

Tips for Meeting in Person for the First Time

Congratulations! After sending an ice-breaker message to a woman whose profile interested you, the two of you have spent some time getting to know each other through online messaging. Maybe you've even taken it to the next level by corresponding via phone. Either way, you've both expressed a mutual interest in meeting in person—a transition that's both exciting and scary.

Making the leap from the cyber-world to the real world can be fraught with anxiety and uncertainty. What if she doesn't like "the real you" as much as she liked the written version? What if your sizzling online chemistry fizzles out the second you shake hands? But to find real, lasting love, you've got to get past these worries and find out if the two of you have a chance off the small screen. Below are some tips for a successful face-to-face meeting:

- **Don't expect perfection.** This may sound pessimistic, but it's the best way to minimize disappointment when meeting a woman for the first time. During the online courtship phase, it's easy to put her on a pedestal in your mind, imagining physical traits she may not actually have. Keep an open mind, and don't expect the chemistry to spark the second you meet.
- **Just do it.** It's normal to get cold feet as the date of your meeting approaches, but resist the urge to cancel. If you don't face your anxiety, you'll never experience the rewards of real, lasting love. Keep in mind that the woman you're meeting is probably just as nervous as you are.
- **Meet in public, and let others know.** This should go without saying, but you should never plan to meet at someone's home for your first meeting. Instead, choose a familiar restaurant, café, bookstore, or other public place. Drive your own vehicle, both to the meeting place and to any follow-up destinations, and be sure to let someone know where you'll be and who you're meeting.
- **Plan a fun activity.** Doing something fun together is a great way to break the ice and allow you to gauge your comfort level with your date. Some easy, stress-free ideas include bowling, billiards, miniature golf, concerts, and sporting events.
- **Prep some conversation starters.** You don't want your first meeting to seem rehearsed, but you also don't want to risk coming up short on topics. Before your date, read over her profile again so you have her interests and personality traits

fresh in your mind. Use your previous dialogue as a starting point—it can be fun to rehash in person what you’ve already talked about online. Most importantly, let it flow naturally. When you try to force the conversation to go a certain way, it just ends up feeling stilted and awkward.

- **If you don’t click, don’t lead her on.** If it’s quickly evident that the date is not going well and you don’t feel even the slightest bit of chemistry, it’s best to end it politely rather than misrepresent your intentions. If you don’t intend to see the woman again, don’t say or do anything that could make her think otherwise. Always be polite and thank her for meeting with you.
- **Be yourself.** If you act like someone you’re not or tell small lies, the deceitfulness will eventually catch up to you, most likely ruining any chance at building a healthy relationship.

Above all, remember that dating is supposed to be fun! Relax and enjoy yourself. Even if you don’t experience an instant spark, a face-to-face meeting could be the start of a great friendship that could eventually lead you to Miss Right.