

## Male - Female Gender Differences

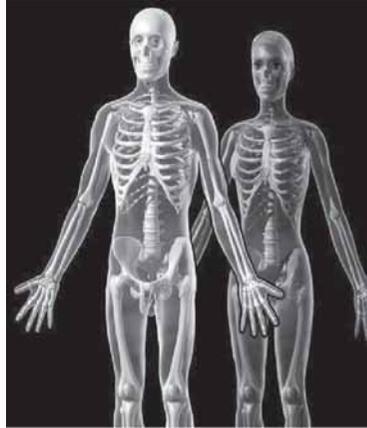
**G**ender differences are, simply put, certain physical and mental distinctions between male and female humans. Over the years, there have been many arguments and studies relating to this subject and although some gender differences are proven and some still controversial, they should not be confused with sexist stereotypes. No one can really tell whether these gender differences are caused by nature, evolution or environment. In fact, sex differentiation starts taking place immediately after the foetus begins to develop within the womb. Contrary to belief, several studies have proven that there are differences programmed within the DNA between males and females from the moment of conception. Some differences (such as reproductive organs) are congenital, while others obviously environmental (such as given names).

### **Physical Differences**

The several obvious differences between men and women include the following:

1. An average man is taller and heavier than the average woman. Men on an average are over 30% stronger/heavier than women, especially in the upper body.

2. Men have strong bone structures while women have more flexible bone structures.
3. Men have larger hearts and lungs and their higher levels of testosterone cause them to produce greater quantity of red blood cells.
4. Differences in the intake and delivery of oxygen translate into some aspects of performance. When a man is jogging at about 50% of his capacity, a woman will need to work at over 60% of her capacity to keep up with him.
5. On average, girls enter puberty approximately two years before boys. Also, the effects of puberty are markedly different in boys and girls.



Puberty Effects (Boys)	Puberty Effects (Girls)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair growth in armpits and face</li> <li>• Pubic hair growth</li> <li>• Larynx grows making voice deeper</li> <li>• Genitals enlarge</li> <li>• Thigh muscles develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Axillary hair, hair growth in armpits</li> <li>• Pubic hair growth</li> <li>• Development of breasts</li> <li>• Menstrual periods start</li> <li>• Thighs thicken due to deposition of fat</li> </ul>

6. Female fertility decreases after the age of 40, ending with menopause but men are capable of siring children even when very old.
7. Men's skin has more collagen and sebum, which makes it thicker and oilier than women's skin.
8. Women generally have greater percentage of body fat than men.
9. Men and women have different levels of certain hormones; for example, men have a higher concentration of androgens such as testosterone, while women have a higher concentration of oestrogens.
10. An average male brain has approximately 4% more cells and 100 grams more brain tissue than an average female brain. Though this is not connected with intelligence, it results in both sexes having similar brain weight to body weight ratios.
11. In men, the second finger is often shorter than the fourth finger, while in females the second tends to be longer than the fourth.
12. Men usually have better distance vision and depth perception, as well as better vision in lighted environments. Women have better night vision, see better at the red end of the light spectrum and have better visual memory.
13. Women can recall particulars about looks, e.g. facial features and dress/attire etc more accurately than men.
14. Men have more body hair than women, especially on the chest and extremities. However, men are much more likely to go bald.
15. Women are more sensitive to sound and smell than men.

## **Mental Differences**

**Brain structure:** Several studies have proven significant differences between male and female brains. Differences are located in both the primitive regions as well as the newer parts of the brain, called neocortex in the higher brain region. Men and women process information differently because of differences in a portion of the brain called the splenium, which is much larger in women than in men and has more brain wave activity.

**Intelligence:** Research has proven that there is no significant difference in the average intelligence levels of men and women. However, some slight differences can be identified:

1. An average man performs better on tests of mathematical ability. Males are better in visualising three dimensional objects (spatial) than women.
2. Women perform better on tests of verbal ability and memory. Girls tend to be more vocal than boys.
3. Men's IQ has greater variance, which means that there are more men than women in the very high and very low IQ groups.

## **Mental Health**

Several physio-psychological conditions are proven to be differently distributed between genders. The most common include:

1. **Happiness** - In general, it has been proven that women are happier with their lives than men. Women also show greater concern about family

and home issues, while men express more sympathies about political issues.

2. **Depression** - This condition affects females twice as often as it does males. Serotonin is a chemical that is required in the brain for 'happy mood maintenance'. The rate of synthesis and level of serotonin in the blood are significantly higher in men than in women. These differences may help explain why depression is more common in women. Both depression and panic disorder rates, higher in women than men, may also be tied to childhood experiences of suppression/abuse.
3. **Schizophrenia** - Although this disorder affects men and women equally, men typically experience symptoms earlier, with more intensity and have poorer prognosis than women. Symptoms of schizophrenia in women more frequently involve depression and greater disorders in thought conceptualisation, while men report more apathy, disorders of speech, disturbance in cognitive function and social isolation.
4. **Alzheimer's disease** - Several studies have shown that women are at a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease than men. This disease is caused by the damage to white brain matter. On the other hand, men with Alzheimer's disease have a higher risk of mortality than women.
5. **Stress Disorders** - These are chronic illnesses that occur more often in women than men. The risk of post-traumatic stress disorder is much higher in women than men.

## Permeability to Diseases

1. More men than women become infected with HIV.
2. More males are likely to be diagnosed with tuberculosis than females.
3. Women are less likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease.
4. Men are more likely to suffer from cancer.
5. Women are more likely to suffer from osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and blindness.

## Behaviour

### Social and Sexual

Though these differences vary from one person to another and are open to interpretation, some commonly observed differences are as follows:

Male	Female
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physically more aggressive.</li><li>• Less likely to attempt suicide but more likely to commit it.</li><li>• Express emotions less and with less intensity.</li><li>• More prone to taking risks.</li><li>• Earning oriented.</li><li>• Sexually more active.</li><li>• Masturbate more.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physically less aggressive.</li><li>• More likely to attempt suicide but less likely to commit it.</li><li>• Express emotions more readily and with greater intensity.</li><li>• Less prone to taking risks.</li><li>• Nurturing, caring.</li><li>• Sexually less active.</li><li>• Masturbate less.</li></ul>

Some proven behavioural differences between men and women exist and the most unquestionable are:

**Employment** - In most countries, there are more wealthy or rich men than there are women and many more unemployed females as well. Employed women earn 80% of the income of men.

Women are less productive than men – women in non-agricultural industries work 35.9 hours per week on average, versus 41.6 hours for men. Also, the nature of work differs between men and women, though this may be attributable to a greater or lesser degree to our prejudices and expectations.

Male Dominated	Female Dominated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mining</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Farming</li> <li>• Computer and mathematical occupations</li> <li>• Engineering and architecture</li> <li>• Fire fighting</li> <li>• Police and patrol officers</li> <li>• Electricians</li> <li>• Dentists and surgeons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social work</li> <li>• Paralegals and legal assistants</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Nurses</li> <li>• Speech therapists</li> <li>• Dieticians</li> <li>• Dental hygienists</li> <li>• Maids, housekeeping, cleaners</li> <li>• Childcare workers</li> <li>• Glamour related work</li> <li>• Advertising and media related work etc</li> </ul>

**Education:** When talking about literacy we should keep in mind that men are more likely to be literate, with a hundred men being literate for every seventy one women in India.

**Internet usage:** The percentage of men using the internet is much higher than that of women. However, the pattern of use varies, as outlined below:

Men	Women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Log on more often to the net and spend more time online.</li> <li>• Download more music and videos.</li> <li>• More likely to pay bills online.</li> <li>• More likely to look for technical support and job related issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More likely to e-mail or chat with friends and family about a variety of topics.</li> <li>• More likely to use social networking sites like Facebook, Orkut etc.</li> <li>• Use the internet for shopping and banking.</li> <li>• More likely to look for advice on family related affairs and daily chores.</li> </ul>

**Who is Male/Female?**

A male is someone who was, is and/or will be able to penetrate and a woman is someone who was, is and/or will be capable of being penetrated. For clarification, people who are incapable of reproduction but still fall into either of the categories described above are termed as such for the purpose of this book. For example, people who have a penis and are capable of penetration but unable to reproduce due to low sperm count or sperm motility are still termed as male, while women who have a vagina and are capable of being penetrated but cannot bear children due to any

hormonal/structural deficiency, e.g. blockage of fallopian tubes etc are termed as female.

### **Between the Two Genders**

No male or female is complete in gender, though their genitals may work within a certain range of what is called as 'normal'. There are several degrees of such 'normality' and it is nebulous at best about which point this normality ceases and 'abnormality' begins. Gender is more often the result of a host of factors, including physical and psychological behaviour. Eunuchs occur towards the female side of this continuum.

The argument that human sexuality is a continuum and not a dichotomy, rests in large measure on the claim that intersex births are a fairly common phenomenon. Specifically, the incidence of intersexual births is about 2 per 1,000 live births. To arrive at that figure, intersex is defined as any 'individual who deviates from the Platonic ideal of physical dimorphism at the chromosomal, genital, gonadal or hormonal levels', e.g. a male without a full beard or a female with a partial beard are intersexed. Similarly, a male with a large beard having full breasts (gynaecomasty) is also an intersex condition.

However, though this condition results in the occurrence of physical traits belonging to both sexes, they do not overlap each other in a single individual. For example, one cannot find a eunuch with one hand exhibiting male characteristics and the other, female. However, it is fairly common to find eunuchs with well-developed feminine breasts having hairy arms and thighs like a male.

Most, if not all so-called 'normal' males or females have had a latent, if unexpressed desire at some stage in their lives to live out their fantasy of donning the attire of the opposite gender and acting like them or at least wondering about what differences would be manifest in their lives as the opposite sex.

While males and females stand on the extreme ends of a biological continuum, there are many classifying authorities, who mix anatomical components together, conventionally attributed to both males and females. If nature really offers us more than two sexes, then it follows that our current notions of masculinity and femininity are cultural conceits.

No two human faces are alike. Organs like the penis, testes, clitoris, vulva, vagina, urethra, pubic hair etc differ in size, bulge, location and texture from one person to another, just like other body parts.

In eunuchs, however, the differences are far greater than in gendered humans. The variation in the position of the urethra, its size and bulge is so large, it is difficult to classify it as a minor one. The midsections are manlier, since they do not have uterus, ovaries and other female reproductive parts and the accompanying layer of fat around the stomach and hip areas.

The body height in the case of 92% of boys is in the range of the height of the father  $\pm 1$  inch, while 87% of girls are in the range of the height of the mother  $\pm 1$  inch. When the sample data values for the height of eunuchs were compared with those of their parents, it

was found that on average, if the father of a eunuch is 5'7" and the mother is 5'2", then in the case of eunuch progeny, about 68% are likely to have heights close to that of the mother, i.e.  $5'2" \pm 1"$ , about 21% have heights close to that of the father, i.e.  $5'7" \pm 1"$  and the remaining 11% fall in between.