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Scientists and psychologists have conducted countless studies on human sexuality. Dr.

William Masters and Virginia Johnson's research is the most renowned and frequently reviewed. Their findings on human physiological arousal established a baseline model for societal understanding. In the 1960s, Masters and Johnson discovered the sexual response cycle in both men and women. The sexual response cycle has four phases, but their findings indicate that each sex experiences the cycle differently. The first phase is excitement or sexual arousal. During this phase, both men and women experience a similar change when aroused. Blood flow increases to the genitals causing the clitoris to swell for women, and the penis to become erect for men. Due to this increase in blood circulation, the female body begins to naturally lubricate the inner walls of the vagina in preparation for penetration.

The female's nipples also become sensitive and sexually arousing to the touch. The male's testicles will begin to swell causing the scrotum to tighten. Of course, these changes will vary depending on the person. Next, the plateau phase occurs, which is similar to the excitement phase, but more intensified. Both men and women will experience an increase in blood pressure and heart rate and possibly muscle spasms and uncontrolled vocalizations.

For women, the clitoris and vagina will become more sensitive. The clitoris may even retract to avoid direct contact from the man. For men, the penis will secrete pre-ejaculatory liquid, helping to lubricate the vagina during

penetration. When sexual stimulation is at its peak the body reaches the breaking point: the orgasm. The orgasm phase is self-explanatory. During this phase, both male and females may have an orgasm.

Some females may not achieve an orgasm. Men may reach an orgasm extremely fast; as for women it might take them a little longer to achieve one, if one at all. Some women can have multiple orgasms in a single sexual experience, while men need a break after experiencing one orgasm. Women experience muscle and body contractions while having an orgasm. If an orgasm is reached, both the men and women release endorphins causing a euphoric state to occur. Last, but not least, is the resolution phase.

For women, if sexual stimulation continues there may be an increase on the amount of orgasms experienced. However, men need a recovery period before being able to reach orgasm again; this amount of time depends on the man. Once sexual stimulation has ceased for both women and men, the body goes back to a normal non-sexually aroused state. Blood flow reduces and the clitoris and the penis return to their natural states. The study of human sexuality is a mysterious and ongoing process that is constantly researched and updated. Dr. William Masters and Virginia Johnson's sexual response cycle differs from person to person and can be affected by age and an individual's mental health.

Not all men and women share the same sexual response in each of the four phases. However, one thing is for sure, Masters and Johnson's human sexual response model will remain the backbone for human sexuality for years to come.

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