

# Handlebar level can affect sexual health of female cyclists

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A new study published in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* reveals that handlebar position is associated with changes in genital sensation in female cyclists.

Led by Marsha K. Guess, MD, MS, of Yale University School of Medicine, researchers evaluated bicycle set-up in terms of the relationship between the seat and the handlebars. 48 competitive women cyclists were studied.

Researchers measured saddle pressures and sensation in the genital region to see if placing handlebars in different positions affects pressure and sensation in the genital region. Results showed that placing the handlebar lower than the seat was associated with increased pressure on the genital region and decreased sensation (reduced ability to detect vibration).

"Modifying bicycle set-up may help prevent genital [nerve damage](#) in female cyclists," Guess notes. "Chronic insult to the genital nerves from increased saddle pressures could potentially result in sexual dysfunction."

"There are a myriad of factors affecting women's [sexual function](#). If women can minimize pressure application to the genital tissues merely by repositioning their handlebars higher, to increase sitting upright, and thereby maximize pressure application to the woman's sit bones, then they are one step closer to maintaining their very important sexual

health," explained Irwin Goldstein, editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

**More information:** Guess et al. "The Bar Sinister: Does Handlebar Level Damage the Pelvic Floor in Female Cyclists?" *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* 2012. [DOI: 10.1111/j.1743-6109.2012.02680.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-6109.2012.02680.x)

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