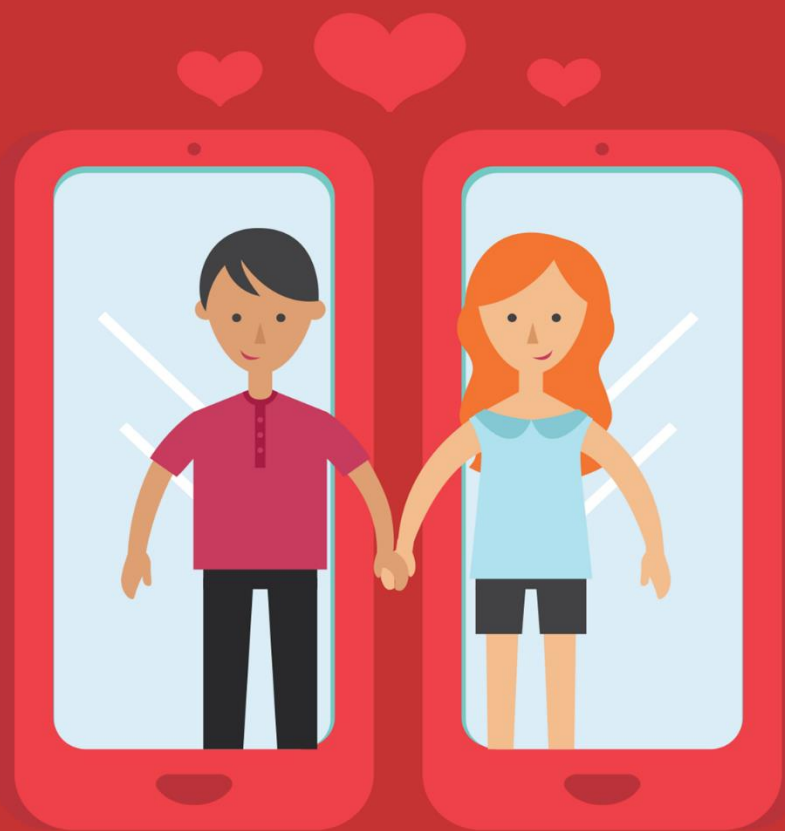


# ONLINE DATING

FOR BEGINNERS



**AMANDA WELLS**

# **ONLINE DATING FOR BEGINNERS**

---

## WHAT ONLINE DATING SERVICES ARE ALL ABOUT

**Y**ou've heard all your friends talking about online dating services and even checked out a couple sites but still aren't sure if this is what you want to do. It seems like online dating services could be the perfect solution if you only knew a little more about how they work. Read this short article and you'll know everything you need to know to get started.

Online dating, also known as internet dating, is when individuals, couples and even groups communicate with each other on the Internet typically with the intent of developing a friendship or relationship of some kind. Relationships may be of a sexual nature, personal or even lead to marriage. Some people, on the other hand, come to online dating just to make friends. Online dating services are all about helping these people meet and making the process easier. Their contact with the members of their service is usually done by cell phone or computer.

When you join an online dating service, you're usually required to become a member if you want to take advantage of all their services. As a member, you provide the online dating service with personal information such as age, gender, interests, location and similar information. You also set the same kind of criteria for what

you're looking for as far as gender, age, location, etc. The online dating service uses this information to match you up with people that meet your specifications. You're usually allowed to upload pictures of yourself as well as look at pictures of others.

Online dating services will also offer services such as online chat, webcasts, message boards and telephone chat (VOIP). Online or internet dating services charge a monthly fee to become a member. You can check out online dating services without actually becoming a paid member, but you won't have access to all their services. For instance, you may be able to see a picture of someone but won't have access to information about him or her.

It's important to check out the sites before actually joining so you know they're the type of site you're looking for, as there are different kinds. While some may be strictly for those looking for a relation-ship, another site may be just for those seeking friendships.

Another thing to remember is that, like in all areas of our lives, nothing will happen overnight. Finding the person of your dreams is not going to happen overnight either, even with the help of an online dating service. The online dating service may be able to help you get started and show you the ropes, so to speak.



## HOW ONLINE DATING SITES WORK

If you're like many single individuals, you may be tired of sitting home alone every night waiting for the perfect significant other to come your way. If you're not into the bar and nightclub scene, where does that leave you? Many people are turning to online dating sites. They're very popular, offer many opportunities and there are many to choose from, more almost a new site created every day.

### Look for Reputable Online Dating Sites

Before you rush out and join the first online dating site you find, do your homework and research the sites to see what they have to offer and how others rate them. If they're a legitimate online dating site, you'll be able to find reviews others have left about them. Check them out. Each online dating site you find is going to promise you the world and swear they're the best. Look around or ask around until you find the right sites.

### Do I Have to Pay for Online Dating Sites?

The good news is that you don't have to pay to become a member

of an online dating service. You will get more options if you have a paid membership, but until you know this is really a site you want to use regularly, enjoy the free services for a while. Check out what they have to offer and if you think it's a site you'd like to join. Typically, free members can view photos of others but must pay a membership fee to be able to see more information about the individual or communicate with them.

### HOW DO I MEET OTHERS?

When you join online dating sites, you'll give out information about yourself to the individuals running the sites. They have a huge database that listed thousands of others looking for someone special. They match you up with individuals that share the same interests as you. These sites have excellent tools to help you find the right individual and screen out undesirables or those you have nothing in common with.

### SETTING Up Your Profile

One of the first things you'll do when you join an online dating site is set up your profile. Your profile is what others will see so make it good. Your profile should consist of your picture and information about yourself. By information, I mean what your interests are, what you're looking for, hobbies, etc. Do not put any more personal information than possible on your profile. You don't know who will be viewing your profile, so you don't want to give out private information. Many of the online dating sites will offer excellent help in setting up your profile.



---

## ONLINE DATING TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

If you've been unsuccessful at getting a date and are considering an online dating service, here are some tips to help make the process easier. The first thing you need to do is ask yourself what exactly you are looking for in a date.

Too many people jump into online dating sites with no idea of what to write down in the profile or preference section, and then get frustrated when they don't find the ideal person. You may tell your-self that you want a date so bad that you'll accept anything the site offers. This is not true, though, as you'll find out the hard way if you don't do a little self analysis.

You may be a serious member of your church. If this is the case, you'll probably be interested in someone that shares your religious beliefs. You may also be looking for a specific age group or certain culture. While you may think you have no preferences, everyone has preferences. The fantastic thing about online dating sites is that they'll act on what you tell them your preferences are. They have unique tools that allow them to weed out individuals that do not match your criteria. It's amazing what these online dating sites can accomplish for couples!

Do not make the mistake many beginners do of beefing up their

profile with stuff that just is not true. If your true intentions are to get a date that may lead to a relationship, you really don't want to have to explain why you lied on your profile and watch a potential relationship or friendship end on the spot. If you're not interested in marrying and having children, don't say that you are just to get a date. You're just wasting your time and theirs.

Although most people will say looks don't matter, they still want to see what the other individual looks like so always post a photo with your profile and post a current one. Pasting a picture that's ten years old and taken when you were younger and 100 pounds lighter is not being honest. Post a current, attractive and appropriate picture. A picture really can be worth 1000 words!

If you're planning on joining an online dating site and taking advantage of all their benefits, be prepared to pay a membership fee each month. You may feel as though it's too costly, but is there any price tag on possibly finding your soul mate? If you were going to the bars and nightclubs, you'd be spending a lot more money with probably less desirable results!





---

## ONLINE DATING HELP FOR NEWBIES: WRITING YOUR PROFILE

If you've been having trouble getting a date and are tired of being alone, you may have finally decided to try the world of online dating. You probably never thought you were first date would be the result of online dating, but there are worst things in life. In fact, you could have the time of your life. Every day 100 people in the world get married as a result of relationships that started from online dating. You could soon become one of the lucky ones!

Before you can become lucky; however, you need to join an online dating site and set up your profile. Setting up your profile is one of the first things you'll do upon joining the site. It's what others will see so make it count. Here are some helpful suggestions on making the best possible profile.

Make your profile unique. Don't copy someone else's and just put your screen name on it. Make it tell the viewer something specific about you. For instance, if you enjoy reading horror books, you might say that you enjoy Steven King novels or are a fan of Dean Koontz. If you have a pet, you might want to say something about your pet. They say cute dogs are great date magnets! Give your viewer enough interesting stuff to read so they stay on your profile page long enough to read it.

Be honest in your profile. Unless you're planning to have nothing more than a cyber friendship, you may meet up with each other in the future. You don't want to have to explain why you lied. When describing yourself, be as accurate as possible. If you are using a photo, this is a must, make sure it's a current photo. Anything less is being dishonest.

Be specific about what you want. Don't just say you're looking for a commitment or looking for a decent person to date. If you want someone that likes animals, say so. If you are interested in someone to do things with outdoors, say that as well.

Do not overbuild yourself or put yourself down in any way. Explain who and what you are and be proud of it. Somewhere out there is someone just like you.

Be yourself. I realize that the internet allows us to speak more freely and often lowers our inhibitions, but use the same kind of voice on your profile as you would use if you were meeting in person. Fewer things are more important in online dating than honesty, especially on your first date.



## CHOOSING ONLINE DATING SITES FOR BEGINNERS

If you've been doing the online dating scene, you're probably familiar with all the ins and outs of what makes it work. You're probably also familiar with which sites are better than others. However, if you're a beginner at online dating, you're probably uncertain as to what to look for in online dating sites. Here are some simple to follow tips to help you make the right choice in online dating sites.

### HOW LONG HAVE They Been in Business?

There are thousands of online dating services on the internet, with a new one setting up shop almost every day. Each one is going to offer to hook you up with the love of your life and claim to be the best. How do you know which one to choose? One of the first things to check is how long they've been in business. The longer they've been in business, the fewer bugs they'll have to work through and the more efficient they're going to be. Research each company thoroughly before joining.

### CHOOSE A FEW of the Best

After you've done a thorough job of researching the different online dating sites, you'll be in a better position to narrow it down to the few that you like the best. Criteria you want to look for are those that are easy to navigate and those that cater to what you're looking for. No longer are dating sites strictly for men or strictly for women. There are now so many options available today so take your time in choosing the sites that are the closest to what you're looking for in an online dating site.

### WHAT DO THEY ALLOW FOR PROFILES?

The profiles that are entered on the online dating sites will play a large part in how successful you will be in meeting the person of your dreams. Check out what type of profiles and photos they allow on their sites. With some sites, the approval period takes so long that completing a profile can almost turn into an all day process. Check out the rules on any sites you're considering.

### WHAT TYPE OF CHAT ROOMS DO THEY OFFER?

Chatting is a popular way to members to get to know each other. For most people, it's the most important part of online dating. If you look at a profile that appeals to you, you're not going to rush out and make a date with them. You'll want to spend some time chatting. Check out what type of chat rooms they offer as well as how they're monitored.

### WHAT IS THE COST?

With so many online dating sites offered today, you can afford to be picky in choosing sites. Cost should always be a factor as well as providing services that you need. The right combination is available out there. All you have to do is look around!



---

## WHY SO MANY BEGINNERS USE ONLINE DATING SITES

**A**re you tired of sitting home alone night after night while all your friends are out on dates? Online dating sites can be the perfect solution to all those empty days and lonely nights. In addition, you'll also get to avoid the boring and costly bar scenes, the almost steady stream of rejection and you'll have much more fun.

Even if you're a beginner at online dating, you could be in for the time of your life. Over 100 people get married every day due to a relationship started online. That's a high number, especially considering it wasn't that many years ago that online dating was considered only for desperate people. This is no longer the case as there are now millions of people visiting online dating sites and becoming loyal members. It should come as no surprise that more beginners every day are choosing online dating sites to help find their first dates.

One of the best parts of a relationship is the beginning when a couple is getting to know each other. The steady talking and communicating is what you can expect with online dating sites. What's even better is that you can do it with more than one man or woman. Once you've put up your profile and specified what you're looking for in a date, you'll have many options available to you. If your profile is set

up right, you could have many people contacting you and getting to know you. You'll be able to develop not just relationships but friendships as well. Many lasting relationships as well as friendships have developed as a result of online dating sites.

Online dating sites offer messaging, chat rooms, voice calls and even winks as a way to flirt. It won't take you long after joining to see why so many people love being members of online dating sites. They give you the opportunity to weed out individuals that are less desirable while concentrating on the many individuals that share your interests. One of the many benefits of online dating sites is that couples have as long as they want to get to know each other before actually meeting for the first time.

Although most of the major online dating sites do a thorough job of screening all their members, some undesirables and unscrupulous individuals still manage to fall through the cracks. Always make sure you know as much as possible about anyone you meet online before agreeing to meet with them. When you do meet for the first time, do it in a public place.



---

## COMMON DO'S AND DON'TS FOR ONLINE DATING

**O**nline dating has become very popular in recent years. Studies show that a large percentage of couples have met either through online dating services or through other places on the internet. Of this large percent, many of these relation-ships led to marriage and long term commitments.

For people that are inexperienced or newbies at dating, online dating is the perfect solution. Shyness and insecurity often keep two perfectly matched people from getting together. The internet offers them the opportunity to communicate freely and get to know each other before actually meeting face to face.

However, in spite of how great internet dating appears to be, one needs to be cautious and realize that precautions need to be taken. Many disasters and crimes have been committed because of online dating, or rather because of failure to be careful.

While there's always the chance that tragedy may have not been avoided even if it wasn't online dating, exercising caution and good judgment may make all the difference. As I stated before, people can meet other people in a variety of online sites including dating sites, chat rooms, online games, forums and more. Here are some simple do's and don'ts for dating online.

If you're seriously trying to meet someone online, make your approach unique. Do not copy and paste the same letters to everyone you talk with. Many sites have similar members that get to know each other and could discover what you're doing. Personalize your letters and communication and limit yourself to only those that you truly want to meet. Regardless of where you're meeting someone, be realistic about your expectations. Not everyone is going to realize how wonderful you really are. Not everyone is going to be as wonderful as they may have made themselves appear.

If you're on an online dating site, do be sure to follow their rules and guidelines. The rules they enforce are there for everyone and are for safety. When you join the site, read the rules so you'll know what is acceptable and what is not. Do not use your regular email account. Set up a separate temporary email account for your dating sites. If something doesn't work out, you may not want that individual to have your regular email.

Do not give out too much personal information until you really know the person well. If they seem to be prying too much, you may want to avoid them. Profiles are great as they allow people to see if you're someone they might want to get to know. However, be very limited with what you put on your profile. If anyone you meet online ever asks for money for any reason, do not give it to him or her. Report them to the site owners. Most of all just have fun meeting new people.





## AVOIDING THE COMMON ONLINE DATING SCAMS

**T**he internet has brought many things to the world and all of us in it. Unfortunately, one of these things is scams and con artists. Online scams can be found throughout the internet in a variety of sites. They're frequently found on online dating sites. If you're a beginner to online dating and online dating sites, do you know everything you need to know to avoid becoming a victim of an internet scam? Online dating sites can be a lot of fun but can pose danger if you're not careful and don't know what to look for and avoid. Here are a few of the most common online dating scams.

Have you met someone that seems too good to be true? They're wonderful, attentive and everything you've been looking for in a friend or potential partner. This individual would love to come and meet you so you can get to know each other better but needs you to send them money. Avoid this individual like the plague. They're after your money and nothing else. Delete them, block them or whatever it takes to get them out of your life.

In most cases, it's a woman that's asking for the money; however, just because their profile says they're a woman doesn't mean it's true. Clues that this individual may not be who they say there are include only agreeing to communicate by email, refusing to give out a

telephone number or address where they can be reached or never answering the phone if they do give out a number. Keep in mind; these are precautions everyone should take when they're first getting to know each other. However, once you've developed a relationship, you should no longer be hearing these types of replies.

Another scam often found in online dating sites is the individual immediately asking for your email address. When you first join an online dating site, you should start up a separate email address just for the online dating sites. This is the only email address that should be given out on these sites. If they ask for another, do not give it out or you could be filled with spam and other junk mail.

Yet another scam found on online dating sites is the individual claiming to be in trouble and asking for your help. You may have a sympathetic heart, but save it for your real friends and family. Don't let strangers take advantage of you. Be smart, be safe and you can have a pleasant experience on online dating sites.



---

## ONLINE DATING SITE STEPS FOR NEWBIES

**I**f you're new to the world of online dating, you're probably considering going to online dating sites and joining the millions of others looking for friendship, relationships and more. However, if you're new to online dating sites, you may find it all a little intimidating. Relax, it's actually a lot easier than you think and, if done correctly, can provide you with a lot of fun. Here are some simple steps to steer you in the right direction in using online dating sites.

### SET up your profile

The first and most important part of online dating sites is setting up your profile. Do not think you will have any success at meeting someone online without a profile. In fact, if you don't set up a profile, you're wasting your time. If you've paid a membership fee, you've wasted money as well. When I say set up your profile, I don't mean just throwing up the sexiest photo you can find of yourself.

You don't have to write an essay, but you do need to tell the world a little about yourself such as your age, location, marital status, goals, interests, hobbies, etc. Many people are afraid of giving their real

name, which is fine, but there are plenty of other things you can say. Make it interesting and creative, but make sure it's also honest. Don't jeopardize a potential relationship by having to explain later why you lied on your profile.

### PUTTING up a Photo

You may not want your close friends and family members to know you're on an online dating site so you may want to forgo the photo. This is a big mistake. I can almost guarantee that you're missing many possibilities by not using a photo. Most people will not even give someone a second thought if they don't see photo to match with the id. On the subject of ids, most people have a screen name other than their real name. Limit giving out your real name until you really know someone.

### MAKE CONTACT

We all think we're unique and special; however, don't think you're too good to contact others that may interest you. If you see someone that interests you, send them an instant message, a wink, nod or whatever else the site offers. This will let the individual know that you're interested in chatting and getting to know them better. It can also be the start of a great relationship, whether friendship or other. Gone are the days where women have to sit around waiting for men to take the initiative.



---

## ONLINE DATING: FREE TRIAL MEMBERSHIPS FOR BEGINNERS

If you've heard anything at all about online dating, you've probably heard that it's very popular today with people of all ages. People that never dreamed they'd ever be part of online dating are now members to one or more of these very popular sites. One area where online dating sites seem to excel is their help for beginners at dating.

Beginning daters, or those that have never been on a date, often feel scared, nervous and very unsure of themselves. They fear they're never going to find that first date and if they do, they'll mess things up so there'll never be a second date. If you're about ready to give up waiting for the perfect individual to come along and accompany you on a date, online dating sites might be the perfect solution.

Online dating sites offer shy and insecure individuals the opportunity to chat with others without the fear of feeling or looking foolish. There is something about hiding behind a computer monitor that manages to bring out the self confidence in most of us. The reason why so many online relationships turn into happy real time relationships is because they've had all the time they need communicating and getting to know each other online. By the time they finally agree to meet, they're already like old friends.

Which online dating sites are the best? Which online dating site should I choose to join? Which one can help me find the date of my dreams and possibly more? These are all questions asked by begin-ners in the dating world. Unfortunately, there is no sure fire answer to these questions, which is why beginners to dating should take advan-tage of the free trial memberships offered by most of the online dating sites.

Most online dating sites guarantee they'll find you someone rather quickly, so take some time checking out the sites before paying to join. If you rush out, pay membership fees immediately upon join-ing, and find out the site is all wrong for what you're looking for, you'll have wasted money.

Many sites allow you to send eye contact messages like winks, smiles or pokes to show someone that you are interested. Look into sites like this, as shy individuals often find this method of communication much easier than directly sending a message. You may even get a few winks on a site, which may make you want to join that site. Try a few free ones out first before you pay. This way you'll at least know what you'll be paying for.



## KEEPING THE RISKINESS OUT OF ONLINE DATING

**O**nline dating has really soared in popularity in recent years.

Online dating sites are great opportunities for beginners to learn about dating because they are targeted according to what the individual indicates their interested in according to certain criteria like sexual preference, geographic location, religion, hobbies, etc. There are many online dating sites all over the internet all offering different features along with many of the same special services.

Becoming a member of an online dating site can be fun and extremely interesting. However, every year we're also hearing horror stories about tragic events resulting from the internet. Most of these events take place because of a failure to be careful and use good judgment. Here are some tips on how to use online dating in a safe and careful manner so you can have fun in the manner in which these sites were intended.

Remain anonymous as much as possible. While all members use a screen name, this should be entirely different from your original name. Do not share any more personal information than necessary. Con men that manage to get the better of many people are able to do

so because the individuals are careless with their personal information.

Use a separate email account for your online dating sites and anything having to do with your online dating correspondence. Regardless of how much you're asked, do not give your personal email address to anyone. In fact, if they persist in asking, this is not a good sign, but is someone that should be avoided.

Before you agree to meet with anyone you meet online, check out their photos or webcamming to see if they're who they appear to be. You may not be able to learn of any discrepancies this way but it's always best to try.

If you meet anyone online, whether on online dating sites or else-where, and they ask for money or your help with a personal problem, stay clear away from them. Delete their profile or block them. If they somehow manage to still contact you, report them to the administrators of the site.

If you do agree to meet with anyone you meet on an online dating site, always agree to meet in a public place, preferably during daylight hours. Always let someone you know where you are going and what your plans are for that day.

Although many people still believe online dating is risky, by taking the proper precautions, you're not in any more danger than if you were dating someone you met at work, school or in a local place. It's all about making smart and safe choices.





---

## GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE ON ONLINE DATING SITES

**T**he success you have on online dating sites will depend in large on the type of profile you've left for others to see. It should consist of an attractive picture as well as information about yourself. Information about yourself should include your age, location, marital status, interests and what you're looking for on the sites (friendship, relationship, commitment, etc.). Many online dating sites have a whole process for filling out a profile. In fact, it's the first step they'll take you through upon joining the site.

### KEEP PROFILE ACTIVE

The mistake many members make is putting up a profile and then forgetting all about it. For the first week or so, they sit around waiting for interested people to contact them. When that doesn't happen, they move on to other things. What this results in (besides little success in meeting someone) is your profile being pushed to the bottom of the pile because of inactivity. You may also want to login to your site to update it as well. The more you login to your site, the more it will show as active so you'll stay on top and get more views.

### INITIATE CONTACT

If you're a woman, keep in mind that gone are the days where only men are allowed to take the initiative. If you see someone that interests you on the site, don't hesitate to contact them. Whether it's a man or woman, they're on the site for the same reason you are. You may not think there is anything wrong with sitting back waiting for others to contact you. However, what if thousands of others are doing the same thing? How many potential friendships or relationships are you cheating yourself out of by waiting around?

### MAKE MANY NEW Friends

One of the great things about online dating sites is that it will show when you and others are online. This means that if you send a message to someone, you won't have to wait days to see if you got an answer. In most cases, you'll get an answer almost instantly (unless the person is not sitting in front of their computer). This will give you an opportunity to chat with others or message back and forth. Don't limit yourself to only one or two people, even if it seems like you've found exactly what you've been looking for. Talk to as many people as possible so you have many choices available to you. After all, you signed up for the site to meet new people, so make every effort to meet as many as possible.



---

## ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE DATING FOR BEGINNERS

**O**nline dating is one of the largest things on the internet today. What's so great about online dating is that it offers people the opportunity to check out millions of others in a short amount of time. If you are tired of being lonely, are ready to get into the dating thing but don't have much time, online dating may be the perfect solution.

With the busy lives we all lead with school, work, studies and a dozen other activities we have going on, we don't always have time to do the bar or nightclub scene looking for that perfect someone. It may also not fit into your budget, either. Online dating is simple; it's fun; it's effective and it takes very little time. You join an online dating site, fill out a profile and you're well on the way to finding the date of your dreams.

Once you complete your profile, it is necessary to come back to the site frequently to keep active and check out the many individuals looking for the same things as you. Unlike going out night after night, online dating does not require hours and hours per night. You can spend as much or as little time as you want on the site. This is one of the main advantages of online dating and one that keeps many people coming back.

More possibilities are another reason many people prefer online dating. You may go to school with many people of the opposite sex but may consider them as friends and not date material. You may also realize the inappropriateness of dating someone from work. Between school and work, you've just eliminated many possibilities. Online dating brings these possibilities back into the picture.

Online dating sites eliminate time spent looking for people that you know you will not be interested in. They have sophisticated search engine tools that will filter out your search to what you've specified when you joined. In other words, you tell them what you're looking for and they'll match you to others that have the same preferences. You can also check out the member's profiles yourself and check out those that interest you or share your interests.

Another advantage of online dating is that there is not the uncertainty, shyness and awkwardness many feel in social settings where they're trying to make a good first impression. With the internet couples have the chance to communicate through chats and messaging until they're more comfortable with each other. Online dating sites offer not only the opportunity to develop a wonderful relationship but also many lasting friendships.



## CHOOSING AN ONLINE DATING SITE

**W**ith online dating such a popular thing today, many people that have trouble finding or getting dates are checking into this popular pastime. People of all ages are learning all they can about online dating, including those going on their first date. Finding an online dating site may seem like an easy task as there are so many, but you may find it more time consuming than you'd planned.

Most of the online dating sites will allow you to view certain photos of members and check out what the site has to offer but will not give you access to information on the members until you pay their membership fee. Others sites; however, will only show you a little information on members without allowing you to view the photos and entire profile without becoming a member. Each online dating site is different.

Because there are so many online dating sites, it's hard to pinpoint which one is the best. It will depend on what you're looking for. While one individual may find a site like Match.com to be the best based on their experience, another may prefer what Chemistry.-com, for instance, was able to do for them.

Here are some examples of what a few of the top rated online

sites offer in the way of services. I hope that this will give you some ideas of what to look for when you're ready to look for the most suit-able online dating site. I'm only listing three, but there are many more as you'll discover when you start looking.

Match.com has many features, which attribute to it being one of the top rated online dating sites. They offer a free basic service and your choice of monthly, quarterly and annual membership rates. They offer the typical options for chat, voice and email. They also use winks as a way for members to flirt online with other members as a way of showing interest. Our fill out a profile when you join and Match.com will attempt to match you up with other individuals that match your preferences. They base their matching on compatibility. Match.com is used by beginning and advanced daters all over the world.

Chemistry.com is an online dating site that, although it matches couple up, does it based on chemistry. They may not share all the same interests and hobbies but may be more interested in sexual or romantic chemistry. It does use traditional matching tools but members are not as limited with Chemistry.com. You have more options.

Perfectmatch.com is another online dating site that's very popular, particularly with individuals that lead a busy lifestyle. You don't have to spend a lot of time on the site browsing through profile after profile. They'll send the results right to your inbox, which saves much time.



---

## PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WITH ONLINE DATING

**O**nline dating has had some good press and it's had its share of bad press. We watch the news and hear of some couple that met through one of the major online dating sites and are on their way to living happily ever after. Then the next day we hear of some sorry individual that was scammed by a less than scrupulous person. How do you tell the difference? How do you know whom to trust these days? It would be easy to just instruct people to always read the fine print when looking through personal ads or read between the lines, but that's not always that easy.

The internet is filled with con artists, but it's also filled with genuinely sincere people trying to meet someone special to share their life with. The key is in being able to tell the difference between the two. Because the internet has done such a wonderful job of bringing everyone in the world closer together, there's a lot of deciphering we have to do to recognize the good and weed out the bad.

Online dating sites are often also called singles sites. However, just because they're single sites doesn't necessarily mean everyone on the site is single. Some of the major online dating sites have a pretty effective means of weeding out the married or shady individuals, but even they're not foolproof. The majority of the problems that arise

from online dating sites are not due as much to the unscrupulous people as to the members not taking the time to exercise good sense. There are certain red flags to watch for on online dating sites.

There's an old saying if something seems too good to be true, it probably is, and this is so appropriate with online dating sites. Look at the profiles in front of you. Do they look real or do they look like professional shots? If they're trying to send you to another website, look out. If they just seem too smooth and too romantic, delete the profile and avoid or block the individual. The block tool is a very handy tool and prevents someone from contacting you if you don't want to hear from him or her.

One of the biggest precautions I tell people to take online is to avoid giving out too much personal information. It's very easy today to trace someone's cell phone number back to their home address. Until you actually get to know someone well, treat everyone you meet with doubt. You may be a trusting person by nature, so skepticism may come hard for you, but give it your best shot. It's for your own safety.

Online dating sites can be a lot of fun, mostly because you can expand your horizon and meet many new interesting people. By using good sense and better judgment, you may be on your way to a new and happy relationship.





---

## ONLINE DATING: FILLING OUT YOUR PROFILE

Online dating sites are becoming very popular today. Gone are the days where only a few people actually have the nerve to enter these sites in search of a relationship or, possibly, love. Today, more than 20 millions single individuals are visiting online dating sites every month. Unfortunately, many of these individuals are at a disadvantage because they're unfamiliar with how to make the most of these sites.

### THE IMPORTANCE of a Complete Profile

An important part of online dating sites is your profile. Knowing how to properly set up your profile can make the difference of being successful in meeting the right kind of people. As amazing as it may be, many people on online dating sites fail to complete their profile. They may put in a photo and location and that's it. If, by some chance, they do find people that are interested, they're not going to learn very much about the individual. A great picture of yourself may draw in many interested parties, but they may not be the type you want.

### PROFILE SHOULD BE MORE than Just a Pretty Picture

Don't be afraid to put up a picture, as is the case with many that don't want to be seen by people that know them personally or professionally. You've joined an online dating site for a reason so make the most of it. Very few people will look deeper into a profile that does not have a picture. Putting up one of your best photos is a great start to your profile, but it should consist of much more than that. On the subject of a great picture, keep in mind that what you consider a great picture may not be what others consider great. Ask your friends and family their honest opinion on which pictures are the most complimentary to you

Be honest on your profile while still being creative. Nothing can kill a potential relationship faster than finding out the individual was dishonest on their profile. You want to put information that makes you unique and stand out in the crowd without being dishonest. You want to put the kind of information that will make it worth their while to look a little further into your profile. For instance, if you've participated in sports in the past, don't be afraid to list "athletic" as one of your attributes.

Always double check your spelling and grammar. Misspelled words or improper use of the English language can easily discourage someone from taking an interest. You don't want to give the opinion that you are uneducated. Lastly, after you've completed your profile, don't forget about it. Come back from time to time to check on it so it stays current and others can see you're active.



## **CAN ONLINE DATING SITES HELP YOU FIND YOUR SOUL MATE?**

**T**he internet is filled with thousands of online dating sites. Surprising as many may find this, many couples have found lasting happiness as the result of online dating. If you're new to online dating, you're probably nervous about what you need to do and if you'll find success in meeting your soul mate. While online dating sites can't guarantee you'll meet Mr. or Ms. Right, many have found success.

### ONLINE DATING SITES are not Just for Dating

You may be thinking that you don't have any trouble finding a date but rather someone that's looking for the same type of commitment as you. The good news about online dating sites is that they no longer focus on just dating as they did in the past. Online dating sites offer many possibilities including friendship, possible marriage part-ner, soul mate, casual date or even someone for just sexual encoun-ters. In other words, online dating sites can offer almost any kind of relationship you're looking for in life.

### HOW DO I ADVERTISE MYSELF?

Online dating sites offer you many ways of advertising yourself to others, starting with your profile. Your profile, which will include information about you, may include photos, voice clips, videos or any designs you wish. You can mention what it is you're looking for on the site, whether it's dating, friendship, lifelong partner, potential marriage or whatever. How much or how little you put on your profile is up to you. The online dating site will usually have a profile template to assist you in providing your information.

Although some members feel that the options they offer in their drop down box are not always exact, they're usually very helpful. Most members will use a profile name or nickname as opposed to using their own name. This is recommended to protect your privacy. By using a name other than your own, you're reducing the chance of your private information leaking out to anyone.

### HOW EFFECTIVE ARE Online Dating Sites?

One of the things that make online dating sites so effective is their ability to match you with someone that's similar in interests and desires. This is the purpose of the profiles. If you specifically stated you were looking for a marriage partner, the site wouldn't match you with profiles of people looking for casual sex. They have very sophisticated tools that can weed out those that do not meet your specifications. While they're not perfect and can't make guarantees, they offer you an excellent opportunity to meet many new and interesting people.



---

## WAYS TO BE SAFE

It seems like almost every day another new online dating site is created. Because online dating is available 24/7, 365 day a year, it involves millions of people across the globe. With online dating so popular today, it's more important than ever for individuals to have some guidelines and tips to make this the safe and pleasant experience it was meant to be. Here are some simple tips and ideas to help you get all you can get out of your online dating adventure, especially if you're new to this exciting pastime.

### AVOID GIVING OUT Personal Information

Make sure your personal information remains private. There really is a reason why it's called personal information. It's personal; it's private and should not be given out to virtual strangers. Until you actually know this individual, they could be anyone. All you really know is what they've told you and a picture they may have shown you.

Although we all want to believe the best in people and give them the benefit of the doubt, make them earn your trust first. We're constantly hearing horror stories about the internet. The best way

you can avoid becoming part of these stories is to be safe. If you meet someone and things don't work out, at least they can't contact you if they don't have all your personal information.

### BE CAREFUL with Pictures

Most online profiles include at least one picture, particularly with online dating sites. Be very selective with pictures you use on your profiles. Make sure there are not names by the pictures that may give out more information than you would like such as school names, cities, etc. A good rule of thumb is do not give out any pictures that you would not want your family to see plastered all over the internet.

### KEEP PRIVATE INFORMATION Secure

We've all been warned not to give out our social security numbers to anyone. The same goes with important online information with online dating sites. Regardless of how trustworthy someone may seem, keep all your passwords and ids private. If you use the same password for every site, make sure it's a unique password that's almost impossible to guess. With so many people using online banking and credit card access, if you use the same passwords and lose them to a stranger, the result could be the same as handing them your wallet.

### USE GOOD JUDGMENT

From the time we were little, our parents tried to teach us to be smart, careful and trust our instincts. With internet dating, it's more important than ever to use good judgment.



---

## DATING FOR THE FIRST TIME

**W**ouldn't it be great if there were a *Dating for Dummies* book on the market? There probably is since these entertaining and delightfully helpful books are out there for almost anything we might want to learn. Unfortunately, not everyone enjoys reading an entire book just to learn the basic things in life. As intimidating as it may seem, dating is a very basic for most people. If you're a newbie to the world of dating, you may be in need of some helpful tips to make dating the fun process it's meant to be.

There is nothing quite as special as going on your very first date. If it's someone you've fantasized about dating for a long time, the experience can be even better. We always remember our first date; whether it's someone we've known for ages or the result of online dating. Let's make it one of your more pleasant memories.

Regardless of how nervous and self-conscious you may feel or how much of a good idea it may seem like at the time, do not bring a friend or third party with you on a date, especially the first date. Your date will think either you need your friends' approval to be with them on a date or will realize this is your first date. Your first date should be spent getting to know each other, and you can't really do this with a third party tagging along.

If you're old enough to go to bars and nightclubs, which is where many dates begin or end, be sure you do not get drunk. Many times people will have the intention of having one or two drinks to calm their nerves and end up drinking too much and making a fool of themselves. A relationship that may have developed into something very special can easily be ruined on the first date by too much alcohol. Let your new date get to know the real you, not an alcohol impaired individual.

If possible, try to find out where you'll be going so you can dress appropriately. It can be very embarrassing to be in a dress if you're on a go carting date or some other sporting event. At the same time, a pair of blue jeans may be appropriate for casual dress but not a fancy restaurant. This is also something that can easily ruin the first date.

One last tip is do not monopolize the floor talking on the entire date. Your date may tell you they want to know all about you, but they don't want to know ALL about you, at least not on the first date. Getting to know each other should be a gradual process, not something you can expect to take place in one date. The less you divulge on the first date, the more they'll want to see of you to learn more. Lastly, relax and have fun. There was a reason you wanted to go on a date with this individual, so make the most of this date.





---

## FIRST DATE TIPS FOR MEN

**G**etting ready for a first date can be very stressful, whether you're the man or the woman. Women often think of men as confident and always sure of what they're doing. In reality, most men will claim they're every bit as nervous before a first date as women. If you're a man getting ready for your first date with that someone special, here are some tips to ease your anxiety and put the fun back into dating.

Provide her with a traditional date. In spite of how modern and independent women may think they are, when it comes to dating, at least the first date, they're traditional. In most women's minds, a traditional date involves the man making the reservations to wherever they're going, picking the woman up and paying the bill. Do not expect her to meet you on the first date or to help pay for the meal. Doing the first date properly will get things off on the right foot.

Don't expect her to accept a date for today or tomorrow. Allow enough time to make plans and reservations. By asking her for a date in the future, you're letting her know that you believe she leads an active life and doesn't spend her time sitting at home waiting for you to call. Show her that you cared enough about this first date to have,

it all planned. Do not show up at her door with no idea of what you're going to do. Don't forget that anticipation tends to make things better!

Don't be cheap on your first date. You don't have to take her to the most expensive restaurant in town, but be selective with where you choose to take her. Show her that you've taken time to consider the best ways to show her how special she is to you. Even if you're on a budget, there are many ways to delight her on the first date. Learn what she likes and do everything to accommodate her. Don't be afraid to call her ahead of time to confirm your plans. She'll take this as a sign that you are anticipating the first date as much as she is.

Be on time for your date. This is good etiquette for all dates but particularly so with the first date. Try not to be too early either as this may just stress her out if she happens to be running late. If for some unavoidable reason you find you will be late, call her and give her an update on when she can expect you to arrive.

We all love to have someone show us and let us know we're appreciated and desirable. If she looks great, don't hesitate to let her know. At the end of the date, if you feel things did not work out and have no change, do not string her along with a promise to call her. Tell her you had a great time and thank her with a kiss on the cheek. If, on the other hand, you both had a great time, let her know and ask her out again!



---

## HOW TO MAKE A WOMAN FIND YOU ATTRACTIVE

**W**hen you look in the mirror, do you see a fairly attractive man staring back at you and wonder why you've yet to have a date? Is your dating technique from another world? Are you just too shy to ask a woman on a date? Do you, in spite of your good looks, have what it takes to make yourself appealing and attractive to a woman?

Believe it or not, many men face this problem because they have no idea what a woman looks for in a man or finds attractive. Although every woman is different in her preferences there are some attributes in men that attract most, if not all, women other than good looks. Here are some tips worth considering before asking that special someone out for your first date.

Women love a man that has confidence. If you've ever heard the saying fake it until you make it, it may become a necessity. Women enjoy having men compliment them and make them feel special. They're not going to get this on the date if the man is so self conscious and insecure that he needs someone telling him how great he is.

Keep in mind; however, that there is a huge difference between having confidence and being arrogant or conceited. A man can show his confidence in many ways such as sharing ideas and opinions

without being argumentative. When a man has confidence, he doesn't always have to be right.

Women also find a man that's affectionate and kind to be very appealing. This doesn't mean you should be pawing her in public or be a push over, but be kind, affectionate and thoughtful. If you both have different ideas of what you want to do, don't be afraid to compromise and make her happy first. You can do what you wanted to do on your own time or on your next date. She'll appreciate the effort you made to make her happy.

Women like a man that will offer her security and take care of her. This doesn't mean that every woman wants to be taken care of, but she wants to know that he's willing and able to if need be. If they have marriage and children on their minds, as most women do, they need to know the man can offer security. They won't see this if you have a history of not holding one job very long.

These are just a few of the many traits that women look for in men. Next time you're looking in the mirror, ask yourself how many of these traits you already possess and how many you can easily develop with a little effort in time for your first date.



---

## DATING TIPS FOR WOMEN

**F**ew things can make a woman nervous quite like going on a first date, especially if it's a date you've dreamed about for a very long time. Even the most confident women tend to get worried about that first date and ways to impress him. The one thing that's very important to remember is to make your first impression count because it may be the only chance you'll get. Here are some important but very simple tips to remember when getting ready and going on your first date.

Be yourself. You've probably been hearing this all your life, and it's never been truer. There was something about you that attracted him and made him ask you out. Don't try to change yourself into what you believe he wants. Try to find out where he plans to take you, dress appropriately, and have fun. If you've been thinking of changing your hairdo for a while now, don't use this time to do it. Wait until after the date. If it was your long brown hair that first attracted him, he might not be too thrilled to open the door to a blonde with short hair, so just be yourself.

In spite of everything you've probably been told about men wanting women that always agree with them, they actually prefer a woman with her own mind. For instance, if your date suggests doing

something that you know you will not enjoy, suggest an alternative. Unbelievably, studies indicate that scary movies make excellent first dates because they get the adrenaline pumping and disintegrate any feelings of nervousness you may have had.

On the subject of suggesting something for the first date, you may want to suggest something that will lessen the need for a steady stream of conversation, especially if you're both nervous. They'll be much fewer opportunities to talk if you're both occupied doing something as opposed to staring across a table at each other. At all times, try to keep your sense of humor and have a good time. Chances are that he's every bit as nervous as you are, but if he sees you're relaxed, it's going to make him more relaxed as well.

Try to keep up with current events so you'll have something to add to the conversation. Men like to learn about their date on the first date, but seldom like a woman that talks nonstop. Ask him questions about himself, his work, family, etc. When it comes time to pay for the bill, wait to see what he does. Don't argue about who's paying the bill. If he does not attempt to pay the bill, casually lay out half of the bill.



---

## BREAKING THE ICE ON THE FIRST DATE

**G**oing on that first date can sometimes be the most difficult thing if you're shy and insecure. This is especially true if the date is with that dreamy individual you've been fantasizing about for a long time. As nervous and anxiety filled as the first date can be, sometimes breaking the ice can be even worse. You've looked forward to this date for so long, you're dressed to perfection and suddenly you're tongue-tied.

This scenario has happened to many people and has also destroyed any chance of the date turning into anything further. After all, how can you think of having a relationship with someone you can't communicate with? What a way to end what could have been a perfect night! Whether this has happened to you or you fear it may, here are some ideas to overcome this all too common problem.

Even if you're normally the friendliest person in the world and someone your friends just can't seem to shut up, you may experience a sudden shyness and inability to speak when you're on a first date with someone special. Getting your date to open up about something that interests them is always a good choice. Be specific about your questions and avoid questions requiring only a yes or no answer. Don't pry, but stick to simple questions.

Some people may love talking about their family but not wish to discuss their work. If you ask enough simple questions, you'll eventually hit on the subject that interests them and keeps them talking. Once they begin talking, you'll feel more open as well. If you're poor at everyday conversation but good at telling jokes, try telling a joke as long as it's not one that could be offensive.

If you're still having difficulty thinking of something to break the ice, a simple compliment always works well. Tell them you like their shirt or ask about their car. Men typically enjoy talking about their cars while females tend to enjoy discussing their work or family.

Try to avoid topics that may be controversial such as religion or politics. Although men tend to enjoy sports, keep in mind that you may be a fan of a competing team. This may not be the best way to get a friendly conversation going. If you know each other from school or work, a good topic might be something you both in common.

Many first dates take place in movies or restaurants (the traditional dinner and movie date). You might want to ask what their favorite food is or what type of movies they enjoy. Usually this type of conversation is easy to keep going and will lead to more conversation. By the time the night is over, you'll wonder what all the worry was about!





---

## MAKING SURE THE FIRST DATE IS NOT THE ONLY DATE

If you're about to go on your first date, you're experiencing the excitement and nervousness that millions of others like you have experienced. You've finally managed to snag a date with that special girl you've been dreaming about, and you want to make it special. You want to make sure that the first date with her is not the only date with her.

While the old cliché says a date with flowers, candlelight, candy and romantic music is a sure thing, this is not always the case. Here are some very simple tips to follow to ensure your first date is not only memorable but the start of more to come.

**Be creative.** Regardless of whom you're taking out on a date, be creative and use the element of surprise. This will delight her every time. Sure, candlelight, flowers, candy and romantic music can't hurt, but not every girl is into those kinds of things, especially on the first date. If she looks on you as a good friend, these gestures might be considered as too serious for the first date. Make it a point to find out what she enjoys doing before you actually go on the date.

**Keep her surprised.** Although women by nature are organized and methodical, most women also love surprises. Once you've managed to learn what she enjoys, keep your plans a secret until the big day.

You can let her know if it's formal or casual to avoid embarrassment and discomfort, but don't let on anymore than that. She'll appreciate the time and care you took in planning this perfect date.

**Keep your shared interests in mind.** There was something that attracted you to her in the first place, and it was probably shared interests. Try to plan something that you know you'll both enjoy. The date will be much more interesting and fun if it's something you both enjoy. Introducing each other to new interests should take place after you've been on a few dates (hopefully it will get this far).

**Don't expect her to pay the bill.** Today woman are more independent and many prefer to pay their own way. However, you asked her out and paying the bill is your responsibility. If she insists on paying her share, there's little you can do about it. However, make every effort to let her know that paying for the date is your pleasure. At the end of the date, don't hesitate to let her know what a great time you had.



---

## FIRST TIME ONLINE DATING TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

**O**nline is very popular today and is actually easier than you think.

From everything you've heard, it involves not much more than signing up for an online dating site, telling the world what you're looking for and going about your business until all those potential dates start coming your way. While this sounds easy enough, there are actually a few more steps needed if you expect success of any kind in online dating sites.

Don't set your sights on one specific online dating site. Do not go to an online dating site with the belief that if you've seen one, you've seen them all. Online dating sites are not all the same. Review different sites and look for those that are rated as the safest. Look for online dating sites directed towards your interests, sexual preference, age group, etc. This will make it much easier to find those that share the same interests as you.

Determine the type of person you want to meet. Decide this before you even begin the online dating process. Online dating sites typically use a search engine tool to help select people that are a close match to what you want. This is determined by the information you've entered when you join the site. If it's not narrowed down, you'll have far too many results to possibly filter through.

For instance, if you're an 18-year-old man looking for a woman, if you set your preferences to all women aged 18 to 24, you'll have a lot less to go through than if you set it any age group. Chances are you're not interested in dating a woman 55 years old so know what you want and put it in the search engine.

Setting up your profile can be a lot of fun. Put a flattering picture of yourself so others can see what you look like. Add some personal information about yourself as well. If you have any particular interests (sports, computers, photography), put this on your profile. It will make it easier for those that share your interests to find you. You'll need a screen name. This name can be anything that represents you as long as it is not your real name. Make sure you start up a separate email account for your online dating sites.

Once you've determined that you've met someone you really like, you're probably going to want to meet him or her in person. This is usually the next step. I hope that by this time, you've known the individual for a while and are confident they're trustworthy and whom they say they are. Always make sure your first meeting takes place in a public, preferably during daylight hours. After you've known each other longer, you can make other arrangements, but always be safe first.

