

Do College Women Watch Porn? Collegiettes Weigh In

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Porn is a topic that many collegiettes wonder about but would never talk about openly. Sure, plenty of movies and television shows depict young men watching porn (and awkwardly getting caught by their parents), but rarely are women ever depicted watching porn; if anything, it's considered an "icky" topic for ladies.

So the big question is: do collegiettes watch porn? And what are their feelings on it? Her Campus surveyed more than 50 college women nationwide, a huge portion of whom (more than half!) watch porn. So, what are their reasons for watching it or not? These ladies will tell you themselves!

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Why do collegiettes watch porn?

Of the 52 women we surveyed, 58 percent said they watch porn. Of these 30 women, all of them said they started watching it in college. Some collegiettes started watching it for experimentation or fantasy; others were just curious and wanted to see what all the fuss was about. Almost all of these women said they watch it alone, but two of them watch it with their boyfriends as a means to spice things up in the relationship.

But the question is, is porn a disgusting thing to watch? Our experts tell us that a little porn isn't bad! Celeste Hirschman and Danielle Harel, creators of the Somatica Method^[5] of sex coaching and relationship therapy, think that porn can be an important step for collegiettes who are just starting to explore their sexualities. "We think that it is wonderful for women to spark their fantasies in all sorts of ways, including porn," they said in a joint statement.

In addition, watching porn can be a big stress reliever! "Do you ever feel tenser after releasing a big O? Nope, definitely not," says Dr. Sadie Allison, founder of TickleKitty.com^[6]. "Self-love and sex can release stress and relax your entire body, which can in turn make it easier to focus on other aspects of your life."

Dr. Allison also believes that watching porn can help with sexual confidence. Some ladies might want help figuring out which techniques and positions to try^[7] but feel shy about asking others, so porn could be beneficial to them.

What do collegiettes who watch porn think about it?

"I actually started watching porn when I got to college because I got freaked out by how sexual college seemed. People were talking about hooking up constantly, and I didn't want to be left behind or be inexperienced." – *Jessica**, Wesleyan University '16

"I watch porn and think it's completely natural. I took a class on ancient civilizations, and I learned that the people in these cultures all had their own ways of doing and watching porn, which I found fascinating. However, I do think porn has changed since 2000 B.C., and college women should give a lot of thought to their health^[8], privacy and safety if they're going to watch it." – *Melissa**, Sarah Lawrence College '14

"I watch porn to get in the mood sometimes, and I don't think there's anything wrong with it. Sex is a complicated and tricky thing, and different things work for different people." – *Alex**, University of Southern California '14

“My boyfriend and I started watching porn when we wanted to spice things up in our relationship. We’ve been dating for over three years, so after a while, we were looking for something new. It was actually kind of exhilarating (and a little awkward at first) to try out some of the stuff we saw, but in a strange way, it made our relationship stronger.” – *Lauren**, *New York University ‘14*

“I watch porn, and I have since my freshman year. I think a lot of girls get grossed out by the idea of it, but it honestly made me more cognizant of sex in general—how stuff works, what doesn’t work, what to try, things like that. I think regardless of how you do it, it’s important to get acquainted with your body and with sex, and porn is just how I went about it.” – *Julie**, *Wesleyan University ‘15*

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What are the downsides to watching porn?

Kelly Notaras, a sex and relationship consultant^[11], thinks porn might not be the best way to learn about your own sexuality. “The basic reason is that porn teaches us to have a type of sex that looks and sounds good on camera—rather than sex that actually feels good,” she explains. “The deepest, most connected, most erotic sexual engagement often looks slow and unimpressive from the outside.”

Dr. Allison agrees, highlighting that porn can create false body and performance expectations. “Yes, porn stars are beautiful with rock-hard bodies and perfect performance tools, but that doesn’t mean you should view yourself any differently after watching a skin flick,” she says. “Porn stars are paid to sell you on the fantasy, and all human bodies are beautiful in their own way. Besides, having sex or masturbating is supposed to make you feel sexier; if anything you’re watching is making you feel uncomfortable, it might be time to try something else.”

Furthermore, Hirschman and Harel explain that porn can have negative psychological effects. “The drawbacks for young women would be if this [is] the only or main place they are exploring their desires and fantasies,” they explain. “Porn, in general, bypasses our physiological arousal system and works through psychological arousal, so it is very quick and may make women feel like their regular arousal curve during sex is too slow, when, in fact, physiological arousal is much slower.”

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What do collegiettes who don’t watch porn think of it?

“I personally do not watch porn, but I think it’s totally okay for women to do so! College is about experimentation, and people can do as they please in the privacy of their own homes or dorm rooms.” – Jenna*, *New York University* ‘15

“I personally choose not to watch porn because I think it’s disgusting. I know other people do and I’m all for people doing what they want to do, but it’s not something I’m interested in, nor would I watch it in the future.” – *Rachel**, *University of Virginia* ‘16

“I think porn can have many negative ‘side effects’ that many people don’t really question. For example, a lot of porn websites are teeming with viruses, and it’s easy to catch one on your computer; I don’t really think there’s such a thing as a ‘safe porn website,’ and replacing your hardware could lead to expenses and a little embarrassment. In addition, there’s the psychological effect of it all. Many of the things porn stars do aren’t realistic; a lot of times, they’re degrading, unsafe and unhealthy. Watching these things can give someone an illogical or distorted perception of sex and relationships^[14], and these thoughts can get worse over time.” – *Jamie**, *University of Southern California* ‘16

“I choose not to watch porn. Someone in my family has a sex addiction, and it all started with that person watching too much porn. I think, though, it can be okay for some people and purposes, [but] it’s easy to get carried away. Any person (collegiette or otherwise) should give a lot of thought to it before doing it, much like any other big decision.” – *Rebecca**, *University of Arizona* ‘14

“I think there are healthier ways to pursue relationships and sex than porn. Colleges need to talk about sex in a more positive and healthy way (as opposed to the “Use condoms! Don’t get STDs!” thing they’re doing now), and I think doing so will lead to fewer people watching porn and more people being happy with their sex lives.” – *Katherine**, *University of Florida* ‘15

So, porn or no porn?

What’s the takeaway from all these collegiettes sharing their thoughts and opinions? Watching porn is more common than you think, but the decision to do it or not is completely up to you! Everyone has their own reasons for doing what they do, and like any other decision, it’s important to weigh the pros and cons and also think about what works for you.

What do the experts recommend for collegiettes looking to explore their sexuality? Hirschman and Harel have a couple of suggestions. “In order for women to find out what they want sexually, it would also be helpful for them to masturbate without porn and read how-to books about how their body works, to find out what makes their body feel good and to be able to ask specifically for certain kinds of touch from their lovers,” they say.

Exploring your sexuality is important for both your health^[15] and your general well-being, so figure out what’s best for you!

**Names have been changed.*

1. <http://www.hercampus.com/tag/porn>
2. <http://www.hercampus.com/tag/sex-0>
3. <http://www.thebuccaneer.com/photos09/09-romance-2013-760.jpg>
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