

# How to... Date the second time round



Starting a new relationship after the end of a marriage or long-term partnership

can be daunting. So we asked psychologist Sophia Ledingham for her top tips on making your new romance flourish...



**4 SMILE** And smile some more. This will help you to be more positive and upbeat, which is a great combination – and research shows smiling can actually make you look younger! Positive emotion catches, so as you re-enter a new relationship be sensitive to the impact of your attitude. A smile and optimistic outlook will prime the relationship for romance.

**1 LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES** What can you take away from your past relationship to help your new romance? Make a list of all the good and bad points, and try to stick to the good ones. Most people learn from their failed partnerships and are more mindful of how they behave with someone new. Indeed, research shows that those who enter marriage for the second time invest more in

their relationship than those in first-time marriages.

**2 KEEP YOUR EX IN CHECK** As they say, two's company and three's a crowd. Not that you'll be inviting your ex on your dates, but just be careful of talking too much about him or her. It's a given that you have a past and it's normal to mention them now and again, but frequent references to your ex

– whether positive or negative – can send a message that you're not really over them or ready for a new relationship.

*Tip*  
Don't talk about your ex too much – it sends out the message you're not over them

hoped, so keep yourself busy with meaningful activities outside the relationship. Whether it's learning new skills, signing up to a club or spending time with

**5 MAKE A PLAN FOR BED** No longer in the first flush of young love, you can be more grown-up (if you want) about when to make love. Consider when the right time is for you to have sex. There's no hard and fast rule. If you find yourself mistrustful of your new partner's commitment or intent, then hold out until they introduce you to their friends or family.

others who make you feel good. This way, you're not dependent on the success of the romance for a positive sense of self.

**3 CREATE NEW TRADITIONS** Be careful of taking your new guy or girlfriend to the same places you went to with your ex. Our environment sub-consciously gives us behaviour reminders, so if your last relationship didn't have the best dynamic, revisiting old haunts might reawaken bad habits. If you went to the pub quiz every Wednesday, try a salsa class instead.

**6 PROTECT YOURSELF** As you know, not all liaisons last or pan out as you

**7 OPEN UP WITH YOUR KIDS** It's amazing what they pick up. There's little point trying to hide a new romance from hormonal teens, or young adults. I would recommend keeping it real and reminding them – and yourself – that you're having fun, but you're not sure it will last forever (or even for the next year).

