



# MAN UP

Australian author, men's counsellor and prostate cancer survivor Allan Pease wants you to do one thing: "Go to your doctor." Erectile dysfunction may be a problem, but it is a simple one to solve

Interview: Meg White

**Y**ou've just released a report on erectile dysfunction called *Standing Tall*. Can you summarise your findings?

The majority of men, at some point in their life, will suffer from erection problems. It's around two out of three for men over the age of 40, but it can happen at any age. The big issue with erections is that men won't talk to anybody about it. They won't go to a doctor. As a result, they suffer in silence and the typical symptoms begin to appear.

#### Which symptoms?

When guys think that they have lost their masculinity, they start to surround themselves with masculine things. They buy boats and cars and big motorcycles. This is one of the physical signs they have a problem and are in denial. But the other side is that men's self-esteem hits a real low. They see themselves as not loveable, not attractive to women, and not good for much. As a result, their work suffers, their health fails and divorce and break-ups occur, because one out of three blokes who suffers from this makes a point of not going to bed at the same time as his wife or girlfriend.

Men will throw themselves into their job, working longer and harder to try to make up

their masculinity because they identify their purpose of self by their work. Women try to find reasons for the guy being like he is, but the bottom line is that he's in denial about his problem. And while it is serious, it's also simply solved. You just have to take that first step: Go to a doctor.

**When a man chooses to pursue treatments to restore erectile function, does that immediately restore confidence and masculinity, too?**

**"For women, erections and sex—erections and love—don't necessarily go together. For men, erections and sex must go together"**

Yeah, that's one of the things that it does. The doctor's going to give him four options: pop a pill, use a pump, use a needle or get an implant. The minute he does that, he gets a result. That's the key: he gets a result. The minute a man starts to do these things, he gets

back his sense of masculinity, his work improves, he even starts to taste food differently.

Everything about who he is becomes better. It's great for women as well, because nobody wants to be with a guy who won't pull his finger out and do what's good for himself.

**Do you have any insight into why men are afraid of addressing erectile dysfunction?**

This report shows that the number one thing men are concerned about when they get erection problems is that they're not going to be able to satisfy their partners. They've been raised to think penis is king. So they avoid the problem, they start to retreat. But the only thing that women aren't happy about is a guy who doesn't take decisive action. For women, erections and sex—erections and love—don't necessarily go together. For men, erections and sex must go together, and that's why they get so depressed if they're having trouble with it.

You can become far better as a man in terms of masculinity by taking action because you can do things after treatment that you could never have done before. Performance-wise, you can do more. If you're managing your own sexuality, managing your own erections, you have control over what you're going to do with them.

**How can we as a society better support men struggling with ED?**

There are initiatives that tell men to go to the doctor. And the second thing is to get women on board. If you do it together, as a couple, it's much easier. It becomes a fun, exciting thing. What women need to do is realise that if the guy's got the problem, they shouldn't take it personally, just make it a goal to solve it together.

**Why can't we also teach men their worth is not**



**measured by their penis?**

It's very simple: 100 years ago in England, men invented the cricket box. In 1978, they invented the cricket helmet. It took them almost a century to realise that the brain is worth protecting, along with the penis. ☺