feel if you need more lube or if your body is tightening up to the penetration or impact."

8. Try it solo first.

Take any pressure to perform off yourself by trying penetrative anal sex alone first. Get a toy and a condom (for easier cleanup) and go at your own pace. "Solo anal play allows your body's sensations and responses to flow more freely, helping you gain a much better understanding of what feels good and what doesn't, which you can then share with a partner before you try anal sex together," explains [Jess O' Reilly](#), resident sexologist at [Astroglide](#).

9. Don't try it if you don't want to.

There's a big difference between "I don't necessarily fantasize about getting a penis enema but I want to blow my partner's mind" and "I would rather die than do this but I guess I can suffer through it because he's been pressuring me." If you're in a mutually caring, healthy relationship (with a guy who goes down on you for half an hour, minimum), maybe you'll want to do it for your partner or you won't. Either way is a hundred percent fine, and if he keeps pressuring you when you have made it clear that it is not on the table, tell him to suck it.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

10. Try out non-penetrative anal play first.

Before embarking on the full monte of penetrative anal sex, you can—and should!—give [lighter anal play](#) a try. This is open to interpretation and could mean anything from [toys to fingers or mouths](#). It'll give you a lower-pressure

idea of what the ~sensations~ of anal stimulation feel like and is a way of working up to the big show. Or not! If you decide some light anal play is all you're interested in, camp out there forever. No rules here, except to use lube, have consent, and USE LUBE.

11. If it hurts, stop!

Some, well, let's call them *new* sensations are to be expected—a lot of women say it feels like they need to poop or like a primal, pressure feeling. But like any other sex act, if things start to hurt in a way that's no longer fun, you should stop. Injuries from anal sex are possible but [super rare](#). Pain most commonly comes from anal fissures, or little tears in the tissue around the anus, which is very thin and delicate. A good way to remedy that is using lots of lube and smarting with smaller objects, rather than big ones.

12. You might bleed a little.

As always, if you're bleeding profusely or persistently (like for longer than an hour), you should call a doctor. But a little blood during anal play or sex [isn't abnormal](#). Partha Nandi, MD, a gastroenterologist and health editor with WXYZ-TV in Detroit, tells Cosmopolitan.com the most common reason for bleeding after anal sex is [anal tears](#)—small tears or fissures in the delicate anal canal tissue. Before you freak out at the thought of “anal tears,” know that most of these are so tiny you won't even feel them, and a lot of them don't produce any blood at all. But, like snowflakes, no two anal tears are the same, so yours may bleed a bit. These little guys should heal within a few days but may cause a bit of mild discomfort when you're pooping.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

Another really common cause is a [hemorrhoid](#) (yup, we're talkin' hemorrhoids, folks) you didn't know about. This is a bit more alarming, because a hemorrhoid holds a bunch of blood inside. You'll probably feel

some level of discomfort or pain if you have a hemorrhoid, and if it bursts, you'll definitely see some bleeding that should totally subside within a few days.

13. You're gonna wanna be vocal during this process.

Even if you're normally very quiet during sex, this is a time you'll wanna speak up—especially your first time trying it out with a new partner. Tell them if they're going too fast (or too slow—see point 10 below), if you feel like you're literally about to poop everywhere or if you're experiencing pain/discomfort. Also, tell them if it feels good! If you're feeling nervous, chances are your partner is too. Positive feedback—we love it!

14. Throw other stimulation into the mix.

Listen, they don't make those wild-looking, three-pronged sex toys for nothing. Once you're in the groove of things, add in some clit stimulation, some vaginal stimulation, or heck, all three. Some women say this combo [feels overstimulating in the best way](#). In any case, [most women](#) need some combination of stimulation to orgasm—whether that's clit/vaginal, or anal/clit+vaginal is totally subjective. But isn't it fun to learn new things about your own orgasms?

15. Even if you're monogamous, a condom is probably a good idea.

It prevents bacteria from the bowels spreading anywhere. (I know, you really wanna fuck now.) Sexpert [Emily Morse](#) advises keeping baby wipes on the nightstand and to “never use the same condom going from vaginal to anal and back again.” For [obvious reasons/poopy vagina](#).

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

16. The right lube is twice as important as it is when having vaginal sex, which is already super important.

You might have heard that too much [lube](#) takes away the friction that makes it feel good for the dude. That's bullshit. There is no such thing as too much [lube](#), because it makes it feel slightly less like you are using your butthole as a handbag for a flashlight.

17. Between thin water-based lubes (like [Astroglide](#)) and thicker ones ([KY](#)), go with the thicker ones, because they don't dry out as quickly.

In sex educator [Tristan Taormino's](#) crazy-helpful [Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Women](#), she mentions that Crisco has been a favorite of the LGBTQ+ community for a long time, but it's bad to use with condoms because it can eventually poke tiny holes in the latex.

The oil-based ones are also pretty annoying to get off afterward. We used Vaseline, but my boyfriend later realized that it deadens sensation on the skin, which was obviously helpful for my asshole but bad for his orgasm. So maybe don't do that or start with a bit of that but then switch, because it'll take really long for your partner to come, if they even can.

18. Getting the tip in hurts the most, because the head of the penis is the widest part.

Once you're past that and up to the shaft, it'll feel a little better. Remember how much regular sex hurt at first for some of us? (Unless I guess the guy's shaft is the same width as his head, in which case are you guys gonna break up when he has to go back to Xavier's Academy for Gifted Youngsters?)

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

19. Relax your PC muscles as much as possible.

Relaxing and constricting the pubococcygeus (PC) muscles is like the anal version of doing [Kegels](#). You can worry about that later on—right now just let your butthole muscles go, like you're about to poop (you won't,

probably).

20. You're going to freak the fuck out that you're pooping but you're not.

Honestly, it becomes hard to tell if you are or aren't; additionally, [this Tucker Max story](#) was not helpful for my butt-sex phobia. You're probably not gonna poop. If there's a little bit of poop, as my partner said, it's not a big deal, because "[he] asked for this." (There wasn't.)

21. You can lie flat on your stomach, get in doggy-style, or do missionary—and that is the order of what will hurt the least to the most.

At least, in my (minimal) experience. You can tear your anus if you use a certain position that allows for more penetration before you're ready, and Taormino points out that the missionary position allows for the least clitoral stimulation and suggests receiver-on-top for beginners. "Insertive partners who are inexperienced, nervous about how to penetrate their partners anally, or fearful of hurting their partners may find this position most relaxing because the receiver can do much of the decision-making and work."

Don't worry about disappointing him by wanting to go slow and gently. You're not being a buzzkill who's squashing his porn-influenced fantasies of pounding the shit out of a girl's butt. You are being an awesome and selfless (if butt sex is not on your list of must-have sex) partner.

22. Like peeing immediately after sex to avoid a UTI, it's good to go to the bathroom right after you're done.

You'll also probably feel like you have to anyway. You have also opened yourself up to the joy of butt queefs. They're not farts, no matter what anyone says. Unlike frontal queefs, they might go on for a few hours as the

air escapes. On the bright side, you are a human beatbox, and your partner can lay a sick freestyle over the top if s/he feels so inclined.

23. If you despise it, never do it again.

It shouldn't take you a few hellish rounds to finally decide it's not for you. If you hate it, you hate it, and that is fine. I didn't *hate* it, and it was psychologically gratifying to watch my partner's mind being blown. I'd do it again as a "special occasion" thing, like on our anniversary...or Flag Day.

Want to get the hottest sex positions, the wildest confessions, and the steamiest secrets right to your inbox? Sign up for our sex newsletter ASAP.

[Subscribe](#)

[Carina Hsieh](#) Sex & Relationships Editor Carina Hsieh lives in NYC with her French Bulldog [Bao Bao](#) — follow her on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) • Candace Bushnell once called her the Samantha Jones of Tinder • She enjoys hanging out in the candle aisle of TJ Maxx and getting lost in Amazon spirals.