

The Do's and Don'ts of Dating

Using the Right “Textiquette”



To help women and guys use texting to their advantage, Nicole Beland, features director of Women's Health magazine and relationship expert, offers the following tips on improving your text life.

Texting Do's

- Do text sweet nothings. With today's crazed schedules, it can be hard to pick up the phone or even send an email. A short text like “Hey, qt,” or “Hope ur havin a gr8 day, ” can make your significant other suddenly happier to see you when you get home. 52% of texters surveyed said they'd rather receive a “Thinking of You” message than any other kind.
- Do text long-distance. According to the AT&T survey, 15% of daters in long-distance relationships send texts more often than they email or call. Texting can create a surprising sense of connection because it's so immediate—you can send messages the second they pop into your mind. Even though you're miles away, your partner feels right there.
- Do text before a first date. 34% of people surveyed agree that they'd feel more comfortable on a first date if they had exchanged texts beforehand. Keep pre-date communication light and fun. Ask about his or her favorite bands, movies, and places to hang out, then use the info to kickstart conversation when you're sitting across the table.
- Do respond ASAP. Most people are never far from their cell phone, so if you don't reply within an hour or so, the other person will assume they're being ignored. As a matter of fact, the biggest texting turn-off according to the AT&T survey was a slow response. If you don't have time to answer, reply with something like “Stuck in mtg. Will hit you soon!” If you can't even do that, be sure to add “Sorry! Just got this,” when you finally do text him or her back.



Texting Don'ts

- Don't guess. If a message is cryptic or vague, wait until you're face to face with the sender to ask what the heck they were talking about. Texts leave so much to the imagination that it's easy to let wishful thinking or insecurity take over. When you get a message that makes no sense, respond with "What?! Let's talk I8r!" Then stifle your urge to analyze.
- Don't over-abbreviate. You want to be brief in a text message, but it's considered proper textiquette to stick with terms and symbols that most people know and use. If you try to make up new texting terms on the spot, you'll end up sending gibberish.
- Don't be a tease. Text-flirting is all fun and games—provided that you're being honest about your feelings. Verbal flirting is such a blast that it's easy to get carried away. Over-do the Sex & the City style banter and you run the risk of raising someone's expectations only to hurt his or her feelings or, worse, attract an unwanted admirer.
- Don't text angry. Sure, you can express general frustration with a 'Grrrr...' or a "Humph" or an "Ugh," but pick up the phone to hash things out. Attempt to resolve a volatile situation in 25-character bursts and you'll create a hot mess that will be hell to clean up.
- Don't be rude or break bad news. Breaking up via text may be efficient, but it isn't classy—and in a hyper-connected culture, a bad reputation can spread fast. Any type of textual bad behavior is likely to get around.