

**\$10 off your first order with
FREE 2-hour delivery**

Restrictions apply



WELLNESS ▀ LOVE & DATING

13 Pro Tips for Dating in Your 40s

by MICHELLE VARTAN  | UPDATED 11/27/19



LINKA A ODOM/GETTY IMAGES 

Truth be told, dating in your 40s can be a wonderful thing. You're braver, smarter, sexier and more discerning than ever. Using these qualities as your secret superpowers, dating can not only be fun, but you can be much more successful, and speedy, at finding your match than when you were younger.

But there are nuances to be aware of that weren't factors in our 20s—we weren't as dedicated to our careers or financial responsibilities, and we hadn't had the experience of deeper relationships to learn from. To give you helpful strategies for how to date in your 40s, we consulted with relationship experts and psychologists for their advice. Get ready to make your 40s love life even more fabulous.

Choose Wisely Because This Could Be It

The divorce rate decreased by 18% from 2008 to 2018, because more young adults are delaying tying the knot. Many want to gain more life experience, financial stability, or a stronger sense of self before saying "I do."



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT **MYDOMAINE**

SPONSORED BY **CIROC**

How to Be the Perfect Hostess with the Mostess This Holiday

As you say goodbye to the year and hello to the next, make sure you're set for all the get-togethers you'll have.

[LEARN MORE](#)

That means your 40-year-old dating field could have more players looking to get hitched. And if that's the case, don't enter into a serious relationship hastily, says Kelly Campbell, Ph.D, professor of psychology at California State University, San Bernardino. "Marrying in your 40s, especially if it's for the first time, means you have fewer years till death do you part, so this really could be The One," says Campbell. "As such, you'll want to make the best possible choice."

Learn Quickly if They've Moved Past Their Big Relationship

Once you hit your 40s, you've likely you had a major relationship, whether marriage or long-term partner. And the person you're dating probably has too. Make sure that both you and your date have processed these relationships and are ready to move forward, says Campbell.

How can you tell if you or your date is living in the past? One red flag is talking about their past partner in disparaging terms. "If they are unable to discuss it in objective terms or clearly seeing each person's role in what went wrong, it may be a warning sign that they aren't over the other person, are still

holding a grudge, or are at risk for repeating maladaptive patterns in the new relationship,” says Campbell.

“Nothing turns off a new person more than hearing you rag about somebody else of their same sex,” adds [Fran Walfish, MD](#), a Beverly Hills family and relationship psychotherapist. Your new partner may suspect you're the one who was the problem.

Meet the Expert

Fran Walfish, MD, is a leading child, couple, and family psychotherapist based in Beverly Hills, California. She shows her expertise in her book *The Self-Aware Parent: Resolving Conflict and Building a Better Bond with Your Child*.

Wait for the Right Time to Introduce Your Kids

If you're a parent, anyone you date is getting a package deal. And it's crucial to prioritize your kids' emotional needs over your desire to find love. “Children need time to adjust to their parents' split, and it can take at least two years for them to get over anger, sadness, and other emotions,” says Walfish. “Introducing a new love interest too soon may delay or damage this process. You owe it to your kids to take it slow when dating!”

If you've been dating someone for at least four to five months and feel confident that you're heading toward commitment, the time may be right to talk to your children, advises Walfish. Tell them what you admire about your new partner, and encourage them to share both negative and positive feelings about the idea of your being with someone new. Actively listen and validate their feelings before planning a joint outing so everyone can meet. They may be cool to your new partner at first; just let them come around on their own time and keep communicating.

And if the relationship is still gelling? Have fun dating when your kids are with their other parent or family members. “If you introduce your children to someone who you are dating casually, this may create uncertainty and ambivalence for them about intimacy if things don't work out,” says Walfish. Be honest, but she suggests saying you're going out with a friend without offering unnecessary detail.

Don't Have Sex Too Soon

In the heat of the moment, sometimes it can take all your willpower to say “no.” But it's well worth it, especially for mature adults. “It takes time to get to know someone, and talking is the glue that holds people together.” Walfish says “Rushing into sex can derail talking communication and make it just a

people together, it makes you feel like you're taking a commitment and make it just a short-lived burst of lust.”

To set yourself up for the best sex with a new partner, hold off on the hanky panky until you're confident in the direction your relationship is going, unless you're just looking for fun. Set your boundaries upfront by letting your date know you find them attractive, but simply stating, “I don't sleep with someone until I'm really ready.” The reward of meaningful and passionate lovemaking when you're both ready will pay off in the long run.

Be Both Independent and Interdependent

A nice perk of being 40 and fabulous is that you've likely worked on yourself and are comfortable with who you are. If not, take time to think through your dating goals, values, and preferences, Campbell advises. Know your relationship expectations and deal breakers, without being too rigid.

Doing this allows you to be both an independent and interdependent partner, so “you function well on your own and at the same time are comfortable fulfilling important needs for your partner and vice versa,” says Campbell.

Know How to Navigate Gender Stereotypes

Dating in today's landscape can present confusing expectations around gender roles. It's likely you and your partner will have different ideas and philosophies, especially when you're both financially independent and used to being single. Who picks up the check and how often? Do you want the door opened for you, or do you want to open it yourself? Not being on the same page can lead to awkwardness and resentment.

“Open, honest communication between two loving and solemnly committed partners is required to make all types of role divisions in relationships work,” says Walfish. Talk to your partner about how they view gender roles and what their expectations are. If you have a different viewpoint, you can decide if it's a deal-breaker or if you both can be flexible and find a compromise.

Trust Your Instincts

“Most relationship mistakes happen because a person does not trust their instincts early on and sticks around thinking it will change,” says Southern California [clinical psychologist Ramani Durvasula, MD](#). By your 40s, you've experienced many human encounters, so trust your gut, she advises.

Plus, by trusting yourself, you'll be able to look beyond type and move forward based on feelings and mutual values—true cornerstones of successful relationships. Types are for people chasing something that they *think* is good for them. Do you want to put those kinds of limits on love?

Have a Clear Agenda

Having a good time may have been your main dating agenda when you were younger. But in your 40s, people may be looking for anything from friendship and casual hookups to marriage and children. And you have to balance dating goals with your established careers, different kinds of financial responsibilities, families, children and living situations.

“You are no longer a 25-year-old living with roommates and with few fiscal ties,” says Durvasula. “Because the range of reasons and expectations around dating may be wider, be clear on yours. If someone is not on the same page as you, knowing your hopes can help you make decisions that do not leave you resentful down the road.”

Celebrity matchmaker and relationship expert [Carmelia Ray](#) agrees. “Establish your deal breakers and don't compromise important values just to impress someone you like,” she says. “Don't beat around the bush long-term—been there, done that.”

Manage Social Media Expectations

Social media is a seamless part of everyday life for most 20- and 30-year-olds. But for someone from an older generation, their connection to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter is a mixed bag. Your date's social habits could range from “the 45-year-old who is as plugged in as a teenager to the 48-year-old who has never been on Instagram,” says Durvasula.

Once things are established, ask your date before posting a photo of the two of you together. And Durvasula says don't make a big deal out of it or try to post too soon, as it may make the other person uncomfortable.

UP NEXT: [The Only Dating Apps You Need If You're Looking for True Love](#)

Accept Scheduling Conflicts

Most people over 40 have many responsibilities that require more planning and sleep. Tuesday night dates that stretch into the wee hours may not work on a regular basis as fatigue can set in, says Durvasula. “Not to say that you need to get the blue plate special and call it a night at 7 p.m., but you are also no longer able to just skip morning classes after a first date.” Plus, parents have to balance childcare responsibilities, “which could get tricky because it means a lot less time for dating and less alone time,” Campbell adds.

Don't try to read between the lines if your date has to reschedule or call it early. Often, it's because of their personal responsibilities, so be understanding and you're likely to receive the same kind of

understanding from them.

Never Apologize for Being You

By the time we hit 40, we've had our fair share of trial and errors, but this needn't be considered "baggage." If a past folly comes up on a date, focus on the growth and learning that came out of it, instead of beating yourself up. "Women, in particular, apologize for what they perceive are their shortcomings or to discount themselves," says Durvasula. "You have lived a full life, no need for apologies. Own your mistakes and talk about them as life lessons."

Your date will appreciate it when you listen to their mistakes without judgment or unsolicited advice. "People want to be seen, validated, and accepted—flaws and all!" says Walfish.

Don't Make Assumptions

When you've been dating for a few decades, it's easy to see things through the lens of your past experiences—more than you ever would have in your 20s, or even 30s. "If you've had negative dating experiences ... you might assume the person you're dating shares similar traits or behaviors as someone in your past," says dating expert [Ray](#). "It doesn't work to assume everyone you date is all the same."

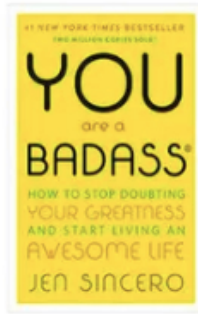
Before your first date, try your best to be open and nonjudgmental (while still keeping your wits about you, of course). By doing this, you'll give your date the chance to surprise you, creating a more positive experience from the start.

Don't Turn the First Date Into Therapy

Conversation on a [first date](#) should be all about getting to know each other, finding common ground, and determining compatibility. But if you're [fed up with being single](#), and you feel a connection, you may be tempted to overshare about past negative dating experiences. Ray cautions not to fall into "the TMI trap."

When you're single over 40, it's natural to have moments where you wonder if you're doing something wrong, and you'd like reassurance from your date. But that's not what you're there for, she says. "If you lack self-esteem or are unhappy with yourself and your situation, it's not attractive to someone you're newly dating," says Ray. Instead, be the person you want to attract. Smile, be the best version of yourself, and have fun getting to know your date. Draw them out and focus on them, and enjoy as things develop organically.

Speaking of being the person you want to attract, here are a few favorite things to help you feel prepared and confident on your next date:



Jen Sincero You Are a Badass (\$9)

SHOP

This singular self-help book will have you feeling like a million bucks, and confidence is sexy.



Fleur du Mal Magnolia Lace Balconette Bra (\$148)

SHOP

Even if no one else sees it, a beautiful bra always gives us a lift.





Wander Beauty Wanderout Dual Lipstick (\$30)

SHOP

Because red lips are a good look that make a bold statement.

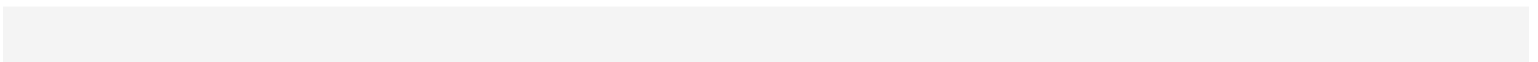


Sam Edelman Hilty Pointed Toe Block High-Heel Ankle Booties (\$160)

SHOP

You'll be relaxed and smiling all night in these booties that are cute and comfortable, too.

UP NEXT: [The 5 Best Free Online Dating Sites for Divorcees](#)



Related Stories



LOVE & DATING -- 10/02/19

7 Smart Tips on How To Start Dating Again (and Come Out Winning)



LOVE & DATING -- 08/03/19

This is How to Be More Assertive in a Relationship



LOVE & DATING -- 08/13/19

12 Crucial Tips for Dating in Your 30s



LOVE & DATING -- 07/11/19

The New Relationship Advice to Start Things Off on the Right Foot



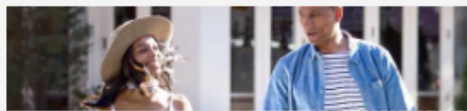
LOVE & DATING -- 12/20/18

37 Dating Resolutions for a Year of Love (and a New Perspective)



LOVE & DATING -- 04/22/19

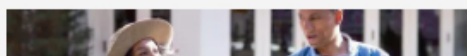
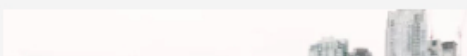
5 Key Reasons Why You Should Date Someone Who Isn't Your Type



Multiple profiles and networks all in one place.



Sprout Social





LOVE & DATING .. 03/17/19

Tips to Find Someone New When You Are a Divorced Dad



LOVE & DATING .. 02/15/18

5 Healthy Steps for Setting Boundaries in Dating



LOVE & DATING .. 10/11/19

Knowing When You Should Go on That Second Date



LOVE & DATING .. 09/04/19



LOVE & DATING .. 12/19/18



LOVE & DATING .. 07/10/19