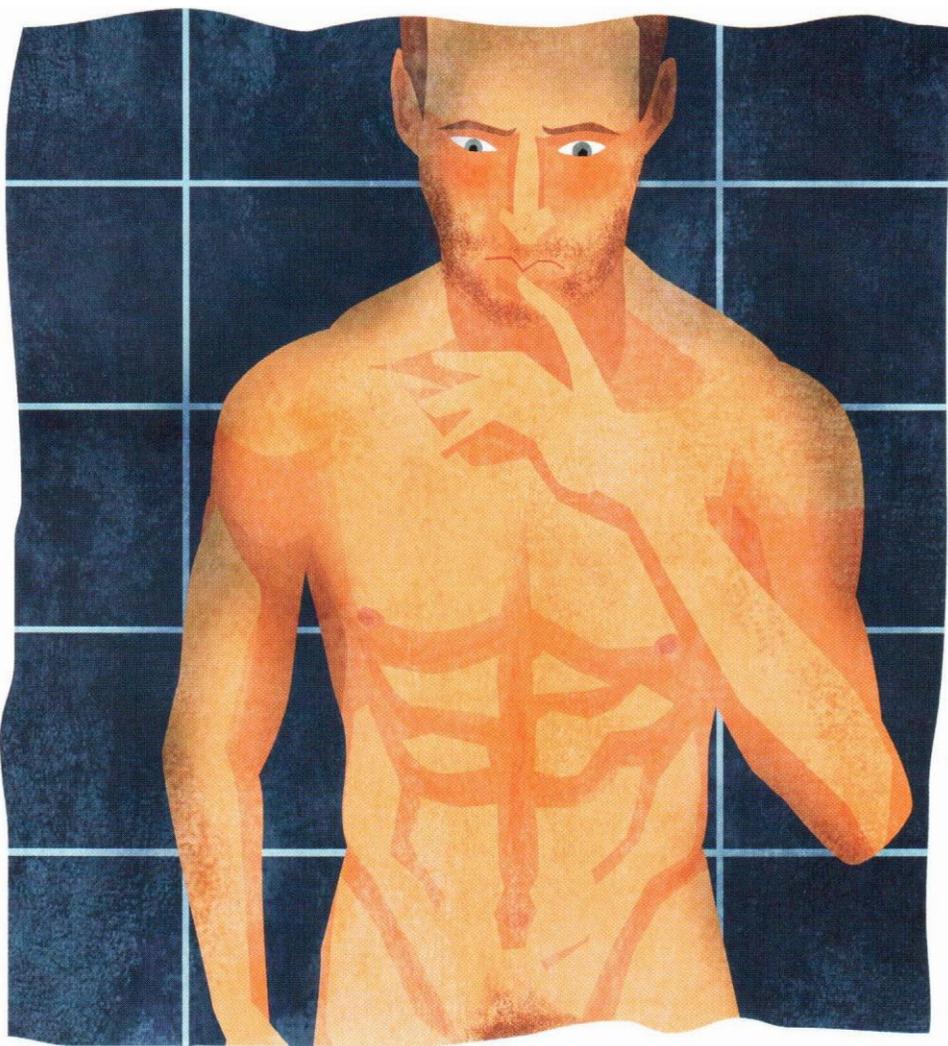


This month JOE ON PENIS SIZE

'Why are so many guys size queens?'



Dear Joe,

I always grew up being quite confident about my body, but as soon as I started being sexually active on the gay scene it became apparent that my penis didn't measure up to the size of most other guys. Not so long ago I went on a couple of great dates with a guy I was really into, but when it got to the bedroom, the comments he made about my size left me feeling embarrassed and ashamed. I feel like all gay men are obsessed with size, and this guy wasn't the first to point out how I didn't measure up. I now feel like I can't trust anyone to love me for me, and that I'll always be afraid and ashamed of my body, which isn't what I want. How can I be expected to feel confident and attractive when guys can be so shallow?

RIC, KIRKHAM, LANCASHIRE

Illustration DERMOT FLYNN

Dear Ric,

I have had countless men in my therapy office with this same concern, so I am not going to trivialise the way you feel. There is a reality to the idea that it's a dick-size-obsessed world for both gays and straights, but this is especially true in the gay male community. And when a man really is smaller endowed, he can feel very upset and shamed about it.

I have had some gay clients tell me that in looking on the internet for hook-ups they will find men who are seven inches, and then search all night to find one who is eight inches.

My theory is that a large penis is being confused with strong masculinity, and that's being confused with raw, erotic power. In other words, the bigger the penis, the better the man, the better the sex. Of course, this is absurd. I've had clients tell me they've been with men with bigger penises but who didn't know how to please their lovers with them.

The truth is that most men are concerned with their penis size whether they 'measure up' or not. Neither gay nor straight men talk about these concerns openly, so they generally don't know how to gauge what is normal and what is not.

UK researchers Kevan Wylie and Ian Eardley have between them carried out 60 years of penis-related research and found that small-penis syndrome affects an unusually high number of men - even if their size is average. The researchers found that men were often more confident if they had a large penis, but the women they interviewed said that good looks and personality were what made men attractive to them rather than penis sizes. However, this research doesn't include gay men, who are often judgmental about smaller penises.

The first place men start comparing themselves to other men is in the changing room. Generally, the size of a flaccid penis doesn't indicate its size when erect. As the saying goes, 'Some men are growers and some men are showers'. Men are also misled by pornographic images. Porn penises are large in order to impress and excite the viewers. They are by no means a sample of the norm.

Men are hung in different sizes, widths, directions, shapes. Each of us is different. Hard or soft. Still, at a nude beach or bathhouse or changing room, men with bigger and longer flaccid endowment are more fortunate. They have less to worry about in terms of being judged and found wanting, or hearing snide remarks made about them. Even if their four-inch softie doesn't grow when erect, the other guys won't know that. Another guy, who might boast only one to two inches soft and grow to eight inches hard, will still feel self-conscious, thinking that when at ease, everyone sees him as too small, even though at attention, he knows he's not.

When I hear any gay man make a small-penis comment-

particularly in my gay men's groups or workshops - I cringe thinking of the insecure men in the group who might already feel bad about their size.

The standard for penis size was set by the Kinsey Institute in the 60s. Alfred Kinsey studied American college-age men and found that 80 per cent of fully erect penises measured between five and seven inches (long). Despite what you might surmise from gay personal ads, less than one per cent of those erections Kinsey witnessed in the flesh exceeded eight inches.

What not to do

Don't get penis-enlargement surgery. I had a client who did this, only to suffer complications that made his penis even smaller than it was originally. The surgery promises to add inches. However, all it does is loosen skin tissue, allowing the penis to expand a bit more. Not much legitimate scientific or clinical research has been done to confirm the effectiveness or test the safety of this kind of

surgery. Research shows that men who have this surgery are not satisfied with the results.

Don't buy penis-enlargement pills or gimmicks. They don't work. They just improve circulation and help create a firmer erection. When you pursue these 'fixes', you only play into your anxiety and confirm your belief that your dick is too small. It may be smaller than average but that doesn't mean that it's too small. It is your belief you need to change, not your size.

What to do

Get online and join groups for men who are into men with smaller penises. There is even a website spotlighting hot men with smaller dicks. Stop using sites that are mainly for men looking for sexual hook-ups. Instead, go where men are looking for partners. These men are more likely to be into the whole person and not just body parts.

Seek older and more emotionally mature men. They do not overvalue penis size.

My final advice to you is to disregard what other men think about your penis size and anything else about you. What other people think shouldn't control your life. Believe that what you have inside - your integrity, responsibility, talents, eloquence and accountability - will count more with men who have the intelligence and generosity to be good partners. You should seek, and you will find, a man who measures you by the size of your heart rather than the length of your penis.

I can promise you this: the better you feel about your own size and the less judgment you make about yourself, the less affected you will be by what others think about your size.



You should look for a man who measures you by the size of your heart rather than your penis