

Sleepover do's and don'ts

“**S**leepover? For adults?” you may be asking. “What do you mean?”

Two-person pajama party. Duo slumber shindig. Couple cuddle fest. Jammie jam. No-sex sleepover. It can happen early in the relationship. You're not ready to have sex, so you only cuddle and snooze with your new sweetie all night.

Sleepovers are living on the edge. There is potential danger. You have to trust the guy enough to know he won't force you to do anything you don't want to do. I'm not advocating them; however, I know they happen. I'll share some guidelines if you decide it is right for you.

When are sleepovers likely to happen? When you've been out on a date until late. Your date brings you home but is exhausted and has a long drive ahead, or he has had a tad too much to drink so is uncomfortable driving. Coffee would barely make a dent in his alertness. He's been a gentleman in every encounter with you. You

haven't had to reel him in. He's shown he is trustworthy through his actions and words. He's honored your boundaries.

One option is for him to sleep in the guest room or on the couch. But know that if there are sparks between you, one of you may join the other before morning. More often sleepovers are in the same bed.



How tos:

- ♥ Explain he can stay, but there will be no sex of any kind. Some people have Clintonian definitions of sex, so be clear you mean *no* sex.
- ♥ Clothing is *not* optional. At minimum, undies must stay on, in their proper place (around one's knees does not count as "on," although technically they are on your body). Ideally, you both wear — and keep on—— something non-sexy, e.g., t-shirts and sweat pants, pajamas — tops and bottoms. Flannel or cotton, not silk or satin. The less exposed skin the better, so avoid camisoles. I'm not meaning to sound prudish, but you want to be uninviting in this situation. Don't don your frilly, see-through negligee for a sleepover. Save it for later. It will only invite trouble.

♥ Expect there will be some “exploration” — unless you have a bundling board. It is hard for two attracted people to keep their hands off each other. So verbalize your boundaries and if his hand “slips” reinforce what’s OK by moving it as well as restating your boundary. If this “slip-page” happens more than a couple of times, kick him out.

♥ You have to stick to your own rules. You can’t change midway and say, “You feel so good, let’s have sex.” You are then sending mixed messages and he won’t want to honor your limits in the future because he won’t think you’re serious about them.

♥ Don’t be a temptress to test his mettle. It is hard enough for two people to lie together, so don’t let your hand “slip” to a sensitive zone, nor engage in passionate kissing or other provocative behaviors. You are putting him in a double bind and most mortals would not pass the test. Don’t do this.

So with all these rules, why do it? And why wouldn’t you?

The pros:

♥ You confirm you can trust him to honor your wishes. If you can trust him in the face of temptation, it will deepen the relationship.



- ♥ There is something delicious about sleeping intertwined with someone you care about.

The cons:

- ♥ You may not get a lot of sleep. Sleeping with someone new takes some getting used to. It's easy to wake when he turns. He may snore. Sleeping with your head on his chest may sound romantic, but it can create neck pain.
- ♥ He will be there in the morning, when you'll have morning breath, possibly a hangover, and sans makeup. You may also have to share bathroom time before work, find him a toothbrush and razor, make him breakfast.

Sleepovers are really a matter of trust. For a sleepover to be successful you have to have clearly defined boundaries and confidence in your and his ability to respect them. Be firm in your rules. Don't waffle. When pajama parties work, they are a delicious way to deepen your relationship.



*Does he want in your
life — or just in your
bedroom?*

I had a hot and heavy relationship with a man I dated for 5 months. It was one of those instant chemistry situations and after our second date we couldn't keep our hands off each other. We saw each other once a week, sometimes for several days, even though he lived less than an hour away. He always brought me a gift, and in between visits he sent me daily loving text messages, IMs, emails, and/or e-cards. Nothing salacious, just romantic and sweet.

The relationship progressed quickly, something I told myself not to do. But I was so drawn to him, and he to me, it was futile trying to put the brakes on. It seemed we were both falling hard and fast.

I thought he was being a gentleman by always making the journey to my house so I didn't have to drive the hour to his. After a month, I suggested we share the driving burden and meet at his house occasionally. He

always had a viable reason this wouldn't work — various parts of his house were being remodeled so it was a mess. Then when those projects were done, he had relatives staying. On and on. I even wondered if he was married or had a girlfriend since he was so adept at keeping me out of his place. But he was so loving and attentive I pushed that thought aside.

I noticed he had a reason to decline attending every social event to which I invited him. So he never met my friends. I told him it was important to me that we were in each other's social lives. But he never invited me to meet his friends, so it felt like he was keeping me at arms length the whole time.



When he visited, he'd take me out to dinner or to the movies. But our physical pull was so strong, before or after — or often both — we'd end up you know where. I tried not to think that this was a purely sexual relationship because he was attentive in between trysts. But the absence of any social interaction with the other's friends eventually made it clear that he didn't want a real relationship with me.

Finally, after telling me many times how perfect we were for each other, how much I meant to him, and how he envisioned being with me for decades, he de-

clared we weren't compatible. I suppose the chemistry ran its course for him. I was heartbroken, even though I could see we had major differences in our relationship goals, preferences and expectations. Still, it stings to have someone you are attracted to break up with you, even if your logical self knows it isn't going to work.

The lesson — which I could have told myself beforehand if I were advising someone else — is to take it slow. Make sure you both truly want the same thing. Even if you both say you want an exclusive, committed long-term relationship, you don't really know what that exactly means to the other until you've gotten to know each other for a while.

Do I regret this relationship? No. In many ways he taught me important lessons and I will cherish the good times we had together. There were indications of our incompatibility in the second date that I chose to ignore, even when they were repeated. There was so much that I thought worked that I was willing to compromise or chalk up to no relationship being perfect.






Swapping sexual favors for...dog sitting!

A former flame recently told me an old girlfriend, who ended their relationship extremely badly, asked if he'd take care of her dogs while she's on vacation. When he said yes, but wouldn't accept any money for it, she offered to give him sexual services in exchange for dog sitting. She'd even designed a sexual-favors credit system where he earned rolls in the hay for strolls with the dogs. He was flabbergasted!

Although when they broke up 10 months ago she wrote him a letter listing his every flaw — and insulting his masculinity — evidentially his in-the-sack performance was now missed. And while she wasn't suggesting they get back in relationship, she was more than suggesting they get back in bed.



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Is this what's in store for modern-day singles? A new perspective on the f___-buddy concept? The attitude of, "You take care of my dogs and I'll take care of you"? What's next? "Pick up my mail and I'll give you a quick pick me up." "Water my plants and I'll make your mouth water." "You do me this favor and I'll do you a sexual favor." While we admired her creativity designing a credit system, it seemed to us a tad too much like prostitution.