

+ SHARP PRACTICE

ACUPUNCTURIST GERAD KITE IS KNOWN AS 'THE DADDY OF ALL FERTILITY EXPERTS'. WITH OFFICES IN LONDON'S NEW BOND STREET, HARVEY NICHOLS AND HARRODS, KITE SPECIALISES IN GETTING SPERM INTO SHAPE – AND HELPING YOU KEEP THEM THAT WAY

"One of the remarkable things when men talk about their sperm is that they refer to it as being something that's separate, not understanding that this is their very essence," Kite explains. "Each sperm is actually a mini-reflection, on every level, of what men have been eating and drinking, how they've been feeling, what they've been doing and when they've gone to bed. The Western medical approach, however, is very scientific: there's you and there's your sperm in a Petri dish."

Fertility is generally logged as being pretty much a fifty-fifty problem between males and females, but for men there's a whole issue around shame and masculinity. As Kite says, men tend to have just one sperm test done, when actually you need to work on profiles from three or four tests over a period of time. Because sperm changes, literally, by the day.

"The traditional test will profile volume (healthy being around 40 million sperm per specimen), motility (the ability of sperm to move properly towards an egg) and morphology, which is the actual construction of the sperm," says Kite. "But scientists are now discovering the role of DNA and lifestyle in sperm construction. So men who were told there was nothing wrong after a standard test but then develop sperm problems usually only have themselves to blame. You can have perfectly healthy sperm cells, but as they develop (in three-month cycles), your lifestyle during that period

is of key importance. Think of it as survival of the fittest, where nature only wants the strongest to survive."

So how can acupuncture help? "The big challenge is trying to get people to understand that it is not a 'fix-it' treatment. It's there to remind your system of what it's hard-wired to do. From an acupuncturist's point of view, when we see men with low sperm counts, that's just a symptom, not their true problem. Chasing symptoms doesn't work. Human beings are meant to procreate."

"Acupuncturists are looking at the much bigger picture – how patients' systems have stopped functioning. The way that I'd encourage a man is to say that acupuncture is a very effective tool that can help them in a deep, physical, emotional way – rewiring the system so that it works properly. The human body has a network of energy channels – meridians – that carry energy to every cell, much like the vascular system carrying the blood. The acupuncturist inserts his needles into points along this network and encourages the correct flow of energy, helping all vital organs function at their best."

"The important thing is that people feel different after the treatment, that there's a benefit. Even though it's maintenance treatment, they should feel that there's a shift in them, that life seems to work better or that their relations with people at work seem easier. KATE COURTENAY
KITE CLINIC, 73 NEW BOND STREET, LONDON W1. KITECLINIC.CO.UK



FOUR KEY FACTORS FOR SAFEGUARDING SPERM

1 WATCH THE ALCOHOL

If you're going to drink, you're better off having two pints of beer a day than having nothing and then blitzing six at once. Bingeing is the worst thing, literally obliterating a whole batch of sperm coming through. Which means that for a month after that, whatever they do is a total waste of time. The same goes for drugs.

2 DIET AND FLUID INTAKE ARE VITAL FOR SPERM PRODUCTION

A panicked body interprets dehydration as potential death, pumping more adrenaline into the blood and shutting down sperm production. The body doesn't want to be making babies in a fight-or-flight situation.

3 CONSIDER THE LAWS OF NATURE

Generally, it's the male energy that pursues the female energy – the sperm goes looking for the egg. So it's essential that the sperm have that kind of energy and dynamism.

4 KEEP A LID ON STRESS

We think it's normal to work 12 hours a day, to drink half a bottle of wine a night, to fight with a partner. But it isn't. It doesn't take much to tip you over into the negative zone when it comes to fertility.

FLOOR PLAY

BEFORE PERFORMING ANY BEDROOM GYMNASTICS, MAKE SURE YOU ARE WARMED UP AND READY FOR ACTION WITH THESE THREE STRETCHES – BELIEVE US, SHE'LL THANK YOU FOR IT



LOWER-BACK STRETCH

Lie flat on your back with your legs bent, feet flat on the floor and arms at your sides. Draw your knees to your chest and grab your legs just behind the knees. Pull both knees towards your chest as far as you can and hold that stretch for 15-30 seconds.

Why? "A loose lower back will help your back last longer when you're on top," says Siski Green, author of *How To Blow Her Mind In Bed* (Piatkus, £9.99).



HIP STRETCH

Stand with your feet together, hands on your hips. Take a small step forwards and keep your toes facing frontwards. Keep your chest high, then push your pelvis forward until you feel a stretch in your hips. Hold this stretch for 15-30 seconds on each leg.

Why? "Keeping these muscles flexible will help you stay strong and avoid upper-thigh cramps during any standing positions," says Green.



GLUTE STRETCH

Lie back with knees bent, feet flat. Bring left knee to chest. Grab outside of knee with your right hand and gently pull it as far toward your right shoulder as is comfortable. Hold for 15-30 seconds, repeat on other leg.

Why? "When she's on top, you get the flexibility to adjust your pelvis in ways that hit the right spot," says Green. **DT**

