



Dildo

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A **dildo** is a sex toy, often explicitly phallic in appearance, intended for sexual penetration or other sexual activity during masturbation or with sex partners.

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5.5 inch clear jelly dildo

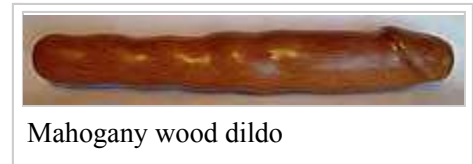
Description and uses

General

A dildo is a device usually designed for penetration of the vagina or anus, and is usually solid and phallic in shape. Some expand this definition to include vibrators. Others exclude penis prosthetic aids, which are known as "extensions". Some include penis-shaped items clearly designed with vaginal penetration in mind, even if they are not true approximations of a penis. Some people include devices designed for anal penetration (butt plugs), while others do not. These devices are often used by people of all genders and sexual orientations, for masturbation or for other sexual activity.

Materials

Rubber dildos, usually incorporating a steel spring for stiffness, became available in the 1940s. This was a less than satisfactory arrangement because of the potential for injury from cuts by the spring if the rubber cracked and came apart. Later, PVC dildos with a softer PVC filler became popular. Most of the inexpensive dildos sold in the 2000s are made this way.



PVC and jelly-rubber toys have been found to be problematic because they contain unsafe phthalates, softeners added to many plastics that are also found in some jewelry, food containers, and other soft rubber toys. Phthalates have been linked to health problems such as cancer and prenatal defects. Products made of PVC or jelly rubber cannot be sterilized. Manufacturers recommend using condoms with these toys if users share them.

In the 1990s, silicone rubber dildos became more popular, a trend that has continued as the prices have lowered. These are easier to clean and do not have the characteristic plastic aroma of PVC. They were expensive when introduced but are now reasonably priced, making them an excellent choice for the first-time user. Silicone holds body heat well, and is an excellent conductor of vibrations, allowing users to hold a vibrator at one end. Silicone is also a robust material (especially when compared to the cheap, unsafe jelly rubber that many dildos are made of) that can be sterilized by boiling or bleaching (using a bleach solution, diluted: 10% bleach 90% water).

High-end, chrome plated steel dildos are also popular in the BDSM scene. Some users prefer them because of their hardness, firmness, durability, electrical conductance (see erotic electrostimulation), and low friction, especially when used in conjunction with lubricant. Because they are heavy, they can be used to exercise vaginal PC muscles.

A steel dildo may be warmed or cooled in water before use to elicit a range of temperature sensations. It may also retain body heat of the user. Because of its polished nonporous surface, it may be sterilized in boiling water, or in an autoclave.

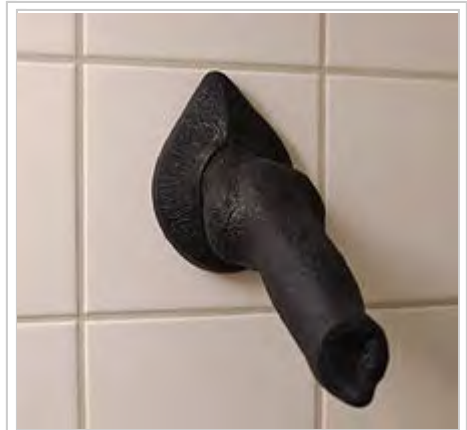
Glass dildos have similar features to steel ones. In most of the cases, glass toys are solid, and made of Pyrex or other types borosilicate glass (Schott-Duranglas and Simax), although this may vary, depending on the manufacturer. Like steel, glass toys may be used to apply firmer pressure than silicone can to a female's G-spot (urethral sponge) or male's prostate gland. Unlike other types of toys, glass sex toys can also be personalized with inscriptions.

Cyberskin is a synthetic material that feels more like human skin. It is a porous material and cannot be sterilized. It often gets sticky after washing (which can be remedied by a dusting of cornstarch) and is more delicate and more prone to rips and tears than silicone dildos. "Packing dildos", which are not designed for penetration, are often made of this material.

Phallus-shaped vegetables and fruits, such as bananas or zucchini have even been used as dildos. Any object of sufficient firmness and shape could be hypothetically used as a dildo.

Shape

Conventionally, many dildos are shaped like a human penis with varying degrees of detail; others are made to resemble the phallus of male animals. Not all, however, are fashioned to reproduce the male anatomy meticulously, and dildos come in a wide variety of shapes. These may resemble figures, or simply be practical creations which stimulate more easily than conventional designs. In Japan, many dildos are created to resemble animals or cartoon characters, such as Hello Kitty, so that they may be sold as toys, thus avoiding obscenity laws. Some dildos have textured surfaces to enhance sexual pleasure. Some dildos have macrophallic dimensions including over a dozen inches long.^[1]



A dildo in the shape of a wolf's penis



Latex double dildo

Uses

Most dildos are intended for vaginal or anal penetration and stimulation, whether masturbation or with a sexual partner. Dildos have fetishistic value as well, and may be used in other ways, such as touching one's own or another's skin in various places, often during foreplay or as an act of dominance and submission. If of appropriate sizes, they can be used as gags, for oral penetration for a sort of artificial fellatio. Dildos, especially specially designed ones, may be used to stimulate the G-spot area.

A dildo designed to be inserted in the anus and remain in place for a period of time is usually referred to as a butt plug. A dildo intended for repeated anal penetration (thrusting) is typically referred to as an **anal dildo** or simply "dildo". Anal dildos and butt plugs generally have a large base to avoid becoming accidentally completely inserted into the rectum, which may require medical attention to remove. There are also double-ended dildos, with different-sized shafts pointing in the same direction, used by women to accomplish vaginal and anal penetration at once, or for two partners to share a single dildo. In this case, the dildo acts as a sort of "see-saw"; each partner takes an end and receives stimulation.

Some dildos are designed to be worn in a harness, sometimes called a strap-on harness or strap-on dildo, or to be worn inside, sometimes with vibrating devices attached externally. Strap-on dildos may be double-ended, in which case they are meant to be worn by users who want to experience vaginal or anal penetration while also penetrating a partner. They may also be used for anal penetration of men. If the penetration is done by a female partner to a male partner, the act is known as *pegging*.

Other types of dildos include those designed to be fitted to the face of one party, inflatable dildos, and dildos with suction cups attached to the base (sometimes referred to as a wall mount). Other types of harness mounts for dildos (besides strapping to the groin) include thigh mount, face mount, or furniture mounting straps.

Recent social acceptance and popularity has resulted in the emergence of highly adorned dildos. These are often made of expensive materials and may also be jewelled.

Society and culture

Etymology

The etymology of the word *dildo* is unclear. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) describes the word as being of "origin unknown".^[2] One theory is that it originally referred to the phallus-shaped peg used to lock an oar in position on a dory (small boat). It would be inserted into a hole on the side of the boat, and is very similar in shape to the modern toy. It is possible that the sex toy takes its name from this sailing tool, which also lends its name to the town of Dildo and the nearby Dildo Island in Newfoundland, Canada. Others suggest the word is a corruption of Italian *diletto* "delight".^[3]

According to the *OED*, the word's first appearance in English was in Thomas Nashe's *The Choice of Valentines or the Merie Ballad of Nash his Dildo* (c. 1593).^[Note 1] The word also appears in Ben Jonson's 1610 play, *The Alchemist*. William Shakespeare used the term once in *The Winter's Tale*, believed to be from 1610 or 1611, but not printed until the First Folio of 1623.^[Note 2]



Acryl dildo

The phrase "Dil Doul", referring to a man's penis, appears in the 17th century folk ballad "The Maids Complaint for want of a Dil Doul".^[4] The song was among the many in the library of Samuel Pepys.

An *olisbos* (pl. *olisboi*) is a classical term for a dildo, from Greek ὄλισβος.^[5] i.e. a dildo that was usually made of leather. A *godemiché* is a dildo in the shape of a penis with scrotum.

In some modern languages, the names for *dildo* can be more descriptive, creative or subtle—note, for instance, the Russian *фаллоимитатор* (literally "phallic imitator"), Hindi दर्शिल्दो *darśildō*, Spanish *consolador* "consoler" and Welsh *cala goeg* "fake penis".

History

Dildos in one form or another have been present in society throughout history. Artifacts from the Upper Paleolithic of a type called bâton de commandement have been speculated to have been used for sexual purposes.^[6] Few archaeologists consider these items as sex toys, but archaeologist Timothy Taylor put it, "Looking at the size, shape, and—some cases—explicit symbolism of the ice age batons, it seems disingenuous to avoid the most obvious and straightforward interpretation. But it has been avoided."^{[7][8]}

The world's oldest known dildo is a siltstone 20-centimeter phallus from the Upper Palaeolithic period 30,000 years ago that was found in Hohle Fels Cave near Ulm, Germany.^[9]

The first dildos were made of stone, tar, wood and other materials that could be shaped as penises and that were firm enough to be used as penetrative sex toys. Dildo-like breadsticks, known as *olisbokollikes* (sing. *olisbokollix*),^[10] were known in Ancient Greece prior to the 5th century BC.^[11] Chinese women in the 15th century used dildos made of lacquered wood with textured surfaces. Nashe's early-1590's work *The Choice of Valentines* mentions a dildo made from glass.^[12]

There have been many references to dildos in the historical and ethnographic literature. Haberlandt,^[13] for example, illustrates single and double-ended wooden dildos from late 19th century Zanzibar. With the invention of modern materials, there appeared the possibility of making dildos of different shapes, sizes, colors and textures.^[14]

Ancient Greece

Dildos may be seen in some examples of ancient Greek vase art. Some pieces show their use in group sex or in solitary female masturbation.^[15] One vessel, of about the 6th century BC, depicts a scene in which a woman bends over to perform oral sex on a man, while another man is about to thrust a dildo into her anus.^[16]

They are mentioned several times in Aristophanes' comedy of 411 BC, *Lysistrata*.

LYSISTRATA

And so, girls, when fucking time comes... not the faintest whiff of it anywhere, right? From the time those Milesians betrayed us, we can't even find our eight-fingered leather dildos. At least they'd serve as a sort of flesh-replacement for our poor cunts... So, then! Would you like me to find some mechanism by which we could end this war?^[17]

Herodas' short comic play, *Mime VI*, written in the 3rd Century BC, is about a woman called Metro, anxious to discover from a friend where she recently acquired a dildo.

METRO

I beg you, don't lie, dear Corrioto: who was the man who stitched for you this bright red dildo?^[18]

She eventually discovers the maker to be a man called Kerdon, who hides his trade by the front of being a cobbler, and leaves to seek him out. Metro and Kerdon are main characters in the next play in the sequence, *Mime VII*, when she visits his shop.



A woman with a dildo. Red figure amphora attributed to the Flying-Angel Painter c. 490 BC; City of Paris Museum of Fine Arts



Dildo being used by two women. Lithograph from *De Figuris Veneris* (1906) by Édouard-Henri Avril

Page duBois, a classicist and feminist theorist, suggests that dildos were present in Greek art because the ancient Greek male imagination found it difficult to conceive of sex taking place without penetration. Therefore, female masturbation or sex between women required an artificial phallus to be used.^[15]

Early modern period

In the early 1590s, the English playwright Thomas Nashe wrote a poem known as *The Choice of Valentines*, *Nashe's Dildo* or *The Merrie Ballad of Nashe his Dildo*. This was not printed at the time, due to its obscenity^[19] but it was still widely circulated and made Nashe's name notorious.^[12] The poem describes a visit to a brothel by a man called "Tomalin"; he is searching for his sweetheart, Francis, who has become a prostitute. The only way he can see her is to hire her. However, she resorts to using a glass dildo as he finds himself unable to perform sexually to her satisfaction.^[20]

Dildos are humorously mentioned in Act IV, scene iv of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. This play and Ben Jonson's play *The Alchemist* (1610) are typically cited as the first usage of the word in publication (Nashe's *Merrie Ballad* was not published until 1899^[19]).

John Wilmot, the 17th century English libertine, published his poem *Signor Dildo* in 1673. During the Parliamentary session of that year, objections were raised to the proposed marriage of James, Duke of York, brother of the King and heir to the throne, to Mary of Modena, an Italian Catholic princess. An address was presented to King Charles on 3 November, foreseeing the dangerous consequences of marriage to a Catholic, and urging him to put a stop to any planned wedding '...to the unspeakable Joy and Comfort of all Your loyal Subjects." Wilmot's response was *Signior Dildo (You ladies all of merry England)* (<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/dildo.html>), a mock address anticipating the 'solid' advantages of a Catholic marriage, namely the wholesale importation of Italian dildos, to the unspeakable joy and comfort of all the ladies of England:

*You ladies all of merry England
Who have been to kiss the Duchess's hand,
Pray, did you not lately observe in the show
A noble Italian called Signor Dildo? ...*

*A rabble of pricks who were welcomed before,
Now finding the porter denied them the door,
Maliciously waited his coming below
And inhumanly fell on Signor Dildo ...*

This ballad was subsequently added to by other authors, and became so popular that *Signor* became a term for a dildo.^[21] In the epilogue to *The Mistaken Husband* (1674), by John Dryden, an actress complains:

*To act with young boys is loving without men.
What will not poor forsaken women try?
When man's not near, the Signior must supply.*^[21]

Signor Dildo was more recently set to music by Michael Nyman for the Wilmot biopic, *The Libertine*.

Many other works of bawdy and satirical English literature of the period deal with the subject.

Dildoides: A Burlesque Poem (London, 1706), attributed to Samuel Butler, is a mock lament to a collection of dildos that had been seized and publicly burnt by the authorities. Examples of anonymous works include *The Bauble, a tale* (London, 1721) and *Monsieur Thing's Origin: or Signor D---o's Adventures in London*, (London, 1722).^[22] In 1746, Henry Fielding wrote *The Female Husband: or the surprising history of Mrs Mary, alias Mr. George Hamilton*, in which a woman posing as a man uses a dildo. This was a fictionalized account of the story of Mary Hamilton.^[23]

20th century

Dildos are obliquely referred to in Saul Bellow's novel *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953): "...he had brought me along to a bachelor's stag where two naked acrobatic girls did stunts with false tools".^[24] A dildo called *Steely Dan III from Yokohama* appears in the William S. Burroughs novel *The Naked Lunch* (1959).^{[25][26]} The rock band Steely Dan took their name from it.

Legal and ethical issues

The possession and sale of dildos is illegal in some jurisdictions, including India.^[27] Until recently, many southern states and some Great Plains states in the United States banned the sale of dildos completely, either directly or through laws regulating "obscene devices".^[28] In 2007, a federal appeals court upheld Alabama's law prohibiting the sale of sex toys.^[29] The law, the Anti-Obscenity Enforcement Act of 1998, was also upheld by the Supreme Court of Alabama on September 11, 2009.^[30]

In February 2008, a federal appeals court overturned a Texas statute banning the sales of dildos and other sexual toys, deeming such a statute as violating the Constitution's 14th Amendment on the right to privacy.^[31] The appeals court cited *Lawrence v. Texas*, where the Supreme Court of the United States in 2003 struck down bans on consensual sex between gay couples, as unconstitutionally aiming at "enforcing a public moral code by restricting private intimate conduct." Similar statutes have been struck down in Kansas and Colorado. Alabama is the only state where a law prohibiting the sale of sex toys remains on the books.^[32]

Some Conservative Christians believe that the use of sex toys is immoral. The Southern Baptist preacher Dan Ireland has been an outspoken critic of such devices and has fought to ban them on religious and ethical grounds.^[30] Ireland has stated "There are moral ways and immoral ways to use a firearm ... There is no moral way to use one of these devices."^[33] According to Ireland, "Sometimes you have to protect the public against themselves....These devices should be outlawed because they are conducive to promiscuity, because they promote loose morals and because they entice improper and potentially deadly behaviors."^[33]

See also

- Artificial vagina
- Bread dildo

- Hegar dilators

Notes

1. The *OED* notes that in the 1899 edition of Nashe's *Choise of Valentines* the following sentence appears: "Curse Eunuke dilldo, senceless counterfet."
2. The *OED* cites Jonson's 1610 edition of *The Alchemist* ("Here I find ... The seeling fill'd with poesies of the candle: And Madame, with a Dildo, writ o' the walls.": Act V, scene iii) and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (dated 1611) ("He has the prettiest Loue-songs for Maids ... with such delicate burthens of Dildo's and Fadings.": Act IV, scene iv).

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