



Does the perfume industry have it wrong? New tests suggest most seductive scent is our natural one - body odour

- Body odour can reveal our personality
- 'Dominant' scents can be particularly attractive
- Tests on people wearing T-shirts for three days - and sleeping in them

Body odour could be the most seductive way to attract someone, scientists have revealed.

While perfume houses spent millions on developing new scents and attracting celebrity endorsements, researchers claim that perhaps in some cases, all that is really needed is a whiff of BO.

They have carried out several different studies, all of which point to the same conclusion - that BO is (sometimes) best.

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'One team found women tend to prefer the smell of dominant men and are particularly attracted to the smell of dominance during the most fertile stage of their menstrual cycle, according to research by Craig Roberts of the University of Stirling, UK, and Jan Havlíček of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, in research reported in [New Scientist](#).

They also found women tend to smell least appealing to men during menstruation and most attractive when they are ovulating.

'The changes in smell are quite subtle,' said Havlíček.

However, the team found that relying on BO has an unfortunate side effect - you can't attract everyone.

Havlíček's team asked people to rate the smell of others first without and then with a perfume they supplied.

'It improved the smell of some more than others. Some actually smelled worse wearing perfume,' says Havlíček. The team also had some advice for choosing the most effective perfume.

'The message is clear,' says Havlíček. 'Don't buy perfume for your lover, let them choose it themselves.'



In Elizabethan England, it was common practice for a maiden to peel an apple, place a slice in her armpit to absorb the smell and then present it to a potential suitor as a memento. Others found the same problem, and believe it could be why we cover our natural smell. 'In one of our experiments, we presented the same six [body] odours to 100 people and each of the odours was excellent to some and very bad to others, so maybe we just don't want to risk smelling bad to some,' said Claus Wedekind at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

Some researchers even believe our scent can even reveal our personality. Agnieszka Sorokowska at the University of Wrocław in Poland asked 60 men and women to undergo personality testing and wear the same t-shirt for three nights to transfer their scent onto it.

Hundreds of volunteers were then asked to sniff the shirts - and managed to successfully predict which were most neurotic, extroverted and dominant.

'Neuroticism and extroversion are very emotional traits and might change sweating rates and the composition of bacteria in the armpits, thus changing how a person smells,' said Sorokowska. The theory also has historical roots.

In Elizabethan England, it was common practice for a maiden to peel an apple, place a slice in her armpit to absorb the smell and then present it to a potential suitor as a memento. Traditional Balkan dancing follows a similar principle. and men put handkerchiefs in their armpits, work up a sweat by dancing hard and then wave their hankies under the noses of young females.



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