

### Online Dating



Online dating has become a popular way for people to meet other people. From the time you set up your profile to an in-person meeting, your conduct defines your image and can have a significant impact on your success. Consider these tips:

- Use a reputable online dating service.
- Don't give out personal information.
- Respect privacy.
- It's okay to interact with more than one person while you're still playing the field.
- Tread carefully with controversial topics, including sex, politics, religion, personal finances, and obscene jokes.
- If you set up a date, show up.

### *Building Your Profile*

Be honest and genuine from the beginning, in your profile and in all your communications. Even small fabrications and embellishments can end up being a problem. Once the trust is lost, your chances for advancing the relationship are lost with it.

### *Interacting Electronically*

If you don't hear back from someone within a few days, try again. If you don't hear after your

second attempt, move on.

It's okay to be selective: you don't have to respond to everyone who contacts you. When you do respond, do so politely, starting with a simple greeting and including things you noticed in their profile. This is your chance to make a good first impression, so take care with your mechanics as well as your messages. Keep them short and pace yourself, it's a process.

### *The Next Level: Talking on the Phone*

When you're ready for the next step, usually a phone call, it's easy to appear too forward. Ask, "Would it be all right if I sent you my phone number?" rather than say, "Here's my phone number in case you want to call me."

### *The First Date*

For most people, the whole point of online dating is eventually to meet and date in person.

- Be on time.
- Dress appropriately.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- When introducing yourself, stand up, smile, look the other person in the eyes, say your name and repeat their names, and use a firm handshake.
- Be a good conversationalist.
- Keep it simple. On the first date, it's easier if you each pay your own way.
- Follow up after the date.

### *Safety First*

For safety's sake, meet in a public place and make sure a friend you trust knows you're going out on a date made with someone from the dating service you use. Give your friend the person's screen name, the location of the date, and how long you expect it to last. Then when

you get home, call to let your friend know that you're safe.