



TopMatch

THE Personal MatchMaking Specialists!

101 WAYS

TO SURVIVE THE FIRST DATE!



An essential guide to getting the most from that all-important 'First date'

Introduction

This guide contains 101 of the most valuable, straight-talking, no punches-pulled, streetwise tips - telling you the way it is, not the way it should be! The goal of this guide is to help you plan a good date, be a good date and get a second date! It is particularly aimed at those who are being introduced by an introduction agency or a friend and therefore assumes a little background knowledge of the date.

The tips are based not only on the extensive experience of the MatchMaking Team authors from TopMatch but also on numerous contributions from many TopMatch Members who wanted to share their experiences with others. Any feedback from your dating experiences will be welcomed. Readers who send in any additional tips, which are included in this continually improving guide, will be sent a bottle of champagne, with our compliments! [post additional tips]

Despite the agencies' or your friends' best efforts, MatchMaking is not an exact science, there can be no guarantees - except to improve the odds of success and future happiness. Remember though, although success is getting what you want - happiness is liking what you get! What can be guaranteed is that by using this guide you will be better prepared than you ever thought possible. Some tips may be commonsense but are included just to make sure!

Many of the tips apply equally to both ladies and gentlemen and some are specific to each. However, a significant number apply particularly to men - sadly, even in this day and age of equality, it seems that men still have to do much of the running!

Anyhow ladies, knowing how your man should behave will let you see whether he shapes up in the 'dating game'.

Take a look at the Compatibility Chart at the back of the guide and complete it honestly, during the initial and early stages of your relationship. It'll assist you in knowing if your chosen match is likely to be a long-term prospect.

Sit back and relax, music playing, a glass of wine in one hand and this guide in the other and learn the 101 ways to Survive the First Date!

The information and guidance given in this publication is believed to be appropriate at the time of publication and represents his opinion only. No liabilities can be accepted for any damages whatsoever, resulting from information contained within this publication.

WARNING: reading this guide could seriously improve your dating success and increase your chances of finding your perfect partner! It is NOT recommended for people who don't appreciate that first impressions DO count and that meeting and keeping the right partner, requires preparation, time and effort. Good luck and happy dating!

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The First Telephone Call

1. Remember the objective is to get the date and leave a good impression
2. The man must always make the first call - sorry guys, it's expected
3. Don't make the call if you've had a bad day or you're feeling down in the dumps. Maintain a lively pace and a light, fun-filled tone.
4. Make the call from a quiet room and make sure you can't be overheard or interrupted by friends, family or pets - it can be very off-putting and this is a delicate moment.
5. Remember, in most cases you have a big advantage. You already know the person on the end of the phone is interested, because the agency or your friend have shared details about you and have connected you together.
6. Whether you're making the first call or expecting it, make a few notes of key things to say - things you already know about them to refer to, questions to ask, comments to make. Avoid it ending up seeming like an interview.
7. Check your diary or calendar before-hand and keep it by the phone. There's nothing worse than making a date, then having to cancel because you have an important prior engagement.
8. Stand up when you call and smile when you talk. Identify yourself in a friendly, upbeat way, such as "Hello, is that Sharon? This is John Jones, TopMatch suggested I give you call...."
9. Ask if this is a good time to talk and if not, ask when is the best time to call back?
10. Use first names and refer to your date by their preferred name. For instance, don't call her 'Susie', if she prefers 'Susan' and don't call him 'Michael', if he prefers 'Mike'. Use your date's name during the conversation often.
11. Refer to something you know about them, which you have noted down previously, for example, "how long have you been skiing", or "...been a member of the tennis club".
12. Give them time to answer and don't interrupt. Then you mention that you too play tennis or ski, etc and it goes on from there for a couple of minutes.
13. Sell the sizzle, not the steak! Keep the call short, leave something to talk about when you meet.
14. To 'close' the date, you then say "Would you like to meet up for a drink one evening? Do not say "let's meet up, what shall we do?" The inevitable reply to that is, "I don't know, what would you like to do?" and you go round in circles. Instead, take control. Ask, "how do you fancy (suggest a venue)?" If your date says 'no' for some reason, have two more possible venues already in mind.

15. When are you both free? This is where the diary comes in. Avoid Friday and Saturday nights, if you can - the bars are usually full and you won't be able to hear yourself think, let alone talk.
16. Confirm your time and place of meeting. Be certain you both understand it's the Swan for instance, rather than the Black Swan or the Swan with Three Necks! Confirm exactly which one you mean.
17. Confirm how you will recognise each other. Ladies tend to describe themselves physically, whilst men often describe what they'll be wearing. Mention certain clothes you will wear or say exactly where you'll be. It's usually very easy to spot your first dater, they'll be conspicuously on their own and looking out for you!
18. End the call saying, "you look forward to meeting them".
19. Just remember, phone conversations don't always go according to the 'script'. Go with the flow and enjoy it.
20. Put the phone down and take a deep breath - congratulations! You've just had the first conversation with your date. It wasn't so bad was it? How do you think the call went, bearing in mind first time nerves? It seemed ok, but you're not sure? Have courage, don't panic, everything will be fine.
21. Remember, if you don't try, you don't get - so see it through and meet up.
22. If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got. So feel pleased with yourself for taking control and being determined to help improve your life.
23. It's usually better to regret the things you have done, than the things you haven't, don't spend your life looking back, asking "what if?" So go for it!

Choosing the Venue

24. The best place to meet is at a neutral venue such as a quiet wine-bar, a hotel reception or lounge, a pub; somewhere you can relax and talk without distractions.
25. Decide on a venue situated within a few miles of each of your addresses. A little further maybe, for the man, is a little more impressive.
26. Choose somewhere that's known to you but not too familiar - this is not the time to bump into acquaintances; you need to concentrate on your date.
27. Incidentally, don't tell all your friends at the 'local' about your date. You don't may be going on several first dates within a short period - you don't want to appear sad or desperate to them, however untrue (or true!) that may be.

28. Collect your date or meet them there? Under no circumstances should you offer to collect your date, unless transport is a real problem. Your date needs an escape route in case you turn into a mad-axe murderer!
29. A few days before your meeting, if you can, check out your chosen venue, for the layout etc. Is there somewhere to sit, rather than be perched on a barstool. A corner table, away from the window, is probably the best place.
30. Relax! You're supposed to be looking forward to this, remember!

Preparing to Meet

31. Clean the car inside and out and make sure you have plenty of fuel. Although you won't collect your date from home on the first date usually, you will probably say goodbye in the car park and the tiniest details add to the overall impression.
32. Personal grooming is essential, of course and so is comfort, so pay attention to the following:
33. Nails. Gentlemen, ensure your nails are trimmed and clean. Ladies, ensure your nails are the same length and if you use nail polish, apply it at least half an hour before you have to get dressed or made up. Don't spoil the effect with smudged nails. A French manicure is probably safest than coloured nails.
34. Hair. Gentlemen, you may want to have it trimmed but have it done a couple of days before so it looks natural - the same for beards and moustaches (if you must have them). Ladies, don't try a radical new colour just before your date but do touch up your roots. Practice a new hairstyle beforehand rather than on the night itself.
35. Teeth. It might be worth a trip to the dental hygienist for a last minute polish. Don't forget the mouthwash before you leave for the date. And make sure there are no bits of spinach stuck between your teeth!
36. Clothes. You want to look smart but comfortable. You'll be sitting for at least a couple of hours so don't choose anything too tight or restricting. Bear in mind where you're meeting and dress appropriately. This isn't an interview, so a suit and tie gents or a co-ordinated jacket and skirt ladies, is not the best thing to wear. Try not to look as if you have just come from the office (even if you have). Try and be yourself, within reason! Don't over do it. You want to seem as if you have made an effort; try understated elegance rather than glamour - save something for next time.
37. Shoes. Polished and comfortable. Tonight is not the night to complain of sore feet.

38. Don't communicate between the first call to arrange the date and the date itself, unless absolutely necessary. Just ringing for a chat appears needy.
39. Getting ready. Plan well in advance what you want to wear, how you wish to appear. There's nothing worse than being in a hurry and having to iron your shirt as you're running out the door. Make sure you have an alternative, just in case.
40. Get up to date - current affairs, music, the latest movies, TV, books, fashion, sports, the internet - anything that may help keep the conversation flowing.
41. Adopt a positive attitude - be confident, be open-minded, be relaxed.
42. Ensure your mobile phone is switched off or on silent - unless you feel you may want to set up an escape route (see section 7).
43. Keep your expectations low and your enjoyment high - it avoids disappointment - you may be pleasantly surprised.
44. Men, always be early - and I mean early. Under no circumstances should the lady be there first, waiting to meet you but feeling like she should be on the corner of 42nd Street! It's a worn out tradition that women are expected to be late - but more than ten minutes starts to become rude.
45. If you know you're going to be late, try to phone or leave a message at the venue. If your date doesn't arrive after 30 minutes, try calling them. If your date is not there after an hour, they aint coming!

The First Two Minutes

46. Smile when you say hello and shake hands. This is your first physical contact and will say a great deal about the person you're meeting, so no 'wet fish' hand shakes!
47. Ask the lady to take a seat. Ask her what she would like to drink. Be relaxed, smile and enjoy.
48. The gentlemen should always pay for the first drink.
49. Whilst the drink is being ordered at the bar and you have a couple of minutes alone, look for the best in your date, something to admire. Don't judge a book by its cover - allow people to 'warm up'. Give each other a chance. Often people whom you mentally rejected within the first 30 seconds, will grow on you. Beauty is only skin deep (unless you are a stunner - then of course it matters!)
50. Sincerely compliment your date on something - her hair, his tie, anything - except physical attributes, you're still comparative strangers, so don't get too personal at this stage! Look out for a conversation starter.

Women love telling the story behind a purchase or perhaps the tie has a funny story behind it? This can act as an ice-breaker, particularly if there is something to laugh over together.

51. When you hand the drink, put it down carefully. If you hand it to your date, make sure they have the glass properly before you let go; a glass of house red down the front of their top is not the ice-breaker you're looking for!

What to Say and Do, during the Date

52. Remember the objective - not just a friendship but a romantic friendship (you don't usually end up sleeping with just friends!) Your date will probably have several friends of the opposite sex with whom they don't have a physical relationship but ultimately, you want something more with this person.
53. Sit up straight, don't slouch, be attentive, smile, laugh appropriately and often and maintain eye contact.
54. Let your date know indirectly how they're progressing and listen for feedback about you, things like "you're really easy to talk to" or "you're thoughtful, I like that".
55. Talk about each other, your interest, your families, aspects of your lives that you have in common, places you've been, places you'd like to go to, your work etc. Explore interests - discuss things on each others profiles supplied by the agency.
56. Make sure you have read the 101 Ways to Survive the First Date Guide - in fact discuss its contents together if you wish!
57. Listen at least as much as you speak - be genuinely interested in what your date has to say - a very attractive characteristic.
58. Be honest - if not, it could spoil things later if you begin a relationship. Reveal your past at a slow rate though, you may reveal some fatal flaws. The process is like peeling the layers off an onion; move too fast and you'll create tears. Don't be downbeat about yourself nor too arrogant. Be philosophical and forward-looking - the past doesn't always equal the future.
59. Trust the process - people have different concepts of timing and self disclosure. Some let themselves be known easily whilst others need substantially more time to open up. Be prepared for telling, wondering, worrying, asking, not knowing etc - getting to know each other is a time-consuming process.
60. Appreciate the favourable qualities of your date, regardless of your initial response and be generous in expressing this appreciation - without going over the top,

61. Be aware of body language - your date's and your own. Are you or they sitting in a relaxed manner or are they tense or nervous. Try and make them feel at ease.

What Not to Say and Do, during the Date

62. Don't appear desperate or too grateful! Don't ask for feedback - are you so insecure that you need to be told how great you are?
63. Don't start an argument! Be prepared to back down on a point, opinions do differ and they don't always need a consensus.
64. Don't talk about yourself non-stop and don't boast - a most unattractive characteristic and almost certain to spoil the date. Boastful people appear arrogant, self-centred and ultimately boring.
65. Don't be bitter about ex-partners - bitterness is definitely unattractive. Bitter people are the type who make huge, inaccurate and plainly illogical generalisations about how terrible men/women are - it's sad, it's boring and it's wrong, don't do it!
66. Things to avoid talking about but which usually crop up in conversations - politics, religion and sex. Don't make sweeping statements or insulting remarks. Try to make your date laugh - but keep the jokes witty - and clean!
67. Don't whinge about ex-partners, your current plight with the opposite sex, your job or your finances.
68. Don't bitch - yes, men can bitch too. Don't discuss people your date may meet in the future, unless you have only good things to say about them.
69. Don't eye up the bartender or the waitress - keep your attention on your date, that's what you are there for.
70. Don't drink too much. If you don't drink alcohol generally, tonight is not the time to start. Stick to your usual drink. If either of you is driving, don't drink, be responsible.

The Escape Route

71. There are two reasons for needing an escape route: one, you suspect before you meet that this may not be such a good idea and two, you can't think of another way of bowing out of a bad date gracefully. There are two ways to prepare your escape route: ONE: within a few minutes of meeting, say you have somewhere to go at a certain time. The disadvantage of this is that you're immediately telling your date that

they are not your most important consideration this evening and that you have something better lined up. However, the advantage of this can be that if you're having a good time, you can always over-run - it's the only white lie you should tell! They'll be flattered that you want to stay longer. TWO: arrange for a friend to call you half an hour into your date - giving you the chance to either make your excuses and leave or if you are having a good time, you can tell the friend "thanks for calling, everything is fine". If your date suspects it was an escape call or you tell them, you may be accused of being devious, calculating or dishonest - best to try to keep the plan to yourself. Be careful with this one.

How to End the Date

72. If the date is going well, you won't realise how time is passing and it'll be closing time before you know it, so plan ahead.
73. If you must make an excuse to end the date, then make it credible and honest. Allow your date to retain their dignity.
74. Remember to thank your date for a lovely evening.
75. If you're not sure if they want to see you again, try saying "we should get together again sometime" and gauge the reaction - put the ball in the others court.
76. The gentlemen should escort the lady to her car. It's not just good manners, it's safer too.
77. When you say goodbye, offer to shake hands again. Play this by ear you may find a peck on the cheek more appropriate and natural.

To Kiss or Not to Kiss?

78. There are no rules to say it's the right thing for both of you, you will just know. Remember section five, the objective is not just a friendship but a romantic friendship.
79. Good signs are if you genuinely feel the evening has gone well and you get the same impression from your date. As you walk out to your cars, confirm the arrangements for the second date and acknowledge how much you're looking forward to it. Then follow up with a kiss.
80. You need to look out for the non-verbal signals, so pay attention. Has your date been so comfortable with you during the evening that they touched your hair, your face or fleetingly placed their hand on your shoulder or your arm? Is the final goodbye prolonged or lingering - if so, this could be the moment to kiss.
81. If you are at all uncertain, then don't risk it but if you can exchange a

kiss, however brief, it's a great way to end the night and prepare for the second date!

How to Say No, in the Best Possible Way

82. There are four possible outcomes to your first date:
 - I. Neither of you are interested in seeing the other again.
 - II. She is interested in you but you're not interested in her
 - III. He is interested in you but you're not interested in him
 - IV. Both are interested in each other - great, see section 11
83. How to say no to a second date - this is hard for most people. If both of you realise you are not compatible during your first date, it will become obvious and if you are honest, it's best to just say you don't feel you are suited to each other. When leaving, don't make arrangements for a second date, just say how nice it was meeting them, take care, all the best in the future and that's it.
84. However, if you sense that the date was one-sided and the other person was attracted to you but you don't feel the same, then this is where it becomes tricky. Two choices, you are either reject their suggestion of a second date, saying you don't feel it would be right and you would rather just be friends OR you can tell the second white lie of the evening and say yes to a second date and then cancel, usually by text message, a day or so later. You know which is the right option! It really isn't nice to be on the receiving end of option two but if you haven't the balls to tell them, it's probably the only way. Just remember, what goes around, comes around.
85. Don't be afraid of rejection, you can't be all things to all people. It's better now than later. Get over it and move on. At least you had a chance to practice your dating skills.

A Second date - To Meet Again or Not - That is the Question!

86. Already have the second date in mind when you are on the first. This may appear presumptuous but you don't want to be caught off guard if the first date overruns and you don't have a chance to make a second. Your second date should usually be dinner in a nice restaurant - by the end of the first date you should have an idea about their dining preferences.
87. Compare diaries - when making arrangements let your date know you have a life outside the 'dating game'. The fact that you don't live to

love but love to live, walking this earth as a free an independent spirit with apologies to no-one for managing your own destiny - is a very powerful aphrodisiac! Let them know (or at least believe) you were happy before meeting them and will be happy afterwards - but could be even more so together with them.

88. Book the restaurant beforehand to avoid disappointment, particularly at weekends. Arrange to meet your date at the restaurant - the same rules still apply to the second as the first. Be punctual, be courteous.
89. It is acceptable for the gentlemen to pay for this first meal but few women will take this for granted. If the lady offers to go 'dutch', and is insistent, accept gratefully if you can. She's telling you she's an independent person, not just along for the ride.
90. Bear in mind what Not to eat. Don't choose something because you want to impress - this includes very hot or spicy foods, sushi, escargots, jambes des grenouilles (frogs legs), artichoke, crab or lobster. If you do, make sure you really do know how to eat them correctly.
91. Don't choose foods better eaten in the privacy of your own kitchen - these include corn on the cob, spaghetti and jam doughnuts!
92. Is your meal breath-friendly? If in doubt, don't opt for garlic unless your date does too.
93. Coffee? Don't jump the gun at this stage. Take it in the restaurant - remember this is only the second date!

Follow-up

94. The day after the date, send a simple text message with "thanks for a very pleasant evening, I really enjoyed it. It was great meeting you"
95. Hopefully, your date texts back "I enjoyed it too, looking forward to seeing you again"
96. Remember to pick up on any important points at the next meeting. Make notes about it if you have to, so you can say "how did you get on at the tennis competition" for instance. This lets them know you were attentive and that you care.
97. Should you send flowers? - no. Personal tokens of affection will be too much at this early stage.
98. Play the game. Unfortunately, much as you would like to express yourself and how you feel about someone, if you do so at too early a stage, you could blow it. The idea is not to appear too eager because it often translates as desperate! Resist the urge to chase too hard as it weakens your position. You are seeking a position of equality. We are all needy to some extent, the point is to choose when we trust someone enough to share this need. There is a standard three day rule between a first date

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- and having another date or even phone conversation.
99. Keep your feelings to yourself for now - the fact that you are seeing each other should be enough. The balance of power has to be maintained or the relationship could collapse, don't show all your cards at once. Keep a bit of mystery at first, there needs to be a challenge.
 100. As much as this may be true, don't tell your date too soon that you are crazy about them, that you are going to keep calling and that you have totally fallen head over heels for them - it's an invitation to disaster. You need your date to use all their charms to keep your calls coming. In other words you need them to work at it - otherwise there's a chance they will lose respect and treat you like a doormat.
 101. Don't take it all too seriously, learn from each date, relax and enjoy. Follow the tips in this guide and you will soon be on the way to finding your perfect partner.

HAPPY DATING

The TopMatch Team and contributing Members.

Four Keys to Compatibility

The chart below is a guide to what most experts agree are the Four key areas of compatibility, which need to be balanced for any relationship to have the best chance of success. Long-term success relies on these key factors being shared, preferred, accepted or complimented by each partner. Obviously, there will be many exceptions. Relationships are a complex area and not an exact science but the truth in the saying 'opposites attract' is certainly in question!

It is however, possible to have a deep and meaningful relationship with someone, despite the lack of obvious compatibility but it does help things along if you are. Compare notes from both columns and see how you match up - what matters and what doesn't, will be different for everyone. Good luck!

LIFESTYLE	EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS	VALUES
Smoking Alcohol Sex Background Occupation Children Financial Status Marital Status Interests	Outlook on Life Sense of Humour Intelligence Social Skills Sensitive Ambition Relationship Baggage Willingness to Compromise Mutual Respect	Age Height Weight Build Hair Racial type Attractiveness	Politics Religion Integrity Work ethic Marriage Home Friendship