

10 Things You Should Absolutely Avoid on a First Date

No doubt about it—dating can be tough. Don't make it worse by sabotaging the relationship from the very beginning. We talked to several relationship experts who explain what NOT to do on a first date.

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According to Unmarried America, there are more than 106 million unmarried adults in the United States with singles making up more than 44 percent of the adult population. This means that there are a lot of people competing for a first date!

In a way, dating is much like a game. We all want to win the ultimate prize. For the ladies, that's usually Prince Charming. Unfortunately, the dating game doesn't always end the way we'd like it to. Sometimes it's because there's simply no spark, values don't mesh, or there's no attraction. Other times, we do things to sabotage the relationship right from the very beginning. We talked to several relationship experts who explain what NOT to do on a first date. Trust us. You'll want to heed their advice.

1. Don't mention your ex.

This is a big turnoff for a lot of people. Oftentimes, it's a sign that you're not completely over your ex and your



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current date is merely a rebound. "Talking about an ex love forces your date to wonder if you're ready for someone new," warns Joan Barnard, Zoosk's resident dating expert. "If you catch yourself beginning sentences with 'I used to date someone who...' or 'Oh yeah, my ex and I...,' you are setting yourself up for failure."

2. Don't get drunk.

Drinking should really be kept to a minimum—no more than two alcoholic beverages preferably. "Excessive drinking can lead to nightmarish situations where you make decisions you normally wouldn't," says Elle Nicole, the author of *Sex Meets Style*. "A first date can easily turn into a one-night stand under these circumstances. The goal is to engage with the person by listening and

speaking, and that's really hard to do if the room is spinning."

3. Don't bring up marriage or kids.

On a first date you are not sure if you want to share a dessert, let alone a future. For some people, it also makes them feel like you're rushing the relationship. According to licensed psychologist Kimber Shelton, "If marriage and kids are important to you, there are general questions that can give you an idea of someone's desire or feelings toward having a family, such as, 'Tell me about your family?' or 'What's your family like?'"

4. Avoid talking too much about yourself.

Make sure to create a balance between speaking about yourself and asking questions about the other person. "Too much about yourself suggests you are too self-involved," stresses physiologist and author Karen Sherman, Ph.D. "Asking too much about the other person feels uncomfortable and like you're a detective."

5. Stay off of your phone.

Between texting, tweeting, posting, and liking, it can be hard to remember life outside the screen. "Texting at the table may make your date think that you are not taking this seriously or are simply not interested," explains professional matchmaker Audra Chandler-Blakley. "So put the phone aside, and take this time to really focus on your date and get to know the date face to face."

6. Don't wear revealing clothing.

You have only one chance to make a good impression. Barely-there clothing can make you appear "easy" or "loose" even if you're not. Don't come dressed for the gym either. "Dress well but don't overdo it. 'Dressy casual' is the best: shirt and pants for men and a nice dress or a cute top and pants or skirt for women," says life coach Amy Schoen, MBA, CPCC.

7. Don't go back to his place or your place.

"First of all, this is dangerous, since, even if you know the guy and think he's a pussycat, he might turn into a tiger when you're alone with him," says bestselling author Carole Lieberman, M.D. "Also, it will inevitably lead to

boredom or sex, and you don't want either on the first date."

8. Don't sleep with him on the first date.

If you really want a committed relationship and for your date to take you seriously, don't have sex with him right away. "Having sex on the first date will cloud your judgment, and if he doesn't call again, you're going to spend a lot of energy analyzing, stalking, and even asking him out yourself for a second and third date. Just because he had sex with you doesn't mean he's interested—and if you care about his interest, wait to sleep with him," stresses April Masini, a relationship and etiquette expert.

9. Don't pretend to be someone you're not.

If you "act" on your first date, what will happen when you try to get real later? "What you want to do is be as real and natural as possible, so that you won't have to try to remember what act you put on," says relationship author Russell Friedman. "If he or she doesn't like exactly who you are, then you want to pass on them anyway."

10. Avoid controversial topics.

While it's important for many people to know where their date stands on finances, religion, the future, or politics—don't bring them up on the first date. It can lead to arguments and uncomfortable moments if the two of you don't exactly see eye to eye. "You may be on the lookout for a life partner, but this is putting the cart ahead of the horse. Stick to more esoteric and insightful topics," explains clinical psychologist Ramani Durvasula. "Get to know your date, and don't get ahead of yourself."

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