

ONLINE DATING FOR MATURE SINGLES

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INTRODUCTION

Technically, a person is considered a senior citizen when they reach the age of 65. However, that's not always the way the general public feels – especially those who have hit the age of 50. When AARP starts sending you offers to join their organization, you have essentially crossed over into the “senior set”.

To some people, this might send them into spasms of denial. After all, how can you be 60 when you still feel 30 in your mind? But, really, that's a good way to think. It's been said many, many times that age is simply a number – it's a state of mind how old you actually are!

If you're over 50 years old, you've likely heard many times by now that you're over the hill. What started this rumor that once you've reached the middle of your life, it's all downhill from there?

Today's baby-boomers will stop at nothing to put an end to this rumor. They'll prove that the over 50 crowd is stronger and smarter than ever. Those over age 50 are more physically active than ever. Many have a decent amount of disposable income. They are politically active, culturally motivated and in tune with modern trends.

Mark Twain once said “Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.” Truer words, I think, have never been spoken! So you're a senior citizen – so what! Life doesn't have to be relegated to planting flowers and rocking on your front porch talking about the good old days. Believe me; the good old days are just starting!

With maturity comes new knowledge and experiences that you can embrace and enjoy. You are blessed with the past memories you can share with those around you – your loved ones. But what if you're a single senior? Is all hope lost for sharing your life and those memories with someone else? Not a chance!

Many of those over the age of 50 actively date. Loss of a spouse or partner due to death or divorce or other life situation is no longer the beginning of many lonely years spent in mourning. Instead, dating for the over 50 crowd is big business.

At one time, dating for seniors was essentially unthought-of. The general consensus "back in the day" was that you found someone to marry and stayed married to them forever. Once they passed away, you were expected to simply live out the rest of your days as a widow or widower. Well, the times have changed.

Divorce can also bring you to a newly single status. The divorce rate today is alarmingly high, but for some people, there just isn't another option.

Studies have shown that staying single can also put your health at risk. Researchers from the University of Chicago and Duke University have found that the longer a man spends in divorced or widower state:

- The higher his likelihood of developing heart or lung disease or cancer
- The greater his risk of high blood pressures, diabetes, and stroke
- The more difficulties he will have with mobility, such as walking or climbing stairs

This particular study only involved men, but we're willing to be that women run those same risks as well. It makes sense then to get back out in the social scene and date – for your health!

If you're over 50 and you'd like to date, put your fears aside. There are so many safe ways to meet others who are in a similar situation. No longer do those over 50 have to rely on friends or family or neighbors to provide them with *dating* opportunities.

Why should you be expected to be alone when you still have so much life to live? You shouldn't! So you need to get out there and meet people – date, have fun, make new memories, have new experiences! What's the best way to do that?

At one time, the only places to meet people were at church, in the grocery store, or through family and friends. Today, we have the Internet and you should take advantage of everything it has to offer in your journey back into the dating world.

Meeting new people can be challenging at any age, but for the senior, it can be especially daunting. If you've spent years with one person, you may not know where to begin. We think that's normal, but don't worry.

A quick search on the Internet shows there are many, many websites dedicated to dating for the senior set. But it can be daunting – especially for those who aren't Internet savvy. That's where we come in!

We can't teach you the ins and outs of the Internet, but we're betting since you've bought this book, you already are somewhat computer literate. You don't have to know

everything about the Internet to start dating online. You just need to know how to log on.

Inside this book, you'll find everything you need to know to get started in the online dating scene. We'll give you all kinds of tips and tricks on how to create your online profile, what to look for in a potential date, and ways to keep yourself safe.

So read on and learn all about "Online Dating for Senior Citizens"!

WHAT EXACTLY IS ONLINE DATING?

Online dating refers to a number of websites that offer services to individuals or groups who wish to meet people online for social or romantic relationships. You dictate what type of relationship you are looking for which gives you complete control over whom you talk to and who you don't.

Simply put, an online dating service is basically a community of people who gather together to interact, socialize, and make friends with each other. Most hope that love will come their way through the site, but at the very least, they want to find a way to date a diverse and unique person they may not have the opportunity to meet in their "real lives".

There are a myriad of websites that cater to this service and this especially true for seniors. A quick search on the Internet will reveal an abundance of dating opportunities for those over 50.

The process involved in meeting someone online can vary from site to site. The basic process for meeting

another person online is for an individual to sign on to an online dating site by entering a unique username and password that applies only to that individual.

Some of these sites are free; others require you to pay a monthly membership fee. Almost all will give you a free trial period to see if you like the site and what it has to offer. You're probably going to have a better experience with a site that requires paid membership, but we'll address that a little later.

Once a person is signed up for the service, they are normally required to create a user profile, which involves filling out an electronic form that asks specific questions. These questions can range from geographical details to favorite food to sexual orientation.

You will also be asked what type of person you want to meet and what qualities you'd like for them to possess. You can also specify a geographical area you would like them to be from.

A person's information is then entered into the site's database, and users have various ways of accessing another user's profile.

You may be able to create a personal profile as well that tells others specific details about you. This can include experiences or memories you might want to share all the way to dreams and goals you want to achieve. We have a separate section on the best way to create your personal profile so you can receive the best results.

You will also be able to enter a photograph of yourself. Again, we touch on this later. A picture can be a great starting point to meeting that special someone though it's not the main point.

Users can also search an online dating site for a compatible match, which is determined by technological profiling of the information a user has supplied to the site. More commonly, users post photos of themselves on their profile to give others a general idea of their type.

However, the online aspect of dating services normally requires users to judge one another on their ideas, how they present themselves, and the overall impression they give. Physical presence rarely factors in to making a connection with another person on the Internet, and this is no different for online dating.

Once you have joined a senior dating website, you'll likely be invited to join in chat groups, and you'll be able to search for other members meeting your criteria. You may even be able to fine-tune your criteria to find others meeting your initial criteria and that also share common interests or hobbies. You will be able to chat with a possible match and communicate with them through e-mail. When you decide to meet in person is all up to you!

Often, there is a sense of anonymity and mystery in meeting people online that is rare in meeting people in reality. Online dating offers an alternative to the norm, and is most likely appealing to those who are unlucky in real life when it comes to meeting romantic prospects. In addition, the common fear of rejection is less intense in an online environment, thereby, making online dating an attractive means of meeting others.

Online dating is a common and popular service for people to communicate with others, which includes finding love. This has been the most significant shift in American dating culture since the mid-1960s.

The Internet has offered additional functions that reduced time for people searching for documents. Now, the

Internet is not only for searching for information, but for also meeting friends, finding love, and finding people who share the same habits and religious beliefs. Online dating services facilitate these functions.

The most popular online dating web site is match.com which is a public company that started up in April 1995. In its 10-year history, more than 60,000 new people register on Match.com every day, and it has grown to more than 15 million members with profiles posted, active users and about one million paying subscribers from more than 246 countries.

Now, there are numerous online dating web sites on the Internet similar to match.com. They cater to all types of individuals and lifestyles and it's a great way to find someone with common interests.

For seniors, the growing popularity of online dating services is stellar news! You can meet people from all over with just the click of your mouse. There are tons of sites specifically geared toward older people who want to find a date and that's even better news!

Many people think that online dating services are only for young people, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Times have changed and so have relationships.

Back when the over 50 crowd was at prime dating age, a date consisted of two people meeting somewhere away from home. Dating couples typically went to the local diner or ice cream parlor where they shared a root beer float. The rules of society dictated that dating was to happen in public.

Today, however, dating has changed. There are still plenty of opportunities to date outside the home, but plenty of relationships have started right on the Internet surrounded by all the comforts of home.

If nothing else, you can take comfort in knowing that there are hundreds and even thousands of single people over age 50 who are interested in dating or creating new friendships, just like you.

Is online dating really for you? We're willing to say yes, but let's look at the pros and cons just to be sure.

SHOULD YOU DATE ONLINE?

Online dating isn't just for young people. We've told you that today there are many, many places online for vibrant, enthusiastic seniors to meet people. They all offer different services and provide features that you may or may not like. But in general, online dating can be a very positive experience for the single senior.

With an online dating service, there are lots of choices. Not since high school or college will you find such a large number of potential dates and mates in one place. It can be heartening just to know that there are many single seniors out there who would love to find a loving partner.

Since there are so many people on the Internet dating scene, it should be enough proof that it does work, right? Some people are a little iffy about putting themselves out to strangers, but with the advancing technology making the world smaller and smaller everyday, the word 'stranger' sometimes means nothing anymore.

Online dating sites give you a wide list of people to choose from. You can choose them because you have shared interests, belong to the same city, or whatever. And because dating sites have this vast list, you have the liberty

to skip and choose. This actually erases having to care for a few caterpillars before you reach butterflies, if you know what I mean.

Dating sites cater to different needs. There are some that focus on letting single women meet single men. Some filter according to sexuality, religion, sex, or race -- the possibilities are endless. You name it; you bet there is something or someone out there who will fit just perfectly with what you're looking for.

The key to getting the most of your online dating site membership is to know what you want and what you're looking for, so you won't waste time trying to get to know people who turn out to be at the polar end of your character spectrum. Don't join a matchmaking site if you're just after the date's "fun" side. Don't join a Catholic site if you're Jewish. Things like that.

It's relatively inexpensive. While there are many free chat rooms and online personal sites, you may want to invest in paying a small fee to meet people who are more serious about meeting a quality partner. Even if you pay \$25 to \$50 to join, it's still cheaper than a senior cruise, and you don't have to leave home.

Profiles are a fun way to learn about people. Sites that offer space to write personal profiles that include hobbies, special interests, political beliefs, dreams, goals and favorite activities will give you the most accurate idea of what a person is like, and will help you decide if you have enough in common to make a connection.

It's easy to connect. By exchanging email you get to know each other slowly, without the awkwardness that comes with first dates. If you choose to meet, you'll already know a lot about each other, and that could help you both feel more comfortable.

There are, however, downfalls to dating online. Some sites allow people to post their profiles and respond to others for free, but unfortunately these free sites often attract weirdoes or perverts. It's important to check out the site carefully before you join.

Plus, it can be risky when it comes to the people you will meet. After all, there are people out there who lie. You need to be cautious. In an effort to get more responses, or in some cases to deliberately mislead, some people lie in their profiles. Don't believe everything you read—if he or she sounds too good to be true, he or she probably is.

Overall, however, many people have found true love through online dating services. You shouldn't have to spend the rest of your life alone. You deserve to live your life! There are people out there waiting to meet you. It's time for you to get started!

SIGNING UP

As we have told you, there are many, many sites geared specifically toward seniors. If you want to go on one of the other sites, by all means, feel free! But you will most likely have more success hooking up with someone closer to your own age with one of the senior sites.

Where should you go? We are not condoning one service over another, but what we can do is give you some idea of where to start. Here are some of the more popular sites we found.

www.seniorfriendfinder.com

www.50plus.com

www.overfifties.com

www.seniorismatch.com

www.silversingles.com

www.SeniorPeopleMeet.com

www.christiansingleseniors.com

And that's just a few of the sites that are out there! If you want to look on the regular dating websites, the most popular ones are:

www.match.com

www.eharmony.com

www.perfectmatch.com

www.americansingles.com

Go to any of these sites and look around a little bit. If none of them appeal to you, try doing a search on Google. Be sure to include the words "online dating + seniors + (any specific category you're interest in such as Christian, African American, Asian, etc.). There are so many to choose from you'll surely find one that appeals to you.

You can also ask family and friends if they use or have heard anything about certain dating sites. You may be surprised to find that they do know places that might suit you. And they know you best, so listen to them!

You may want to consider joining more than one service if finances will allow. This way, you'll get maximum exposure and increase your chances of meeting that person who is waiting for you!

Review the fee structure, if any, on the site you choose along with how often you'll be asked to pay membership fees. This is very important since you likely will have to provide a credit card number to join a senior dating service, and you likely will give authorization in advance to have your credit card charged.

In general, you're going to have more safety and honesty with a pay service. You won't have the same concerns regarding payments, but you may encounter a greater number of persons with questionable motives on the free dating websites.

Ultimately, however, you'll have to just jump right in. Once you find a site you think you might like, click on that "Register" tab. Don't be scared, it'll be just fine!

At almost all of these sites, you'll complete a short questionnaire with information about yourself and what you're looking for in a date. Have a picture ready to upload into your profile. You'll want to have a recent photo too – not your high school senior picture!

Be honest when you're answering these questions. You'll expect honesty from a potential mate, won't you? However, avoid giving away too much personal information such as your address, phone number, or place of employment. Be vague when it comes to these topics. Better safe than sorry!

You may be asked to create a nickname for yourself to use when you are online. Create something that says something about yourself but that is not racy or suggestive. Try to avoid using your real name at all costs.

Consider your favorite hobby or something that interests you. Nascargram, scrappinlady, golfisforme, etc. would all be proper nicknames. Redhotmama, ilovesex, or

hotgrandma might attract the wrong types of people, so stay away from nicknames like these.

Take a picture of yourself to post online. You will generally get 3 to 10 times better response with a posted photo than without. People don't generally spend much time on profiles with no photos... so take the hint.

If you don't own a digital camera, web cam, or scanner, take a few photos and a diskette to your local Office Depot, Staples, or general office supply store. They should be able to scan and copy your photos to your diskette. Then you can easily add one or more to your dating site profile. You could also ask friends and relatives who own a digital camera or scanner.

When taking your picture, be sure it reflects your personality when you're smiling and relaxed. Don't use glamour shots! These can be a real turn-off for others as they don't show the "real you". Also, stay away from professional portraits. People generally want to see you in a natural state.

Remember that this is how others will see you online, so you want to look your best. Make sure your hair is done, clean, and combed – styled in your regular style. If you wear makeup, be sure it's applied. You'll be more relaxed if you are sitting and have a nice background. Outdoor photos are generally good and provide great natural lighting.

Finally – smile! There's nothing more attractive than a nice, natural smile. Don't try to look sexy – just look like yourself. Unless, of course, your natural look is sexy! What we mean is don't try to cast your gaze slightly downward to try and evoke a mysterious air, for example. Just sit back, relax, and laugh – this is fun! And oh what fun it will be!

You will probably be given the opportunity to create a personal profile. This can be an overwhelming task, but we

have some tips to make you sound like the wonderful person you are!

YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE

A personal profile is a way for others to learn a little more about you and what you are interested in. This is a way for you to showcase yourself and what you think would be attractive to other people as well as provide information you want others to know about you.

How do you write a personal profile? There is such a thing as a system to writing this profile. Just throwing up words randomly to fill up space won't cut it. Rambling is a real turn-off as well. There are certain things you should include and do in this profile.

First and foremost, **STAY POSITIVE!** We've all got baggage. There's no need to drag it out as your first introduction to someone.

Think of your profile as if you were meeting someone for the first time in person, picture yourself saying the words you write, it will help you from sounding too stiff and keep your tone conversational. And most importantly, don't complain about the lack of great men/women, your ex, or why you're "trying" this out even though you "don't really need to."

Some possible topics to include might be your political affiliation, career choices, hobbies, likes, interests, and a brief family history. **DO NOT** include dislikes or turn-offs. Including this in your profile would be considered negativity and we've already told you to be positive!

Show that you are a unique person. If you've got a quirky or unusual hobby, go ahead and mention it, but keep

it in perspective. Remember that all of us have odd hobbies that don't seem so odd – and even make us endearing to those that love us – but if someone doesn't know you yet, bombarding them with information they don't care about (yet) will bore them.

In other words, it's great if you've got the biggest collection of Star Wars memorabilia in the entire state, and you should mention it to see what kind of response you get, but then move it along so your date can continue to learn what else makes you tick.

Having an unusual hobby is great but remember to mention more "popular" things like movies, reading, and your favorites like food, music, movies, etc. These are the things that you'll likely do with a date and those that most people will want to share.

State what your objectives are. In your profile, put something in the headline that will shout to everyone what you really are and why do people need to check you out. Be informative and catchy.

Tell something about you and your objectives in a very appealing and enticing tone. An ordinary profile might not carry it, but when finding a love mate, you can use a metaphor as a sales tool. For example, you might want to use as headline "Mature gentleman ripe for picking!" rather than "Decrepit old man wanting to get hitched".

Be descriptive when you're writing your profile. You don't have to be a great writer; you just need to include details about you and what you like. Do this in a casual, conversational style as if you were talking to another person.

Be as specific as you can. It's one thing to say you play sports to keep active, and another thing entirely to say you like walking 18 holes every day not only to hone your game, but also to appreciate the scenery and companionship

of a golf match. Write a profile that describes the things you like to do so a potential date can picture being with you and all the fun you'll have together.

Don't reveal too much personal information. It's best to be general – even vague when describing yourself. For example, if you're the proud grandma of 3 – write exactly that. Don't tell people your grandkids names and where they live. It's OK to reveal the name of the town you live in, but don't give your address. If you work, simply state the category of your job. Instead of "Administrative Assistant at (company name)" write "Office Professional".

Just as you did when you answered the questions about yourself, don't provide false information in your personal profile. You want people to be honest with you; you should give them the same courtesy.

As other members read through your profile, they should be able to get a good idea of who you are. This is the way they can judge whether or not they want to talk to you and meet you.

Sometimes, though, a person will not put much personal information into their profile and as a result, may not get the reaction or attention that they anticipate from other members. If there is not a lot of information in a person's profile, chances are that's the way they will communicate so keep this in mind both for yourself and for others.

You'll need to update your profile from time to time. We all find new things that interest us as we are introduced to them. You don't need to rewrite your entire profile each week, but go ahead and change a few key items like the last movie you saw or book you read.

In doing this, you will also continually move up to the top of the search list for new online daters new to the system.

It's a good idea to compose your personal profile in a word processing program and then cut and paste it into the sites space. By doing this, when you update, all you'll have to do is change a couple of places and avoid having to re-type everything.

Update and add new photos as well. You should always be looking to improve on any aspect of your online profile. Show pictures of you having fun and doing different things. As a general rule, however, don't post pictures of your family and loved ones – especially children.

You may want to also include some information about your ideal mate. Tell that potential suitor what you'd like to see in him or her. You'll have better luck finding a match as well with this more specific information.

You will probably want to also set up an alternate e-mail address for communication through the website. We don't generally advocate giving out your primary address due to the possible spamming that can result.

Many places offer a free e-mail box. We prefer yahoo.com or hotmail.com. To make things easier for you, you may want to use the same nickname and password you use for the dating site on here. It's less to remember!

So what happens next? You get prepared to meet lots and lots of new people!

YOU'RE ONLINE – NOW WHAT?

You'll want to check the site often – every day if possible – ideally several times per day. People who have browsed through the site and seen your profile will send you communication that you can respond to if you choose.

This is usually done with the site's system instead of through e-mail. You may receive someone's e-mail address to replay to and it's up to you whether or not you give them yours. You may want to hold off on that initially, however, avoiding being spammed and possibly harassed.

You can also browse through who is available out there that might interest you. If you find someone you like, send them an instant message and see what happens.

The website will usually send you several possible matches for you each day. Check your e-mail and log onto the site faithfully. If anyone catches your eye, respond to them. Be pro-active, not re-active. After all, you're online to find a date – don't let a chance pass you by!

The great thing about online dating services is that participants get to choose the persons they're going to communicate with. Plus, they get to read their profiles ahead of time, so they'd pretty much have an idea about what type of a person they are dealing with, before they make contact.

As connections are made, members of online dating services are free to correspond back and forth with the other members, at a pace that makes them comfortable. There's no need to feel pressured into setting up an in-person date until both members feel comfortable doing so.

When you are communicating with someone, there are a few things to keep in mind. You want to be as careful as possible in the early stages of your foray into internet dating.

We can't say this strongly enough – never divulge personal information online in any circumstances unless you are full and completely sure that the person on the other end is truthful and trustworthy.

Any pieces of information you provide could be used against you. Especially with regard to financial aspects, do not easily give your trust to a person you meet online and give him your bank account number, electronic PINs and the like. While that may seem like simple common sense, you'd be surprised at how many people do this!

You should immediately cease communicating with someone who is obsessed about obtaining your personal info. All you need to do is tell the other person you're not comfortable yet telling them about that. If they persist, stop communicating with them.

If your purpose is only to exchange ideas with another person, share your experiences and beliefs. You don't have to give details about yourself if they insist. And even if your purpose is to find a date, don't give in too quickly by telling everything about yourself. Besides, you can test a person's sincerity when they value your decisions and listen to what you say.

Talk about things you might have in common. Initially, keep these conversations toward interests and hobbies. Avoid talking specifically about children, grandchildren, etc. Be vague about jobs and locations until a trust can be established.

Remember that what you see is not always what you get when it comes to online dating services. Photos can easily be manipulated so the person you see in the photo may not resemble the person when it comes time to meet face-to-face. Sometimes people post photos taken many years ago so you see a much younger looking person than you're likely to encounter.

Words can lie, too. Someone might post the most impressive profile as a way of getting a lot of connections, but in the end fail to live up to the lifestyle that is presented in the profile. So, when pursuing the dating scene on the Internet, proceed with caution. If this method of dating does

not sound like a good idea to you, then try some of the other senior dating alternatives.

Always keep your eyes open to signs of fraud, cheating or obscenity. Don't get too engrossed by sweet nothings or mesmerized by good looks (as seen in the webcam or photo). Watch out if the person is able to keep their story straight and consistent. If they repeatedly inject sex into your conversations and are too demanding for private information or things that you are not at ease with talking about, end the conversation.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. It's perfectly normal to inquire about marital status, children, hopes, dreams, etc. If someone is uncomfortable with these questions, it's a good indication they have something to hide.

Find someone who shares your common interests, life goals and family preferences. It is important to share some of the same hopes in order for a relationship to be worthwhile.

During casual conversations, look for possible warning signs of control, jealousy or tempers. If an individual seems to be extremely needy or needs to talk to you every minute, this may be a sign of possessive behavior and should be recognized early. If you notice this happening, move on and find another possible online dating match.

Don't rush. Take the time to get to know someone before you decide that you are comfortable enough to meet them. A relationship takes time to build and there is no reason to rush into anything.

If you learn that someone hasn't been honest about his/her profile or other detail, end the dating potential immediately. Dishonesty is no way to begin a relationship and it makes you question anything else that he/she may be hiding.

Be yourself. Don't pretend to like something or be someone that you are not just to please the other person. If they are the right one for you, there will not be a reason to pretend.

Don't be afraid to play the field. There are hundreds of possible matches out there for you – don't limit yourself to just one. Just as long as you're being honest and having fun, it's okay to keep contacting as many people as you like until you find someone you're interested in. After all, meeting new people is what dating is all about.

Reply to anyone who contacts you whether it is to say "Yes, I'm interested" or "I can't talk to you at this time". The generally accepted practice is to respond within one week. But remember that you may be turning down the right person, so you may want to just chat a little bit and see what happens!

In e-mail communications, don't send out "form letters" to everyone. Don't make them sound like a business letter, be casual and conversational as you address something showing about them in their profile.

Do not just chat via online. An electronic chat doesn't always suffice. Do phone conversations with him or her, as these would show social and communication skills. Avoid calling at home. Try calling from a cell phone or a telephone booth. Only when you are completely comfortable should you give your home number.

Exercise caution and common sense during these communications. Don't trust too easily, but don't get obsessive and think that everyone is lying. There are some tell-tale signs that people aren't being honest with you.

In fact, we think it's important to point out different things about online dating that aren't exactly positive. There are things you really need to be aware of when you begin chatting with them.

DANGERS AND PRECAUTIONS

Thousands of people have dated successfully online. However online dating sites are far from dating heavens. There is a touch of hell that you must know about. Sad but true it is not a perfect world.

There are people who submit profiles that are a bunch of lies. They hide facts and present an illusion that is very far from the truth. When you select a profile for a date try and discover the "actual" person beneath the layers.

Scammers abound, extremely charming and friendly there are online daters who will wrench details of your bank accounts out of you and poof the next day you will find your accounts wiped out. Never reveal important information over the net or personally unless you know for certain that x, y, or z is trustworthy.

Sadly the net is an open book and a person can easily find out your address and so on. Unscrupulous men and women can use the net and land up on your doorstep endangering you and your family. Always use the e-mail facility provided by the site or an anonymous account. Never use personal e-mail accounts or e-mails belonging to the place of work.

Spammers use online dating sites to flood people with spam mail. Never reveal contact information just because the anonymous dater asked sweetly.

Stalkers, rapists, and murders can easily use the anonymity provided by online sites to find their next victim. Be wise follow safety rules and listen to your gut instincts.

Online dating sites are even used by cons and drug dealers. The sites do have security measures in place but have no way of verifying everything. So don't jump into a

relationship in a hurry. Keep it friendly and casual until you know for certain that the person you find attractive is just an ordinary person like you.

The handsome hulk or buxom blond may be just a celluloid image and the real person may look quite different and ordinary. So, never choose a person just on what they look like in the photo presented along with the profile. Look for substance in your conversations and communications.

Be aware as well that photos can be manipulated or altered. People might also use older photos that no longer resemble what they look like today. Yet another reason not to discount or fall for people based solely on their photos

There are many who are just there for a one-night stand or fling. They use the sites as a playing field. Be alert these types generally betray themselves by inconsistent behaviors.

You should also be aware that often married people will be online looking to cheat. Unless you're comfortable being the "other woman" or "other man", which we're pretty sure you're not, these people should be avoided. You can get a sense of whether or not they're married just from talking with them.

Don't let the above turn you away from dating. Read these suggestions and be wise know how to shift the pearls from the pebbles. Thousands of men and women have dated successfully using online sites. Don't let the dangers scare you away.

In fact, there are many, many pros of online dating.

ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE DATING

Dating, these days, is far different from how it was back then. People usually met at a party or were hooked up by friends then in time, the couple would realize whether the friendship could go on to the next level or it was never meant to be.

Meeting people online is similar to having friends doing all the work looking for that special someone. Recently, more people have had higher success rates in getting a date online than the conventional method.

To know more, here are some benefits which are interesting to know about online dating:

1. Safety

By personally signing up on an online dating service, you can meet many people without the risk of revealing your personal information. The only time that such details can be revealed will be done voluntarily by you or a potential partner when a level of trust has been established.

2. Security

Dating online is supposed to help people who have difficulty meeting that special someone. Some people take advantage of that and prey on innocent people so most dating sites have made a system that allows you to report a user and have that person blocked for malicious conduct and prevent this from happening to other people.

3. Affordable

Dating people is costly especially since you will probably go out on more than one date. By getting to know many people online, you will be able to save a lot of money since the same information that you gather online can be

done just like going out on an actual date but without the cost of dinner, a movie, etc..

4. No more rejection and unwanted people

For men, dating online avoids the embarrassing experience of going up to meet a girl and getting rejected. By signing up on an online service and just chatting online, if you are turned down, you can easily forget about that person and meet someone new.

For women, dating online helps avoid meeting the wrong person. It saves the time and effort of giving love to someone more deserving like that potential partner.

5. Openness

Most people find it difficult being honest talking to a stranger for the first time because there is the fear that the other person will not appreciate what is shown.

Since dating online provides a buffer by talking to someone via the computer and not face to face, another benefit is that you can be as open as you want to be without fear of showing any sign of emotional attachment.

Online dating can be fun. Whether it's just to meet new friends or meet that potential partner, you never know until you try. The possibilities are endless, but don't concentrate too much on trying to force a love connection. It's better if you look at your online dating experience as the search for a date, not a mate. You'll be much more satisfied and less frustrated if your view is geared this way.

Since you'll be chatting with people online, let's look at ways you can figure out if the person you're communicating with is not telling the truth.

LIAR LIAR?

Online dating can prove to be a wonderful experience but you have to remember certain precautions in dating people over the Net. How would you know that the person you will be meeting for the first time is honest and is not deceiving you? Here are some tips to guide you.

First of all, listen to what your gut is saying. If something does not feel right when talking to the person, then most likely, something may indeed be wrong and that he or she is not saying the truth. If something triggers a red flag during communications, it is probably an indication to move on. Trust on your instincts.

Again, we warn you, do not give out your personal home information too early. If he or she is an honest person, he or she would understand this.

He or she knows the danger that lurks in online dating, so it is just understandable that you take enough measures to protect yourself. In fact, he or she might admire you for that. It just shows that you are not that cheap and desperate in trying to hook up with dates.

If you think you have gathered enough information about your date, then you could try doing a background information check of that person. If your date knew that you are giving him or her a background check, he or she won't make a big deal about it. After all, honest persons don't have something to hide, do they?

There are plenty of online services that provide background checks of people, but they almost always charge a fee. You should be prepared for that and keep it in mind when you think this might be a step you'll want to take.

Keep in mind that there are people out there who lie about their profile and lie on the things they are saying over the Internet. Some lie about their marital status, some over

their physical appearances, and some about their intentions. Be alert at all times. Not all people in online dating services are good people, but not all of them are bad either.

Trust your instincts. Hopefully, you find one over the Internet that is honest and has good intentions for you. He or she might be your destiny.

Also, be careful of people who want to meet up with you instantly and pressure you to do so. If they bug you to give your personal contact details when they themselves don't want to give you their personal contact information, stay away.

Another warning sign is that the person you are talking to is not consistent in giving you information about their marital status, age, employment, etc. You may notice conflicting information between conversations. This is a huge red flag.

If somebody is bothering you by constantly sending you a multitude of e-mails or trying to contact you in person, stop sending him or her messages immediately. If the site will allow you to block them, do so to prevent any further harassment.

Unfortunately, it sounds like we're just focusing on the negative, but there are safety risks that you must be aware of when communicating with people through an online dating service. When you know what to look for, you can be more prepared to find that special someone and not that fake someone.

There are some ways that you can make yourself stand out to someone if you think you might be interested in dating them. Flirting in person is easy – flirting online is a little different.

ONLINE FLIRTING

Online dating is an excellent way of meeting new people and expanding your dating pool. For some, it is also a great way for getting back on the dating scene again. Though online dating sites are often stereotyped as an arena for the desperate, they are actually an effective venue for singles that are interested in meeting interesting people.

Most people you engage in online dating are those who lead busy lives and do not have time to indulge in time-demanding social activities. Others turn to online dating to widen their social horizons or simply to have a fresh start. But whatever their reasons, online dating is a proven way for social renewal.

Dating, in general and in whatever venue, always goes hand in hand with flirting. For those who wonder if they can master the art of online flirting, of course you can! All you need to do is learn all about the different online flirting approaches, and you are on your way to a successful online dating experience.

Online dating is usually carried on through live chat or electronic mail. In your communications, always keep it short, simple and sweet. Stick to light-hearted and upbeat tones in your conversations. This is proven to attract online dates. Use easy to answer questions, and in return make your responses simple in your e-mails.

In writing correspondence, always use screen names. Do not abuse "emoticons" such as :) and the likes. Emoticons may also be annoying when overdone or may sound too giddy or insincere. We'll address what certain emoticons and lingo you might see online at the end of the book.

Use humor as your ally. Universally, humor is considered sexy. Try it, but of course remember to use them in good taste. Deliver with confidence; dates will definitely pick that up.

Compliment your date. Everyone likes to be complimented. The best compliments are those with the element of surprise. Keep your compliments sincere, honest, and genuine. And when you receive a compliment yourself, the best response would be to simply say, "Thank You!"

A great online flirting tip is to use "enticers" in your e-mail communications. You may want to try the tried and tested pick-up lines or devise your own. Try to keep them light and inviting so as not to sound predatory. The key is to sound cute, interested and above all sincere. This will help ignite spark in your emails and will surely get you that much-coveted first date.

This may not seem to feel comfortable to you, but remember, you're just a name and a face and what you're saying is typed words on a screen.

And don't overdo it. Avoid being overly suggestive and making too many sexual comments. You may be opening yourself up to something you're not prepared for.

Simply hold on to these simple to follow steps and helpful online flirting tips, and with proper timing, you are off to a being a top online flirter.

So you've been talking online, you're comfortable with someone and think you're ready to meet face to face. This is the exciting part, but how should you meet?

MEETING IN PERSON

If you've been talking with a person and have gotten to feel comfortable with them, you might want to rush right out

to meet them in person, but there are a few things you should keep in mind before you do.

Remember, the only way you've gotten to know this person is through what they have told you. The only image you have is what photo they've posted or through a webcam. We're not saying they're being untruthful with you, but you need to keep yourself safe when meeting someone for the first time.

The most important thing is to meet in a public place preferably during the daylight hours. You don't want to meet a perfect stranger in the dark night where there's no one else around but you.

Do not have them pick you up at home. Arrange for your own transportation to the agreed upon place. Make sure you have a full tank of gas in the event you need to make a getaway.

Arrive a little earlier than the pre-arranged time so you can take stock of the environment. Take note of where the doors are in case you have to make a quick exit. Also find the nearest pay phone. They're often by the restrooms.

Perhaps you can meet for coffee in a local café. Try a museum or art gallery for your first date. Go where there's going to be a lot of people. Bad things are less likely to happen if there's a crowd around you.

Why not consider a group date? Double dating can ease the anxiety you're going to feel and make you more at ease. Plus, you won't be alone with anyone and there will be many more chances of diverse conversation.

Don't plan to meet up without telling someone where you're going. Make sure a family member or friend knows

what time your meeting is and where it will be. That way if anything should happen, they'll know where to find you.

Have an exit strategy. If the person makes you feel uneasy or you just plain don't like them, don't feel bad about leaving. After all, your safety comes first. If it feels wrong, get out!

Carry a cell phone with you or have plenty of change for a pay phone. Not only can a cell phone be a lifesaver when it comes to getting away from a bad date, you'll want to be able to communicate with someone if something should go bad.

Never, ever, under any circumstances have them come to your home for your first meeting. While you might have a certain comfort level being in a familiar place, if this turns out to be not what you expected, you won't have a way to exit and no way to get them to leave aside from force, and we're pretty sure you don't want that to happen. Along the same line, don't meet at their home either.

Stick to public places. It's better to be safe than sorry!

Don't meet with someone until you are completely sure you want to. Some people may apply pressure to get together in person, but you have control and shouldn't do so until you are truly ready.

Once you are on the date, steer the conversation away from overly personal details. Just as if you were chatting online, you're meeting this person for the first time so try not to reveal specific things about your life. Keep it general – at least for now.

Pay close attention to any displays of violence or sudden outbursts. This could signal emotional problems that you certainly won't want to deal with. Also be aware of any

attempts to control or pressure you. As we said before, you should be comfortable and do only what feels right for YOU.

When you are eating in a restaurant or café, go Dutch. Pay half the bill. That way you won't feel like you "owe" your date something in return.

If possible, avoid drinking alcohol while on a date. Alcohol could affect your judgment and lessen inhibitions. If you are drinking, keep the drink in your sight all the time. Do not get too drunk. You might not know what might happen later or remember what you have been doing.

Finally, just be alert and trust your own instincts. Try to relax and enjoy this first meeting, but don't let your guard down too much. Safety is your first concern – for both you and your date.

Now that we've addressed the safety issues, you will want to make a good first impression.

A SUCCESSFUL FIRST DATE

The rules of dating have not changed much over the years. The purpose of a first date is and always has been a way of determining whether or not a second date is likely. A first date is not a make or break type of deal. If the pairing does not work out, the only thing that has been lost is time. If the time spent on the first date was even a bit enjoyable, then nothing, really, was lost.

You may have been out of commission for awhile and it's scary to think of going back into the dating pool. Seniors aren't the only ones who feel this way, so just relax and be yourself.

A first date is one of the most nerve-wracking aspects of dating at any age. If you're 50+ and just starting to date again after a few years or a few decades, however, the uncertainty about where to go, what to wear, and what to talk about can seem almost insurmountable.

You wonder whether your date will like you, whether you'll like him or her, and how much dating etiquette has changed since the last time you were out there.

When organizing that first date, try to think of activities that you would both enjoy doing together. You could plan a romantic picnic for two, visit a local art gallery, attend a play or concert or play golf or hike if you both like physical activities. A visit to a local winery makes a lovely afternoon as do book browsing and coffee if you both enjoy reading.

Maybe an afternoon matinee at the movies would fit you both, but couple it with an early or late lunch depending on the movie time. You want your first date activities to encourage conversation because, after all, the purpose is to see if you want a second date.

Check with your local senior center and see if they have any activities planned that you and your date would enjoy. Many have organized day trips or dances specifically for senior singles. Don't make the date too complicated or jam packed with activities. Make it easy and enjoyable for both of you!

Be sure to have a backup plan in case the original one doesn't work out. If you've planned to meet at a local outdoor music festival, but rain postpones it, agree to meet at the nearby restaurant instead.

You should initially plan for a shorter date. One to two hours is sufficient. If things are going well, you can always extend the date, but there's no need to try and map out

your whole lives together on the first date. You don't want to be stuck in an all-day event if you realize five minutes into the date that this person is wrong for you.

Be specific on a dress code for where you will be going. A cocktail dress for a fast food joint would just be awkward. A T-shirt and jeans for a four-star restaurant would just be inappropriate. It can be embarrassing when one person shows up in dress clothes and the other in casual.

Compliment your date, but don't overdo it. Everyone has something appealing about them – find that one thing and comment about it. A few nice words can make a person feel special, but persistent comments about looks, body, etc. can just be annoying.

Balance your talking with listening. The purpose of this meeting is to get to know each other a little better. You don't want to dominate the conversation with talk about yourself. Learn to listen and offer up details about your own life – just not too many!

Don't compare your date with your prior partner. Everyone has their own endearing qualities and no one will be quite like the one you are now without. Look for those good qualities in the person you're with.

The senior years don't give you the right to be boring. You have a lot to offer and a lot to share. Be sincere, honest, and regain that charm you had when you dated as a young person.

And remember, it's OK these days to kiss on the first date. Avoid sex, however. While young people might think that's alright, sex on the first date remains tacky and inappropriate.

Men, try ending the date first and do it politely, though make sure that you show you're interested. This will make you stand out.

You may want to send an e-mail or instant message directly after the date ends just to say "thanks". Something short and sweet is fine – "I had a great time – thanks so much!" will suffice. However, if the date wasn't what you wanted, just stay away from the contact. No need to string the other person along down a dead-end road.

Women, don't wear anything provocative or too sexy. This sounds like an old cliché but first impressions last. Your date won't know anything about you except for how you look and how you behave. He will take you at face value and giving him the wrong impression on what sort of person you are is not something you want to do.

Try and wear clothing that makes you confident and that you are comfortable wearing. It will be uncomfortable enough without worrying about that tightness around you waist or the itchy necktie.

Ask your date about themselves. A healthy interest in getting to know your date is a good sign to show him/her. This means that you want to learn about him/her and think of your date as an interesting person.

Remember, the most interesting conversationalists are those who ask about others. Great topics are work, hobbies and sports. Just keep it light and conversational.

Try not to overdo the perfume or the cologne. If it's too strong, the scent can be quite distracting. It's very hard to complete an evening out with your date dazed by the smell.

Mouthwash is important. Also, brush your teeth and bring a couple of mints if you're eating out.

Always remember... have fun and be yourself!

Though it may seem a bit intimidating to return to the social scene after many years, it can be a fun and rewarding experience for those in search of companionship. Just remember to find something you enjoy and odds are you'll meet other dating senior singles that share many of your interests and have a great first date!

What do you do if a date goes wrong?

SURVIVING A BAD DATE

Occasionally, a bad date happens to everyone at a certain point in his or her life. You should do some assessment before writing off the person for life. Are there no sparks at all? Are they too nervous to open any topic? Is he or she being rude?

Here are some things that you can do to deal with a bad date or when you are the one who's about to make it bad.

If you are feeling too nervous opt for a date over coffee. You will have less time fidgeting due too over nervousness since after finishing your coffee you can easily bid your date a quick adieu.

There is no excuse for a date that is obnoxious and rude. Walk away and let it be.

If you and your date are not on the same wavelength, it might not be working out. Endure the date, maintain your composure and leave politely. If your date asks for an extension like an after meal drink, you can always politely say no.

If you unintentionally insult your date, simply apologize then move on. If your insult is not that severe, your date might just forgive and forget. The same goes if they unintentionally insult you. Realize that they are probably just as nervous as you are. You'll have to be the bigger one and forgive and forget.

Never provide entertainment at your expense. Humor is cool, self-bashing is not. It is not worth it to make your self feel uncomfortable trying to impress your date. Avoid negativity and focus on your positive traits.

If your date is going badly, what's a good way to exit gracefully? There actually are many – most of which involve little white lies unfortunately.

If you are brave enough to tell it like it is, by all means do so. Honesty can be the best policy; however, it can also hurt the other person's feelings. If you want to avoid this, as most people do, you may be faced with making up a harmless story to spare your date's feelings.

This story is up to you but make it plausible. Perhaps you suddenly don't feel well. Maybe you "forgot" to turn off your coffee pot.

You can also set up a pre-arranged time for a friend or family member to call you. If the date is going well, that's fine, but if it's not, this is the perfect out. You can have an "emergency" that just can't wait and explain it away by the phone call alerting you of such.

What do you do with those feelings that might arise from a date that has gone badly?

Don't punish yourself for a date that went horrible. Save it somewhere in your mind that is remote. Or better yet, commend yourself for being able to go through it. Learn from your mistakes.

Share the details with a friend. This way you can treat it more of a laughingstock than something that will haunt you for life.

Get occupied with other activities so you can forgive yourself and forget about the bad date. Exercising, eating something sweet or watching a movie will make the bad vibes go away sooner than you expect.

Honesty and kindness are a good combination when it comes to turning down a bad date that would like a second round. Say something a bit blunt but peppered with some praise. "You seem like a wonderful person, but you're just not for me."

Now, if you think that the person still deserves a second chance, by all means, give it a second try. You can always laugh the bad date incident away when you are more comfortable with each other.

Most of all, however, shake it off and get back online! There's bound to be someone else you can connect with. Dating isn't always an exact science. It might take a few tries to find that perfect one!

What if you find yourself in the situation where someone wants to go out with you but you don't want to go out with them?

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS

It's easy to get caught up in a chat and become overly interested in being nice. If you've simply been being polite while chatting with someone, but they're interested in more, you're faced with a difficult task. Is there an easy way to say "I'm just not interested?" Not really.

The best advice we can give you is to just be honest. It's much better to be honest early on than to go out with someone just because you're "guilted" into it or just want to be nice. We're relatively sure that you wouldn't want someone to go out with you just to be nice. Why waste the time.

When turning someone down for a date, focus on what you don't have in common. Explain to them that you just don't like hanging out in smoky bars like they do and it just wouldn't be a fun time in your eyes.

The same applies if you don't get a phone call or e-mail for a second date. Often, men think they're supposed to wait awhile before calling a woman for a second date. This is rude, but for women, you need to realize that maybe he's just not that into you.

Calling him up and expressing your rage at his rudeness is just plain wrong. It can cause you to have a bad reputation and result in added stress that you just don't need. There are hundreds of others online that you try to connect with. Get back out there and shake it off.

Alternatively, men, you should be aware that just because a woman shows a little interest, she might be faking it. Many women find it difficult to turn a man down for a date or a second date, but if she's honest with you, accept it and move on. Perhaps – on the flip side – she's just not that into you!

Don't string someone along just because you're too polite to say no. It's better to be honest and move along rather than waste anymore time with someone you know you won't be compatible with.

One thing that seniors have difficulty with when entering the dating world is the reactions of their friends and family. How does the dating senior address this?

I'VE MET SOMEONE

Family members – especially children – can be overly critical when it comes to a new relationship for you. They have their own issues with the loss of your prior partner whether it is through death or divorce, so it's especially problematic when you've found someone you want to pursue for a relationship.

The reaction of grown children to their parent dating again can be one of the biggest obstacles you face. It's hard enough for them to picture their mom and dad in a romantic liaison in their heyday – it's especially difficult for them to see you as a vibrant, healthy, sexual being.

Some grown children simply have a difficult time understanding that their parents are real human beings with the same feelings and needs as younger singles, so they may tend to discourage any budding romance.

These same grown children may also be reacting out of concern for their parent, feeling a need to protect him/her from being taken advantage of. This may certainly be a valid concern, but if the senior in question is of sound and healthy mind, interference should be minimal at best.

You need to concentrate on you and what's best for you. Hopefully, you have a good enough relationship with your children to be able to talk openly and honestly about your desire to continue living instead of waiting to die.

Explain to them that having a person in your life other than them is important to you. Tell them that you still have a lot of living to do and you don't want to do it alone.

Often your grown children may feel like a potential date is using you or simply after your financial assets. Reassure them that you will be very careful in this area and you will not be taken advantage of.

Ultimately, you have to think about yourself and what will make YOU happy. Sure, the opinion of your children is important to you, but your opinion of yourself needs to be in the forefront.

Your children are grown and they have lives of their own. Point out to them that you have worked hard to get where you are and dating is important for you to feel needed, wanted, and alive.

Display your own confidence in yourself and your dating abilities. Show them that you know what you are doing and that, despite their misgivings, you will be just fine. You've earned the right to be happy and you are going for it!

Believe it or not, attracting the person you want is really a state of mind. Let's look at how you can attract that right person – in general.

THE RULES OF ATTRACTION

Do you wish you could attract *exactly* who you want? Do you want to have more dates and more choices? Would you like to meet the person of your dreams? Perhaps you need to discover the rules of attraction.

There are essentially five rules that will bring you more of what you want: more choices, more love, and more happiness. If you are looking for a relationship, concentrate on these rules of attraction. Following these rules puts you in control of your destiny.

First, look for signs of love. Change your negative picture that love does not exist. Since your thoughts become your reality, you need to look for signs of love between a man and a woman.

If you do not think love happens except in the movies, it may take you a while to see it in others. But it is out there. You can start writing down the positive examples of love that you see. This will become your book of evidence that you can refer to when you get discouraged. These new examples become some of your new thoughts.

Believe that you will find love. If you believe that you can find your mate, you will. If you believe that you can't, you won't. Other people have found their soul mate...*you can too.*

Focus on what it is that you want. We get what we focus on. Think about what kind of relationship you would like to have. Dream big.

Make a list of the top ten qualities you would like to have in another. Whenever your thoughts and feelings go to hopeless, change your thoughts. Cut pictures out of a magazine that shows a man and a woman enjoying their time together, whether walking on a beach or sharing a candlelit dinner. Post these pictures in a place where you can see them often. When you look at them several times a day, see yourself in that picture.

Surround yourself with a vision of the relationship you want. When you look at pictures of couples having fun, or when you see others enjoying each other, imagine that you

are doing the same. *Feel* it happening to you. See yourself having the relationship you have always wanted.

Probably the most important rule of attraction is to become the kind of person you want to find. You attract who you are. What kind of person do you want to find? Are you that person? Get busy becoming the wonderful person you would like to share your life with. If you are depressed or despairing, get help.

Remember to fill yourself with positive energy by doing activities that you love. Sort out your finances, handle your past baggage, make your living environment something you are proud of that gives you peace and comfort, and surround yourself with friends and family members who support you. It is from this space that you create someone who will love you.

And finally, be a generous spirit...to yourself and to others. We find someone to love when we love ourselves in a kind and nurturing way. You deserve to love and be loved. And remember...someone waits for you.

Now that we've addressed the basic issues and concerns in online dating, let's look at some general dating tips for seniors – both men and women!

ATTRACTING WOMEN

Dating is not easy for everyone. To some it could be an exciting and fun activity that allows them to meet other people, and maybe even their potential life partner! But for others, this ritual can feel like a slow and painful torture, leading to an execution; especially for those men who do not have much luck when it comes to attracting women.

But there are ways you can attract women and realize that they might be interested. It doesn't have to be as difficult as you think it might be.

When in person, read body language. Chances are, she's putting out signals that she's really interested. Some tell-tale signs of interest include:

- Biting her lips
- Twirling her hair
- Gazing at you
- Touching her face
- Laughing and touching you

Whether online or in person, be approachable and open to conversation. Be friendly and ask questions. Smile a lot when in person. Convey that smile when online. You can actually do this through positive comments and talk about yourself and the person you are chatting with.

When face to face, it's important to be clean and presentable. Women are not going to go for guys who have poor grooming habits. When going out, men should always wear clean clothes, comb their hair, and never douse themselves with after shave. A little is okay, but a lot can be too much to take, and may send the women scurrying away in the other direction!

When you're over 50, you may notice the presence of an abnormal amount of ear or nose hair. Keep these areas trimmed and clean. It's a real turn-off to see these errant hairs sticking out when trying to keep up an interesting conversation.

Make eye contact, too. There's nothing more attractive and sexy than having someone look directly into their eyes while they are talking with them. They say the eyes are the

window to the soul. There's no better way to connect with a woman than to give her a glimpse into your own soul.

Finally, have something clever to say. Women love men with a great personality and this can be conveyed through what you say. If the woman you're talking with has a love of literature, quote something from a well-known book. If she loves the theater, refer to the amazing symbolism in her favorite play. You'll not only win her heart, but her respect as well.

And no matter what people may tell you – chivalry is not dead and women DO appreciate it. This is especially true for seniors. Senior women remember the day when a man opened the door for a woman and let her enter a room first. Pull her chair out for her at a restaurant and help her put on her coat. While feminism is still alive and well, all women love to be pampered and remembering these tried and true techniques will impress her – trust me!

What about you women?

ATTRACTING MEN

So many women – especially senior women – are in search of Mr. Right. Women tend to live longer than men, so some women think that the pickings might be slim when you reach a certain age. This is far from the truth. There are ways to find and attract that special guy. But there are also obstacles that stand in your way.

First and foremost, you need to get rid of that extra baggage you're carrying around with you. Past relationships can affect future relationships, but don't let them. What happened in the past is the past. You don't have to dwell on it and let it be part of your present or your future.

Many women have low self-esteem that can influence their attractive qualities that are naturally inside them. You need to change your way of thinking here and convince yourself that you're worthy of a good relationship to complement everything that you are.

Low self-esteem is an aspect of your personality that has been cultivated over years and years. Let go and let yourself be that wonderful person that lives inside of you. Tell yourself positive things including that you deserve to be loved and you deserve to continue living a healthy and full life. Confidence is the ultimate sexy trait in women, but avoid being too confident. A little humility is sexy as well.

If you think there just aren't any good men out there, you're wrong. This is a belief that has been bantered around for years. Some of this is rooted in past experiences. Still more is because you've set your expectations too high. No one is perfect and if you expect to find someone who is perfect, you'll be disappointed.

As a mature woman, you have many great qualities that you should embrace and use to your advantage.

Remember when you were in the first throes of a new romance, all of a sudden you got hit on a lot? That's because you radiated self-confidence; you were loved. Now, in your mature adult years, you should have plenty of self-confidence in your ability to balance a job, the ex, the kids, the bank account, the aging parents, friends, etc. Self-confidence is the biggest turn-on and once you've reached 50, you've got plenty of it.

You've been there and done that too! Now you know what you like. You are a better lover than you were at 20 because you know what turns you on, and you should be comfortable telling your partner exactly what you need. Indulge yourself.

And if you feel like you have to be demure and shy, get ride of that! You have the right to be a strong, sensual woman – even as a senior citizen. You don't have to be that coy little chanteuse anymore. Assert yourself and enjoy the results!

Older women tend to be more daring as well. They're the ones signing up for all that adventure travel. Odds are you'll find more older women than men on cruises to the Antarctic, treks through Nepal and gorilla-watching expeditions in Africa.

Women are more liberated when the kids move out and allow them to reclaim the lives they put on hold decades ago with their first delivery. This liberation is empowering and can be very alluring.

Read the section above on how men can attract women and employ these strategies. If you're interested in a man, look him in the eye, touch him lightly on the hand, twirl your hair (if possible) and make him know that you want to know more about him!

Above all, exude comfort with yourself. Know that you deserve to find love and companionship and let him know that. When you are confident, you will be stronger and that's what surviving in the dating world is really all about.

We're getting ready to tread on controversial territory next, but we feel like we need to address the obvious outcome that is likely to come from dating and relationships. Can seniors have a vibrant and satisfying sex life? Absolutely!

SENIORS AND SEX

Many older adults and seniors report that their sex lives actually improve as they age. Once the children are grown

and work doesn't require the energy it used to, couples can relax together and enjoy each other without the old distractions. They find that senior sex gets better.

When we're talking about sex and online dating, we do feel compelled to tell you that you should never, ever do anything sexually that you aren't comfortable with. Do not, under any circumstances, feel that you must have sex with someone just because they took you out on a date.

However, if you feel the urge, and the time is right, there are some steps you can take to insure the sex is awesome – even at your age!

Communication is the key to real intimacy. As your body changes in the senior years, it's important to communicate your thoughts, feelings, fears, and desires with your partner. Encourage your partner to communicate fully with you, too. Improving your communication will help both of you feel closer and can make senior sex more pleasurable.

If you would like to try something new, discuss it with your partner, and be open to his or her ideas. The senior years, when you have more time and less distractions, can be a time of creativity and passion. Sometimes just talking about sex can make you feel sexy.

Think about sex in a new way. As a senior, you might not be as comfortable with some sexual positions as you once were, but this does not mean you need to give up an activity that is pleasurable for you, and miss out on feeling close to your partner.

Senior sex calls for creativity. Try different positions to find ones that please you and your partner. If erectile dysfunction is an issue, try intercourse with the woman on top, where hardness is less important. Experiment with positions that you both find comfortable and pleasurable. Make your senior years a time of sexual generosity and sharing.

Expand your sexual play beyond intercourse. Holding each other, gentle touching, kissing, and sensual massage are all ways to share passionate feelings. You might experiment with oral sex and masturbation as ways to please each other in bed.

Keep your mind and body healthy. If you exercise regularly and eat a healthy, balanced diet, you'll look and feel better for yourself – and your partner. And a healthy body will help you enjoy senior sex, no matter what your age.

Keep fruits and vegetables high on your list, and limit the amount of alcohol you consume. Too much alcohol can decrease sexual function in both men and women.

Check with your health care provider to design a workout plan for yourself, and stick to it. Stretching, aerobics for your heart and strength training will all help you feel sexier and improve your stamina and flexibility.

And don't underestimate the appeal of an active mind. Find activities you enjoy that stimulate your intellect and imagination, and share them with your partner. Seniors who enjoy their lives have their own special sexiness.

For all adults, not just seniors, medications and illness can affect your sexual drive. If you have questions about how prescriptions will affect senior sexuality, check with your health care provider.

If you notice any sexual problems, seek medical help as soon as possible. Your health care provider may be able to help you stay fit and active, as long as you're willing to talk about what's bothering you.

Finally, be true to yourself. Try to let go of expectations and things you think you should do as you enter the senior years. If you enjoyed an active sex life when you were younger, there's no reason to slow down with age, unless you want to. On the other hand, if you are not especially turned on by sex but want to feel close to

your partner, communicate your desires and find activities that please both of you.

Is there a time of day when you have the most energy? That's the optimal time for sex. Mornings are often good if you're refreshed from sleep, but anytime is fine if it works for you and your partner.

If you find in your senior years that it takes longer to become sexually aroused, start lovemaking with a romantic dinner – or breakfast. Share romantic or erotic literature and poetry, hold hands, touch often, and don't be shy about saying what you love about each other.

You may have intercourse less often than you used to, but the closeness and love will still be there.

Be creative, loving, open-minded, and willing to communicate with your partner. You'll find it's possible to enjoy senior sex at any age.

Well, that's about it for the tips and tricks. We do, however, want to let you know about some common online abbreviations you might encounter during your conversations

INTERNET LINGO

You may already know that chatting on the Internet can have its own language and expressions. But if you're not very experienced with chatting, you may find yourself lost when someone says lol or ttyl.

There are hundreds and hundreds of these abbreviations and emoticons. We'll just look at some of the more common ones.

When communicating with others, generally, these abbreviations are typed in lower case. If you want to make an emphasis, put it in all capital letters.

Here's your dictionary for online abbreviations:

- adbb – all done, bye bye
- atst – at the same time
- b/c – because
- b4 – before
- b4n – bye for now
- bf – best friend or boyfriend
- brb – be right back
- btw – by the way
- btdt – been there done that
- cyl – see ya later
- dd – dear daughter
- ds – dear son
- dgd – dear granddaughter
- dgs – dear grandson
- fwiw – for what it's worth
- gtg – got to go
- ilu – I love you
- ily – I love you
- Imho – in my honest (or humble) opinion

- jc – just checking
- jk – just kidding
- jw – just wondering
- kewl – cool
- kwim – know what I mean?
- Imirl – let's meet in real life
- lol – laughing out loud
- lola – laughing out loud again
- ltns – long time no see
- lyl – love ya lots
- msg – message
- myob – mind your own business
- ne – any
- neway - anyway
- nm – never mind or nothing much
- ntk – nice to know
- nuff – enough said
- nw – no way
- oic – oh, I see!
- omg – oh my gosh
- rl – real life
- ru – are you?
- rofl – rolling on the floor laughing
- roflmao – rolling on the floor laughing my a** off

- roflmaopmpastd – rolling on the floor laughing my a** off, peeing my pants and scaring the dog
- ruok – are you ok?
- swak – send (or sealed) with a kiss
- tc – take care
- tx – thanks
- thx – thanks
- tia – thanks in advance
- ttfn – ta ta for now
- ttyl – talk to ya later
- tyvm – thank you very much
- ur – you are
- wb – welcome back or write back
- we – whatever
- wtf – what the f***
- wtg – way to go
- wyp – what's your problem
- wyt – whatever you think
- wywh – wish you were here
- xoxo – hugs and kisses
- yr – yeah right
- yw – you're welcome

You may want to also use emoticons to express how you are feeling. Some places will give you pre-programmed

emoticons to insert with the touch of a button, but some won't. Here are some of the more common ones used.

: -) = agreeing or smiling

: -D = laughing

; -) = winking; just kidding

; -> = devilish wink

: -o = "Wow!"

: -(= frowning; boo hoo

: (= sad

: -< = really sad

: -c = really unhappy

: -C = really bummed

: - I = "hmmm..."

: -X = "My lips are sealed"

(((((name)))))) = hug

CONCLUSION

Just because you've crossed over into the senior set doesn't mean you can't have a healthy and satisfying dating life. Growing older doesn't mean growing slower. Consider the following quotes we found for inspiration:

Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.

~Samuel Ullman

Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.

~Chili Davis

The years teach much which the days never knew.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been.

~Mark Twain,

How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?

~Satchel Paige

A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams.

~John Barrymore

Everyone is the age of their heart.

~Guatemalan Proverb

I still have a full deck; I just shuffle slower now.

~Author Unknown

Men do not quit playing because they grow old; they grow old because they quit playing.

~Oliver Wendell Holmes

There's no such thing as too late. That's why they invented death.

~From the movie *Out to Sea*

Some people, no matter how old they get, never lose their beauty - they merely move it from their faces into their hearts.

~Martin Buxbaum

You are only young once, but you can stay immature indefinitely.

~Author Unknown

A man is not old as long as he is seeking something.

~Jean Rostand

There are people whose watch stops at a certain hour and who remain permanently at that age.

~Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve

The trick is growing up without growing old.

~Casey Stengel

You can't turn back the clock. But you can wind it up again.

~Bonnie Prudden

You are in the prime of your life – even if society doesn't think so. Well show them! Embrace the fact that you are ready to re-enter the world of romance and love by finding that other special someone.

In these past few years the trend in dating from all over the world has changed drastically. Individuals looking to meet people don't choose to line up in queues anymore, to try to get into the hottest places. Seldom will they be seen hanging out in pubs and bars, trying to catch a glimpse of prospective hook-ups.

Online dating is the perfect venue to do this in. You don't have the awkwardness of struggling through meeting someone and then trying to charm them. You can charm them with you words and typing without worrying about how you look or how you act. Now singles can meet and greet each other without leaving the refuge of their homes. Sounds crazy, but now this is the most preferred way individuals socialize.

Online dating is fun -- if you know how to play. There are rules that abound and courtesy should be exercised so you won't offend the other party. Try to be sincere, but not to a point that you appear vulnerable and come of as an easy scam target. Most of all, have fun. It's a dating site, for crying out loud!

You can get to know someone first and then take it from there. Robert Browning said it best, we think:

Grow old with me! The best is yet to be.

The best is waiting for you – now go out and find it!

More great Dating and Relationship resources can be found at:

- [Finestdatingservices.com: Dating Service Reviews & Advice](http://Finestdatingservices.com)
- [Datingreviews.biz: Reviews of Free Dating Websites and Local Chat Rooms for singles.](http://Datingreviews.biz)
- [eSinglesdating.net: Chatroom and Dating Site Reviews](http://eSinglesdating.net)
- [Datingvibe.net: Dating advice and Tips](http://Datingvibe.net)