

So much for taking it slow

Every second counts to make a first impression

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Watch it, boys. You've got less time than you think to wow a date.

A surprising number (45%) of women make up their minds in the first 30 seconds of meeting a guy. Only 22% of guys render such snap decisions, says a study of 500 speed daters out of the Edinburgh International Science Festival.



The study also found women to be the pickier gender, turning down twice as many potential dates than the men did.

Did he lose her at hello?

Which means when an opening line tanks, you may be dead in the dating water. Here is practical advice for guys in the field on getting that second date. Or at least keeping that first date from climbing out the bathroom window.

The findings

One successful topic of conversation was dream vacations.

In the field

True, ladies love to talk trips to Fiji. Here's another safe topic: giving hints that you'd be a great dad. "Women are looking for good father material," says Gottlieb. "He can mention the fact that he knows how to coach Little League, in a subtle way. That way, we know that they like kids, but they're still using birth control."

The findings

One of the most successful openers, the study found? "What is your favorite pizza topping?"

In the field

Um, that's one way to go. Really, though, the less cheese, the better. Just don't be insulting. "You can generally talk about many things, as long as it's not, you know, a turnoff or offensive," says Jaffee.

The findings

Talking about favorite movies or books will likely bomb, because people have such such definite tastes.

In the field

Hey, so long as it's not "Debbie Does Dallas" or "Dianetics," women won't much care what you like to watch or read. A little friendly fight might even help spice things up. "I think it's okay for a guy to joke about how he didn't like a chick flick," says Tom Jaffee, CEO and founder of 8MinuteDating.com. "It matters how it's presented."

The findings

Women must feel an "instant click."

In the field

Some simple eye contact will do. "I sometimes tell guys to make it a point to know what color her eyes are," says Jaffee. Not so much so he can tell you they're the color of the sky, but as a simple exercise to ensure you're not looking at your own navel. "If you make a point to recognize what her eye color is, it means you've looked her in the eye."

The findings

Men consider appearance most of all on first glance.

In the field

So do girls. Also, for the most part, our sense of smell is intact. Feel free to apply cologne sparingly.

The findings

Women rejected eight suitors while men kicked only four to the curb.

In the field

"Paradoxically it's sort of like we're desperate and picky at the same time," points out Lori Gottlieb, co-author of "I Love You, Nice to Meet You: A Guy and a Girl Give the Lowdown on Coupling Up." Hey, women are picky. Get used to it.





The findings

Among the speed daters, one of the least successful opening lines was "I have a Ph.D. in computing."

In the field

That line may be more successful than the study found. Ever heard of Bill Gates? If you have any sort of computer experience, flaunt it. We're sure Melinda Gates didn't turn up her nose at her husband's geeky forte.

Originally published on April 18, 2006

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