

## Frequently Asked Questions

These are a few questions often asked about Naturism - in the form of a dialogue between a naturist and a skeptical friend.

*Note: For many of these questions, the precise response would depend very much on who was being asked, such is the variety of individual attitudes to the subject. Given this, these answers are not definitive but are, we believe, reasonably representative of the views of many Naturists.*

**Q:** So, you're a naturist, what exactly is 'naturism'?

**A:** 'Naturism' is a term used to describe going without clothes, often for sunbathing and swimming. The International Naturist Federation defines it as: *'..a way of life in harmony with nature, characterized by the practice of communal nudity, with the intention of encouraging respect for oneself, respect for others and for the environment.'*

**Q:** Is that the same thing as being a 'nudist'?

**A:** For many people they *are* one and the same. Here in Canada, and in Europe, 'naturist' is heard more often, perhaps because it raises fewer eyebrows than 'nudist'. In the USA, 'nudist' is preferred by many. Some people insist there's a difference in behaviour or philosophical outlook between naturism and nudism but, in reality, most simply use the term they are comfortable with.

**Q:** Why would anyone want to prance around in the nude?

**A:** Firstly, naturists don't 'prance' - anymore than 'textiles' do when they go to the beach. Its an archaic cliché used by newspaper journalists. The same with "nudist colony".

**Q:** Sorry... what's 'a textile'?

**A:** That's the collective name naturists use for those who get dressed to go in swimming.

**Q:** So why **do** people choose to be naturists?

**A:** I suppose we all have our own reasons, but most naturists would probably say that they like the feeling of complete relaxation and freedom they get when their clothes are put aside. Perhaps because they are more at ease with their bodies, naturists seem to be more sociable, open and trusting of each other, accepting each other's imperfections and respecting each other's personalities. Most of all, being naked in warm sunshine, feeling the fresh air or cool water on the whole of your body is **such** a pleasurable experience. Swimming without a bathing suit is something everyone should try.

**Q:** It's hard to believe that all this communal nudity isn't really about SEX!

**A:** Well, it isn't! Equating nudity with sex is a common misconception, probably because many people are only nude with the opposite sex for sex. In essence the practice of naturism has

nothing to do with sexuality. It's a matter of context; Like kissing. A kiss is a sexual act, but not when you're kissing your Granny on her birthday.

**Q:** You're not trying to tell me that naturists are **asexual**?

**A:** Of course not - we have the same urges as anyone else, but they're not expressed in the context of naturism. It's often said that there are far more 'sexual overtones' at a regular beach, where bathing suits only conceal bits of the body and so draw attention to them. In comparison, a completely naked body is really not very erotic.

**Q:** But, don't men automatically react to naked women by becoming aroused?

**A:** Aha, the 'erection question'. This really isn't a problem, for the reasons I've just explained. When your mind isn't pre-occupied with sex, involuntary erections are very rare indeed. If it happens, you just roll over on your stomach or go in the water.

**Q:** I don't think I could strip off on a beach, I'd feel so self-conscious.

**A:** Most people feel comfortable within the first 5 or 10 minutes. In fact, when you're surrounded by naked people, you could find yourself self-conscious if you were the only one **clothed**. Most people forget they are naked very quickly! The most frequently-heard comment from first-timers is: "I wish I'd done this **years** ago."

**Q:** 'Years ago' I **might** have had the body for it, but not anymore.

**A:** *Nonsense*. You'll find every shape and size at a naturist beach. Naturists **know** there is no such thing as a '*perfect body*' - after all we get to see more of them (pun intended) than anybody else! Naomi Wolf coined the term 'the beauty myth' to describe how we're manipulated, by the advertising industry, to aspire to an impossible face or figure. It's just a ploy to get people to buy products in the *hopes* of looking like that. All it really does is make many people depressed.

**Q:** Ok, ok! I see your point, but I still think people would stare at my wobbly bits...

**A:** They wouldn't, I assure you. One of the best things about naturism is the way in which naturists look beyond outward appearances and accept everyone for who they *really* are. Women, in particular, find that becoming a naturist gives their self-image and self-confidence a real boost.

**Q:** So, you're telling me that being a naturist can make me relaxed, outgoing, sociable *and* happy about my body?

**A:** Well... not instantly maybe but it's a good way to begin. You really should try it sometime.

**Q:** Supposing, *just* supposing, I *did* want to try naturism, would I have to join a club or something?

**A:** Not unless you wanted to. I'd suggest you wait for a nice warm day and visit Sunward or one of the other naturist resorts or beaches. Once you get there, you can take off as much or as little as you're comfortable with. I can promise you that no-one will stare or comment - and once you've tried swimming without a swimsuit, you're very unlikely to ever want to wear one again!

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