

Kimberly Blaker
P.O. Box 5585
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 397-3510
info@KimberlyBlaker.com

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“From Bedroom to Boudoir”

Create a sensual environment for renewing your relationship

(Alternate subtitle: A parents’ guide for renewing romance)

By Kimberly Blaker

Has your bedroom lost its touch? Does it seem like the same dull routine every time you head to what was once a magical lair? After being together for a while, that once yearned for familiarity turns into a longing for the unexpected. So why not give your room a lift?

As the ancient Chinese philosophy of Feng Shui points out, your surroundings play a large role in the quality of your love life. Although much of this philosophy is rooted in superstition, there’s no question that environment plays a crucial role in our mood and desires.

Incorporate pleasures in your bedroom for all of your senses to savor, from romantic sounds, sensual sights, and exquisite touchables, to savory tastes and aromatic fragrances. Try some of these ideas and transform your humdrum room into a lover’s lane.

[Alternate introduction:

Is parenting putting a damper on your marriage? With kids, finding time to relax is difficult enough, let alone finding the time or mood for romance. So, turn familiarity into the unexpected you long for by giving your room a lift and creating a magical lair.

As the ancient Chinese philosophy of Feng Shui points out, your surroundings play a large role in the quality of your love life. Although much of this philosophy is rooted in superstition, there’s no question that environment plays a crucial role in our mood and desires.

Use your bedroom to close off the rest of the world and incorporate pleasures for all of your senses to savor, from romantic sounds, sensual sights, and exquisite touchables, to savory tastes and aromatic fragrances. Try some of these ideas and transform your humdrum room into a lover’s lane.]

Aromatherapy

Aroma is an essential ingredient in creating the right mood. Choose from many fragrant scents that come in a variety of forms, from incense, sprays, and candles to cologne and scented body lotions. Also, try some of these aromatic touches.

- For lasting fragrance, lightly spray your favorite cologne on the sheets for a fresh, inviting scent.
- Open the windows and let the fresh breeze softly whisper through to enhance your room.
- Set out a box of gourmet chocolates. The aroma of chocolate alone is a great aphrodisiac.
- Fresh cut flowers are an inviting addition. Try different types to determine which have lingering scents.

- Too much fragrance is bothersome to some. Strive for a pleasant aroma that’s not overpowering. If your partner is sensitive or allergic to fragrance, forego it altogether.

An Irresistible Vision

Men are most stimulated visually, so they want to see the woman they are with. Play this up, and you’re bound to hold his heart.

- Each of us looks great in particular colors—and those colors may not necessarily be red or black. Choose those that look best on you. To determine which colors compliment you, there are several books available to assist in finding your best colors and shades. Drape different colors over your shoulders to determine what each color does for your appearance. You’ll likely find that some colors make you look drab, while others reveal your true radiance.
- Choose eye-pleasing fabrics. Flannel is unlikely to be a hit, while men find clingy or shiny fabrics irresistible.
- Don’t forget the lingerie. Many men love it. Yet, keep in mind that they all have different tastes. Ask your partner what styles or articles he finds most appealing.

It’s All in the Music

Music is also important to setting the mood. It brings about relaxation, perfect after a hard day or for breaking the silence. Avoid loud rock, country, or hip-hop music, which can be a real distraction. Try some of these favorite albums, for setting the mood:

- *Jon Secada*, Popular, vocal
- *Kenny G—Breathless*, Jazz, instrumental
- *Luther Vandross—Best of Love 2*, Popular, vocal

- *Celine Dion*, Popular, vocal
- *A Romantic Tribute to the Titanic*—Popular/Classical, vocal/instrumental
- *Chris Botti—Slowing Down the World*, Jazz, vocal/instrumental
- *Mark Whitfield—Forever Love*, Jazz, instrumental
- *Raphael/Intimacy—Music for Love*, Contemporary/New Age, piano
- *The Romantics—A Windham Hill Sampler*, New age, instrumental
- *Paul McCartney—Working Classical*, Popular/Classical, vocal/instrumental

Musts

Don't be caught without these necessities:

- A nightstand or small chest next to the bed to eliminate unnecessary fumbling.
- A firm, comfortable mattress, good box springs, and a solid bed frame for comfort and quietness.
- Soft quality sheets, a lightweight comforter, and fluffy pillows for relaxing and lingering.
- An occasional change in furniture arrangement to keep the environment feeling new.
- A neatly made bed with fresh sheets.

Instant Mood Killers

Avoid these common bedroom mistakes:

- A television in your bedroom is a definite no-no. This passive individual activity is sure to destroy the allure of your bedroom as a place for intimacy.

- Both bright lights and no lights can detract from the moment. Your partner wants to see you, yet doesn't want to be under a spot light. Use a small bedside lamp with a low watt bulb for soft lighting. Candles also make a pleasing substitute.
- Keep exercise equipment any place but in your bedroom. The thought of a sweaty gym is good way to detract from the moment.
- Decorate in ways that are appealing to both of you. An atmosphere that is either too masculine or too feminine can destroy yours or your partner's mood.
- Keep clutter hidden. A messy room is a reminder of work that needs to be done.

Just for Fun

An occasional change in scenery creates interest. So, try these fun ideas for a change in pace.

- Use a purple, blue, or red light bulb for a new effect.
- Add vibrantly colored satin sheets as an eye catcher.
- String white holiday lights around your bedroom window.
- Add erotic statues, paintings, or strategically placed books for added intrigue.
- Set out a bowl of scrumptious fruits such as strawberries, cut melons, and grapes next to a bottle of chilled wine.
- Toss a few fresh rose petals on the bed. They'll add fragrance and are perfect for tickling, too.
- Install a mirrored wall or large mirror for a different view.
- Put a furry or soft throw rug or a comfortable armchair in your room for added coziness.

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SIDEBAR IDEAS OR WAYS TO LOCALIZE: Ask local men what they consider to be a romantic atmosphere. The example below was used in *Complete Woman Magazine* and written according to their style. Include a list of area stores that carry candles, lingerie, and other romantic items.

SIDEBAR EXAMPLE:

Men were asked, “What turns you on in the bedroom and what turns you off?”

- “I really like it if there’s some nice music like Marvin Gaye or Chet Baker. I like when the lights are turned down or when there is candlelight because I like to see my partner. I also like my wife to wear something nice like lingerie. I don’t like it when the cat gets in the way and wanders up on the bed. And flannel sheets are kind of – not. However, I don’t like things too overdone, either.”

--Bryan Dean, 24

- “What turns me on in the bedroom is the person. The type of lighting and music really depends on the person I’m with and the mood. I think it’s important that you try various things, sometimes hot and sometimes soft. For décor, I would like it kind of sporty. I would not be amused with pink or little girl’s types of things, like flowers.”

--Jens Baker, 32

- “Mood lighting is nice, such as candles or soft lights. I like kind of a soft jazz, rhythm & blues, or even reggae music in the background. I prefer silk sheets, and waterbeds are great. Rock & roll or rap music would probably be a turn off. If it is too dark, I would be unresponsive because I like to see the sights. Also, if the bedroom is too messy, it makes you feel like you have to clean it up. Quilts are a big turn off, as well.”
--Ray Cogan, 24
- “I think it’s important that it’s not too dark. I need to see what’s happening. Also a comfy bed with not too many pillows, but enough to be able to relax is important. Bright colors are cool, yet should be slightly masculine. I’m not a fan of lacy things. Soft is okay but not too pretty, such as floral prints.”
--Michael Houlihan, 31

Kimberly Blaker of Michigan writes for parenting and women's magazines across the United States and in Canada. Write her at KimberlyBlaker@chartermi.net

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