



## HOW TO KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE FRESH (50 Ways)

For those who choose to marry or live together, it's easy to get into a pattern of bad habits over time. Whether your work life is creeping into the time you used to spend together or you simply can't remember the last time the two of you sat down to talk, relationships can get stagnant, and couples can grow apart.

The good news? Keeping your marriage as fun and exciting as it was when you first said "I do" is easy with a few additions to your regular routine. Here are 50 tips for keeping the love alive.

### 1 Plan Regular Date Nights

Keeping the spark alive in your marriage means spending quality time together, and that doesn't just mean nights at home on the couch. Plan romantic dates like the ones you had when you were dating and you'll keep that spark alive. In fact, research suggests date nights can have serious benefits in terms of bringing long-term couples closer. If you're in the market for some terrific inspiration, check out these [40 Irresistible Second-Date Ideas](#).

### 2 Say Thank You

It's easy to forget your manners when you've been with someone for a long time. However, saying "please" and "thank you" to your significant other can go a long way toward making them feel respected and appreciated. In fact, researchers have found that expressing gratitude to a partner helped strengthen relationships. Bonus: saying "thanks" is also a mood enhancer.

### 3 Staying Intimate

Keeping your relationship intimate, whether in or out of bed, can make a big difference in how fresh your romance feels over time. In fact, research published in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* reveals that the frequency with which couples were intimate was significantly related to their overall relationship satisfaction.

### 4 Surprise One Another

Break out of the monotony of your day-to-day routine by surprising your spouse. Whether you're bringing home a gift or just leaving a note reminding them how much you love them, it's a gesture that won't go unappreciated.

### 5 Put Your Relationship First

Everything from a hectic work schedule to kids at home can make it hard to keep putting your marriage first. However, whenever possible, make time to do routine maintenance on your relationship, whether that means taking a vacation with just the two of you or just talking at the end of a long day.

## **6 Treat Your Significant Other Like Your Friend**

Treating your partner like your friend, from patiently listening to them to acting happy to see them when they walk through the door, can make a major difference in how romantic your relationship remains in the long run. Give them the benefit of the doubt when you disagree.

## **7 Journal About Your Disagreements**

Don't leave your fights unresolved. In fact, for a healthy marriage, you should be writing them down. According to a study, marital decline was significantly diminished among couples who did a regular journaling exercise about the status of their relationship. And for more amazing relationship advice, read these [50 Relationship Quotes to Reignite Your Love](#).

## **8 Kiss More**

Even if you're not in the mood for something more intimate, that doesn't mean you should limit your physical affection toward your spouse. Kiss them before you go to sleep, when they head off to work in the morning, and any time you want to remind them just how much you love them. In fact, kissing can boost your feel good hormones (dopamine), making you feel happier and more content every time you do it.

## **9 Ask Questions**

One-sided relationships rarely last. When you want to make your marriage feel like more of a two-way street, make sure you're asking your partner questions. Ask about their day at work, their friends, or just ask them what they've been thinking about. Asking questions will go a long way toward making them feel appreciated. Just remember the [20 Things No Husband Ever Wants to Hear](#).

## **10 Listen More**

And when you ask questions, take the time to really listen. Don't just wait your turn to talk, but focus on what your partner is saying, and offer constructive advice, if that's what they want.

## **11 Admit When You're Wrong**

As hard as it may be, admitting when you're wrong can go a long way. Remember: in the long run, being kind is more important than being right. Everyone has a unique perspective and because of your values and mental filters the other party is never going to see things the same way as you. They don't have the same parental conditioning. Okay?

## **12 Go Out Without One Another**

Absence really does make the heart grow stronger from time to time. Spending time without your spouse, whether that means going to a concert or heading to a bar with friends, can give you plenty of exciting stuff to talk about with your spouse when you get home.

## **13 Remind Yourselves of Your Priorities**

It can be easy to lose sight of your priorities when you're in a long-term relationship. Keep them in mind by making a list of what you both want out of your marriage and revisit it from time to time

when it feels like you're going astray. And for more sound relationship advice, here are [30 Things Straight Couples Can Learn from Gay Couples](#).

#### **14 Create Rituals Together**

Creating new rituals and traditions together can help bring you closer together, no matter how long you've been married. Have a special seat at your favorite restaurant. Create new holiday traditions. Keep making new traditions and memories together and that spark will remain lit, no matter how long you've been with one another.

#### **15 Dress Up for One Another**

Don't let sweatpants and ratty t-shirts become your uniform just because you've been together for a long time. Put on your hottest LBD or a nice suit and make it a point to take your significant other out on the town to show them off as often as possible.

#### **16 Be Transparent About Your Finances**

Money issues are one of the biggest factors leading to divorce. Keep your relationship romantic by being honest about how much you're making and how much you're spending; a little transparency can go a long way. One person should not dominate on spending nor control the finances as this can lead to major fights or financial abuse. Agree on who spends what. Make a team plan for your combined budget. Make sure that you have the conversation about what roles you expect of each other surrounding money. What you expect the other person to contribute. Talk to a counsellor if you find this difficult.

#### **17 Check In Throughout the Day**

Instead of just waiting until the end of the day to talk to your spouse, check in periodically with texts and ask him or her how her day is going. Those little romantic gestures can keep your relationship feeling fresh, even when you've been together a long time. However, a word of warning: Being chatty or checking in too often can come across as needy or mistrusting. It also ruins your air of mystery. Limits your texts to 3 a day.

#### **18 Say "I Love You"**

Three simple words can make a big difference in how you and your spouse feel about each other. Even when you fight, make sure you still say "I love you" to one another before you go to bed or leave for work. Even if you don't like each other in the moment, remind them that the love is still there whether or not you are negotiating on some topic. Respect should be there whether or not you are in a happy place.

#### **19 Don't Sweat the Small Stuff**

Did your partner put down a cup without a coaster? Did they make the bed weirdly? If your partner keeps making the same mistake over and over, you can mention it, but letting little things go will make you both happier and less resentful in the long run. Positive Reinforcement works better than punishment. If you punish your partner for their sloppy bedmaking or other chores they may not want to do the task again. Relationships can turn into Parent/ Child Relationships easily and these

will die. No one wants to be treated like a child and no one wants to parent their spouse. There is no team (intimacy) in domination. Effort must be 50/ 50. How you accomplish this distribution is up to your particular strengths and weaknesses. Work with their strengths, not against them. Many couples write up a chores list that they can agree on so that there is no argument over silly stuff. This list or chart goes on the fridge.

## **20 Drink Together**

If your partner's having a glass of wine, go ahead and have one with them. Psych research has proven that discrepancies in your drinking habits can lead to marital strife, so don't hit the bottle solo if you want to keep your relationship in working order.

## **21 Try Some Role Play**

Make things more exciting by adding a little role play into your date night. Let your spouse pick you up at a bar as though you're just meeting for the first time and you'll keep things fresh and fun. Furthermore, roleplays can be also fun in the bedroom.

## **22 Get Outside into Nature**

It's easy to slip into a pattern of spending every evening on the couch with your significant other. Make a commitment to get outside together on a daily basis, even if you're just taking a short walk to the store, and you'll not only get more exercise, you'll have more to talk about, too.

## **23 Tell Your Partner What You Appreciate About Them**

Make time to show your spouse just how much you appreciate them by reminding them (and yourself) what you love about them. Tell them how you love their laugh, the smell of their hair, or just how much you love waking up to them—it will make your relationship feel romantic, no matter how long you've been together. *See Marriage Jar Blog*

## **24 Keep a Gratitude Journal**

Feeling like you're drifting away from your spouse? Try keeping a gratitude journal. By listing the things you're grateful for in your relationship, you'll make it easier to remember why you fell in love in the first place. It is easy to take for granted all the wonderful things that you noticed they did for you in the beginning. Reevaluate your perspective. Imagine all the things you would have to do if they were not around. Having a partner around is also emotional/ moral support in of itself.

## **25 Foster Your Personal Interests**

Having a life outside your marriage is essential for the health of your relationship. Making time to pursue personal passions will keep the spark alive during the time you and your spouse do get to spend together.

## **26 Put Down Your Phone (Electronics Free Time)**

Nothing breaks down communication more than having your phone in your hand when you're supposed to be listening. When you're talking to your partner, put your phone away. A method I use for my couples clients is to suggest an electronics free period around family time in the evening.

Some select 6pm to 8pm to have a period free of phones, laptops and tablets. This is re-connection time for partners after work or for families to talk. If you don't do this everyone will become disassociated in the family creating selfishness and separation.

## **27 The Marriage Jar Concept**

One of the best things I was ever taught at uni was by my professor Dr Jodie Bradnam, who taught the 'Love, Sex and Relationships' class. Jodie taught me her secret for marriage and it really stuck with me. So much so, that I use it with my couples counselling clients.

Anyhow, the 'Marriage Jar' is a simple concept that the mind can easily 'get.' It is amazing how this simple idea can adjust one's behaviour everyday. Basically, it works like this: When you are first together, the jar is full. As time goes by, the jar empties. For every kind gesture, kiss, supportive comment, intimate moment, lunch pack made, etcetera, a marble goes in. For every sarcastic remark, episode of not listening or avoidance of connection, five marbles come out.

Some clients actually use a marriage jar to pop in notes of appreciation or love. Others just use the concept in their minds that they have to work 2.5 times harder after a disagreement or disconnection. Repairing your relationship between fights is compulsory.

## **28 Exercise But Don't Overdo It**

Want to spice things up in bed? Try hitting the gym first. According to research published in the Annals of Behavioral Medicine, exercise can help make women and men friskier. That doesn't mean you need to become a CrossFit champion any time soon, though. Beware: Researchers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill found that intense exercise lowered libido among men.

## **29 Do Something Impulsive from Time to Time**

Break out of a relationship rut with a little impulsivity. Take a spontaneous vacation. Host a last-minute party with your friends. Doing something out of the norm can make your relationship feel fresh, even if you've been together for decades.

## **30 Give Yourself Homework on How to Do Better**

Tackling your relationship issues sometimes takes more than just initiative. Try talking to your partner about the things they'd like you to change, and make a point of doing them, as though they were actually assigned tasks. Counsellors often give couples clients homework like Active Listening. This is something couples can do at home.

Active or Reflective Listening is a game changer for couples with communication problems. Talk to me about learning this method. [www.ghitaandersen.com](http://www.ghitaandersen.com)

## **31 Make New Friends**

Adding some new people to your inner circle can make your relationship feel fresh in no time. Making new friends outside of your relationship can broaden your horizons and your spouse's while bringing you closer together.

### **32 Maintain Some Air of Mystery**

Don't become the people with the shared Facebook account. Also, don't plaster social media with relationship memes when you have a fight. Keep your relationship in your relationship bubble. There should only be two people in there and the only person (other than your therapist) that you talk about your spouse to, should be them. Don't drag your extended family or mates into your marriage.

Furthermore, if you treat your spouse like a platonic mate, your passion will die. Don't become the people who use the bathroom when the other one is showering, or fart in bed. Keep some mystery in your relationship and you'll feel a lot more connected in the long run. Want to know what you shouldn't be sharing? Start with the [13 Secrets You Should Always Keep From Your Partner](#)

### **33 Get a Babysitter**

Kids can be a joy, but they are a romance killer. Whenever possible, book yourself a babysitter and go out with your spouse like you did when you were dating. Even if you don't have time for a night on the town, just a few uninterrupted hours at home together can do a world of good. If you find that your budget is a problem, then swap babysitting nights with other couples or bribe your parents. If you don't invest in your relationship it will wither. It is the best investment you can make.

### **34 Add Some Romantic Viewing to Your Routine**

Want to keep things spicy? Add some romantic movies to your roster. According to research conducted at various universities show that watching romantic movies (Chic Flicks) made couples significantly less likely to split than those who shunned the rom-com viewings. And when you want to brush up on your classic cinema, add the [37 Movies Every Man Over 40 Should Be Able to Quote](#) to your must-watch list.

### **35 Be More Giving and Generous**

Even if you typically go Dutch, treat your partner whenever you can afford to. Take turns in shouting each other. Those little gestures will make a major difference in your appreciation of one another over time. *See Marriage Jar blog.*

### **36 Develop a Mutual Hobby**

Want to get closer to your spouse? Try participating in a mutual hobby. Whether you're taking cooking classes or hitting the gym together, a new common interest will keep things hot.

### **37 Send Each Other an Occasional Flirty Text**

Hearing "I love you" is great, but if you want to keep things spicy, send your partner something a little more flirtatious from time to time. "I can't wait until you get home" or "You look hot tonight" is always nice to hear.

### **38 Tell Your Significant Other When They Look Good**

Your significant other deserves to know more than just that they're loved. They need to feel wanted, too. Whenever possible, tell them how good they look and how much you appreciate the time they take to do so. And when you want to show off for your partner, tone up with some workouts, yoga,

or gym exercise. When a person is appreciated, they will work harder to get the praise and for you to be proud of them.

### **39 Take Some Work Off Their Plate**

If chores feel like they're the only thing you and your spouse do together, try taking something off their plate. Give them a break to do something they'd enjoy more; it won't go unappreciated. Notice when they are bogged down with some issue. Ask them if they want to talk about it. Put off chores until then if you can.

### **40 Write Each Other Love Letters**

Make your spouse feel wanted and loved by writing him or her a love letter or pop a cute note in your marriage jar or lunch box. *See Marriage Jar blog.*

### **41 Spend Time Apart**

Marriage often involves marathon togetherness, and that kind of time spent together can be draining. From time to time, take a solo weekend away from your spouse to relax and you'll return home feeling more excited to see them than ever. Self care is important. Fill your cup up before you fill up others. Men and women appreciate partners who take care of themselves.

### **42 Don't Shy Away From Corny Ideas**

Just because you think leaving a trail of rose petals is corny doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. Those grand romantic gestures you see in movies can make your spouse feel loved and appreciated. At the very least, you'll have a good laugh over how cheesy it is. Need some inspiration? Look on Google or Video Social Media. And who doesn't like spontaneous gifts in the mail?

### **43 Be Each Other's Cheerleaders**

Whether your partner is up for a promotion at work or shaved a minute off their mile, make sure they know how proud you are of their accomplishments. And when they fail, be there to catch them, too. There is no "I" in team.

### **44 Pack on the Passion**

Kissing doesn't have to be an inside-only activity. Show the world how proud you are to be with your significant other by giving them a big old smooch in public when the mood strikes. Of course, kissing isn't the only way to show your affection. When you're out with your partner, hold their hand; not only can this make you feel closer to one another. In fact, research suggests it may even limit stress and pain.

### **45 Find Out Your Partner's Love Language**

The 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman: **Acts of Service, Quality Time, Physical Touch, Gifts and Tokens and Words of Affirmation.** <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

Look at the quiz online and make use of this knowledge. How your beloved wants to be loved is how you should love them. Loving them your way will not give you brownie points, unless theirs is

the same. If they like physical touch, use it to connect. If they like Words of Affirmation, tell them you love them. Etc.

#### **46 Leave Work at Work**

Bringing your work home can have a profoundly detrimental effect on your relationship. Make your home a sanctuary for your relationship by trying to compartmentalize your work stress and don't let it spill over into your marriage. *Some couples have a habit of double tapping the door frame when they get home to leave their work stuff at the door, or showering away the day as soon as they get home.*

#### **47 Flirt, then Flirt Some More**

Go ahead and give yourself permission to be a little flirtatious with someone other than your spouse from time to time. Doing so can help fuel a little bit of healthy jealousy and keep things hot at home.

#### **48 Don't Go Any Further than is Appropriate**

But make sure you don't take things too far. Talking to someone at a bar is one thing, but exchanging numbers—or worse—won't do any favors for your marriage in the long run. This includes online dating apps, messenger chats to old girlfriends and boyfriends, sexting apps or exhausted social media chatrooms. If it looks like emotional cheating it is emotional cheating. Why can't you get what you need from your spouse?

#### **49 Ask Before You Make Major Decisions About Your Life**

Make your partner feel included and important by asking their opinion before you make big decisions. Whether you're making a big purchase or are trying to decide where to dinner, making your decisions a collaborative process will keep you closer in the long run.

#### **50 Get to Bed at the Same Time**

Want to keep your marriage happy for the next 10, 20, or 50 years? Make sure you're hitting the hay at the same time. Research published in psych magazines reveals that women viewed interactions with their partners more positively when they went to bed together. Leave your electronics in the lounge. Don't use them just before bed because they interfere with the body's biorythms. Avoid bright fluoro alarm clocks. Make your bedroom a haven of comfort and intimacy. Put happy photos of you both in your special room. This room is for you to sleep and make love, it is not a room to have your children or pets.

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