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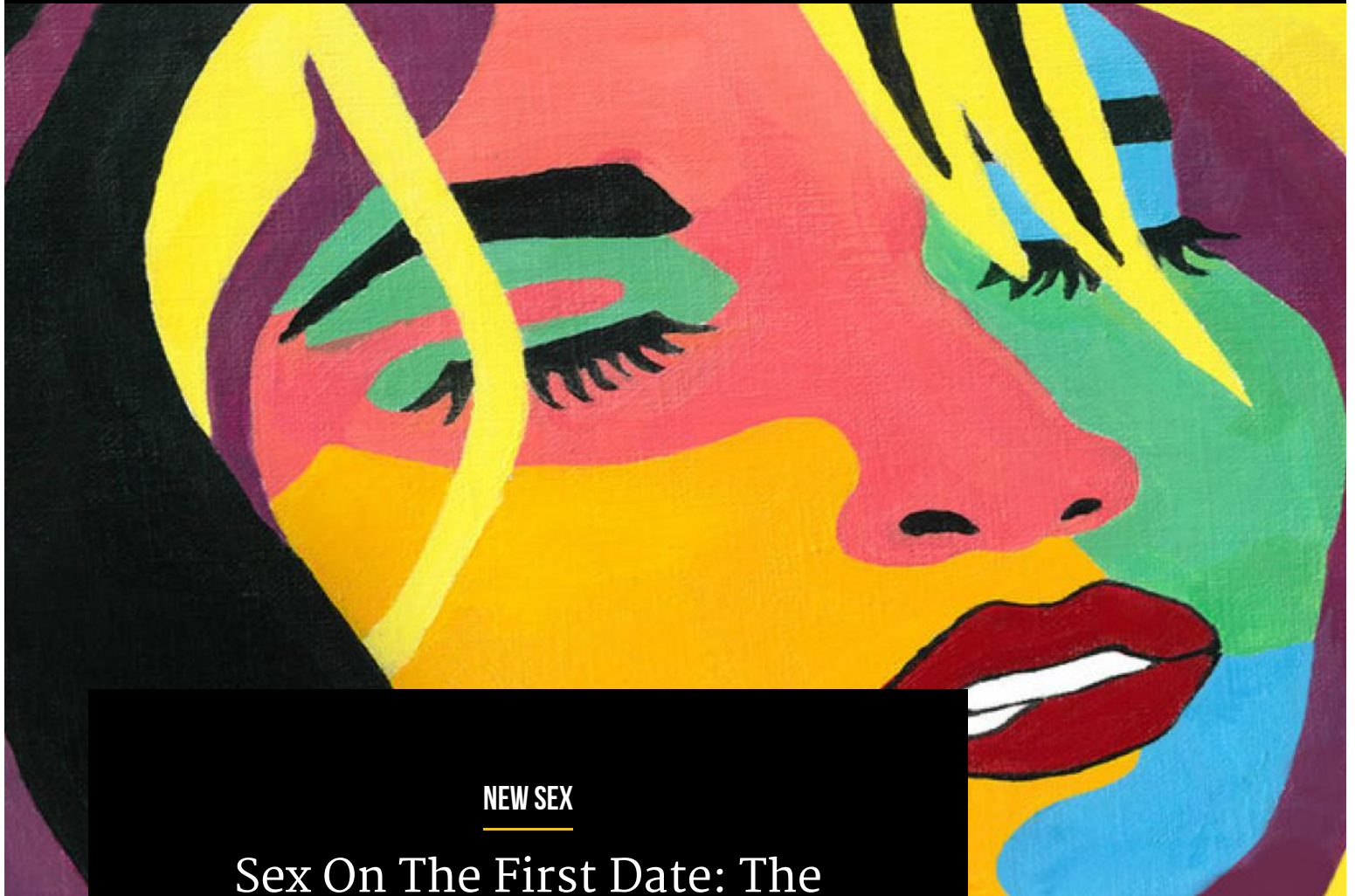


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NEW SEX

Sex On The First Date: The Science Behind Why People Put Out When They Go Out

Dec 18, 2014 12:19 PM By Lizette Borreli

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Is it perfectly OK to have sex on the first date or is your relationship doomed?

Illustration courtesy of Lecia Bushak

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Your palms are sweaty, knees shaking, mouth dry; you've come down with a case of the first date jitters. But soon, the nervousness dissipates and you lock eyes with your date. As you start to list his positive qualities — a decent guy, steady income, stylish dresser, and oh, that chiseled body that can barely be contained by his tailored suit — you begin to ask yourself, *His place or mine?* as you wrestle between *Should I? Shouldn't I? What about that fifth date rule?*

1. SEX ON THE FIRST DATE: THE PSYCHOLOGY

The carnal desire to have sex on the first date is usually driven by an intense physical attraction, the love of sex, or simply wanting to receive affection. After all, who doesn't wish to be liked or loved? But we may find that often we overthink getting laid amid our starry-eyed episode.

“Psychologically, or cognitively, the urge is interrupted by a thought or reason. The person begins to evaluate and assess what the ramifications may be if they proceed on the urge, or if they curtail their behavior,” Dr. Fran Walfish, Beverly Hills psychotherapist, author, and expert panelist on WE TV's *Sex Box*, premiering in the U.S. early 2015, told *Medical Daily*.

We all know the lust-driven impulsivity on a first date is fueled by nighttime's dim lights, when sexual juices are flowing, but social context and cultural conventions also dictate when people twist the sheets.

A 2005 study published in the *Journal of Circadian Rhythms* found most participants have sex at night due to convenience. Factors like already being in bed, mate availability, sexual feeling, and work schedule were among the most common reasons people get frisky, with the most sexual encounters occurring around bedtime (11 p.m. to 1 a.m.). It seems strong environmental factors, specifically from the work/family schedule of individuals and partner availability influences our desire both physically and mentally to have sex.

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2. SEX ON THE FIRST DATE: THE 'SLUT-SHAMING'

Women who have sex quickly, like on the first date, are viewed as “easy and cheap” even in a modern sexually liberal society. They live in a world of mixed messages, where naked, sexualized images of women are everywhere, according to [Dr. Ramani Durvasula](#), a licensed clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at California State University, Los Angeles.

“[I]f a woman agrees to have sex on the first date because she wants to, her partner may make unfair attributions about her (even after asking for sex) that she is not relationship material and may be of suboptimal moral character,” Durvasula told *Medical Daily* in an email.

In most cases, she may be viewed as immoral, “easy,” or men may even assume she has other partners and does this with everyone. However, there are some cases when a man may believe it is an out-of-the ordinary occurrence. On a population level, though, men make unkind assumptions about these women.

“Women are made to feel cheap or to have no standards or self-love when they sleep with someone right away, and men are made to feel like a hero when they do. Many dating experts preach that when women have sex, it is a reflection

of the value that she places on herself and her worth. This is only true if sex means that to her,” Dr. Paulette Kouffman Sherman, a psychologist, relationship expert, and author of *Dating from the Inside Out* and *When Mars Women Date*, told *Medical Daily* in an email.

Walfish admits she’s had some patients in their mid-to-late 20s who have thrown themselves on her couch the morning after they had sex with a guy because they woke up the next morning feeling devalued.

“Their feelings weren’t necessarily by anything the guy did but what they self-impose,” she said.

Men, however, may not be the only ones judging women’s sexual activity.

A recent study published in *Clinical Psychology Review* found women do want more sex than they’re willing to admit. When women self-report dating behavior, they tend to downplay any sexual interest. However, when women are asked to interpret other women’s behaviors, they are more likely to label them as tied to sexual interest. It seems there is a level of “slut-shaming” and judging, even among their own peers.

The sexual revolution of the 1960s helped pave the way for women to have sex just for fun, independent of a monogamous relationship. The revolution also supported the notion that sex for fun shouldn’t be any more shameful for a woman than it is for a man. In entertainment, this modern day archetype of an independent woman is illustrated with television characters like *Sex and the City*’s Samantha Jones.

An exclusive study conducted by DatingAdvice.com found

more women with high incomes said it's OK to sleep with someone on the first day of meeting him. These women earned between \$75,000 and \$99,999 a year, compared to the one percent of women earning less than \$25,000 annually who agreed. It seems women who are becoming equal to men in the boardroom feel that way in the bedroom and therefore are more inclined to take the lead (and feel less guilty) when initiating sex.

3. SEX ON THE FIRST DATE: WHAT MEN THINK ABOUT YOU AND RELATIONSHIPS

So, you've caved into your primitive urge to have sex on the first date. Now what? The answer depends on age, the man, and the values of the couple. For instance, if the couple is older, the man's level of respect for a woman may diminish if she does have sex on the first date, according to Walfish.

Sex on the first date does influence the chances of forming a long-term relationship. Walfish says, "It's because strong healthy long-lasting relationships are built on good communication, ethics, mutual value system, character, and shared interests. Without taking the required necessary time to get to know the other person, this relationship becomes foundationally built on sex instead of the other important values. Shared values don't go up and down. They are ever-present constant."

Some experts say women shouldn't have sex on the first date because men tend to separate sex and love. Sex is the hottest in the first three months and then decreases in intensity and requires work over time.





The feet of a man and a woman in bed.

Robert Álvarez, CC BY-ND 2.0

“I do believe that men really want a woman who makes them work to win them over, and that goes for sex,” April Masini, relationship expert and author, told *Medical Daily* in an email.

Attempting to have both emotional and physical intimacy on a first date could be too much for the psyche to handle to form a real relationship. In a first date setting, it creates emotional distance by keeping the physical intimacy and the heart separate. A 2012 [study](#) published in the *Journal of Sex Research* said having sex on the first date may harm relationships over the long-term. Approximately 11,000 unmarried people in steady or serious relationships reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction, communication, and stability compared to couples who waited longer to have sex or who abstained from sex.

Now, while the younger generation is more sexually expressive and liberated, this also applies to them. They are still part of a culture that values older generations' norms and values.

4. SEX ON THE FIRST DATE?: YES, NO, MAYBE

First-date sex is becoming more commonplace in society, especially among college youth, where the “hook-up” culture is prevalent. The downfall to all the hook-up fun, though, is skipping over a valuable lesson: forming a relationship.

“College dating is a dinosaur and those kids have no idea how to initiate, form, or be in a relationship. This is also true of people of all ages. Adults sleep together on the second or third date (or even the first date) and then wonder why the relationship did not work out long-term,” Walfish said. “Due to this hook-up culture, guys don’t know what they want until they’re much older.”

This leads to mixed messages for both women and men. While society has become more accepting of women having

sex on the first date, it's not accepting of women who are serious about relationships having sex on the first date. Masini believes if a woman is serious about relationships, she should consider the role of intimacy when forming one.

On the other side of the pond, [Sasha Daygame](#), an international dating coach and author of *Daygame: How To Meet And Attract Beautiful Women In Everyday Situations*, believes if there's chemistry, there is chemistry. Women have sex for pleasure just like men, Daygame says, and there is nothing wrong with that.

"It's much better for two people to sleep with each other as soon as they are both comfortable and have established mutual attraction. Not on the basis of a social convention, rule, or fear of being labeled 'easy' or otherwise," he told *Medical Daily* in an email.

Women don't have to hold out for marriage, but waiting to get to know someone first is not because of an antiquated belief system; it's to protect the heart and mind to make sure you're in the right place.

Walfish's advice: "Try people on the way you find an outfit to find the right fit."



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