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How to Survive a Bad Date

A bad date can leave you feeling bemused, embarrassed, and unimpressed with yourself. Yet, if you're part of the dating scene, you're bound to bump into the inevitable bad date. Sometimes the person you're dating is a mess, sometimes you're the one doing everything wrong, and occasionally, the activities you planned turn into a disaster. Here's what to do to survive, or perhaps even turn around, a bad date.



Steps

- 1 Try starting over.** If you're botching up left and right, ask your date if you can start over. If you're willing to show your human side and to acknowledge that you've mucked up, it can be a genuine moment of **vulnerability** that endears you to your date. At least give it a go, as doing so will probably relieve your date, as well, who was probably getting worried that you're naturally like this!

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🗣️ Oh-oh, watch out!

- Say something like: "I'm sorry, I'm really nervous, and I'm not being myself. Can I have a do-over?" Then take a deep breath and forget whatever you did that made you feel embarrassed, and start over.

- 2 Be open-minded.** If your date isn't what - or who - you expected, that's not necessarily bad. Are you irritated that he showed up wearing sweatpants and took you to Taco Bell? Maybe he's **saving up** to buy a house, and maybe he has an amazing sense of humor. Maybe he's gloriously unpretentious. Are you turned off by her constant chattering? Maybe she's just nervous, possibly because she genuinely likes you. Does your date seem a little **creepy** or awkward? Who knows? Maybe he or she has **Asperger's**, chronic shyness, or simply doesn't know what to do on a date. In other words, unless your date is being outright rude, don't be too quick to write them off.



🗣️ Ah, that's different...

- Try using open-ended questions to get them to talk about themselves more, especially where they seem nervous about talking. Listen attentively and smile a lot.

- Keep in mind that it might be something you've said that your date is too polite to point out. For example, if you've aired strong opinions about sensitive issues (really a no-no for first dates), you might have unwittingly insulted his or her own beliefs without realizing. Tread with care!

3 Do something really nice for your date. Instead of focusing on how bad you're feeling, target your fears or worries into trying to ensure that your date is having a good time, even if you're doing it for selfish reasons. It'll take the focus off you and your negative thinking, and who knows, it might even brighten up the outlook for future dates.



- Rush out and buy or pick a **bunch a flowers**. Excuse yourself by saying you need a bit of fresh air or a bathroom break. Naturally, you'll need a florist handy; even better if the two of you happen to be walking by one as you can just do this on the spur of the moment.
- Offer to do something for your date if he or she has just spent most of the date complaining about it. For example, if your date keeps going on about having to care for a sibling or has a broken car, offer to **babysit** or repair the car for them. That will take away the reason for complaining and could even steer the rest of the dating conversation in a whole new direction.
- Hold open doors, lay your coat down over the mud for him walk on, let your date pick the best seat or the movie, etc. You get the drift...

4 Be laid back. So you're on a bad date. It's not the end of the world. It's probably just a few hours out of your life. Why not try just relaxing, and going with the flow? Whatever it is that you're doing, try to enjoy it. If you're eating, for example, **focus on the food**, instead of on how annoying your date is. Even though every bone in your body is telling you that this person isn't the one, see it as a situation where at least the two of you had a chance to meet and exchange views and relish the reality that it isn't for long.



🗨️ OK, whatever!

5 Find the humor in the situation. It helps to maintain a sense of perspective and humor, as famously summed up by Groucho Marx when he once announced: *I've had a wonderful evening - but this wasn't it.* And perhaps **being funny** can lighten the tension that has been causing everything to go wrong so far; try a few laughs on for size.



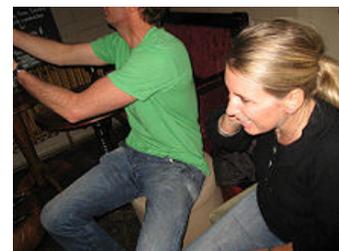
🗨️ Maybe injecting a little silliness will improve things!

- Pay attention to every detail of what is going wrong in your date, so you can tell your friends and you can all laugh over the date escapades tomorrow. Come up with amusing **metaphors** for how dreadful, tiring, cheap, etc., the date situation is turning out to be (focus on finding the humor in the

situation, rather than at the expense of your fellow human being). Imagine you're a stand-up comedian, relating the awfulness of the situation to an audience.

- Remember your karma. It's all very well to be condescending about your date but usually it's just a case that the two of you are not made for one another. It doesn't mean he or she is any less a person than you. It just means that you're incompatible, so keep your sense of humor light-hearted and compassionate, and focus it on the date itself and not on judging the person whom you barely know anyway. The purpose of sensing incompatibility is to ensure you don't make a daft choice for your lifelong mate, not for making a laughing stock out of him or her.

6 End it early. If, for whatever reason, you know you're not interested in dating this person anymore, the best thing to do is to end it. It may feel uncomfortable or cruel, but it's not kind to give someone a pity date, either (especially if they're paying). Say something like "Look, I'm really sorry, but I don't want to waste your time. For some reason, this isn't clicking for me. Do you mind if we cut this short?" Or, you can **lie** and pretend you feel sick, or have an emergency to tend to. If you don't have the courage to bail, though...



Hi Evie! Really? I have to come get you... right now?!

- If your date is being rude, lewd, or even harassing you, don't stand for it. Be assertive and inform your date that their attitude is not acceptable. Let your date know that you're not someone who will put up with such behavior, and leave.
- If you're feeling really chicken, ring your friend from the bathroom. Tell him or her that your date is going really badly and ask your friend to get your out, fast. There are several possible scenarios here:
 - Have your friend drop by, "accidentally".^[1] Your friend can either turn up pretending to already be drunk, or can quickly pretend to get drunk once with the two of you. Once he or she is seriously pretend drunk, your friend can confess to a terrible recent upset that has your friend losing the plot and needing to be taken home by you, your friend's knight or dame in shining armor. This one tends to work best between females!
 - Have your friend call you back in a few minutes with a "family emergency" that you just must attend to immediately.
 - Have your friend arrive and simply take over the conversation, boring your date to death while you listen rapt. Your date will soon make motions to go home and you can say simply "Oh I'd love to stay a little longer with X. I can call you a taxi if you'd like."

7 Flirt with other people. You don't have to wait for this date to end before you start shopping for a new one! And who knows? Maybe someone you cross paths with while on this date will end up being "the one" and you'll have an interesting story to tell when people ask how you met!



Rediscover your passion for someone... or something... else

- Realize that flirting in front of your date is pretty mean and devastating. It's the ultimate ego-blow. Unless you're feeling really mean or you're feeling unsafe or vulnerable around your date, at least try

to wait until he or she has left the scene before you start flirting.

- 8 **Boost your own self-esteem.** No matter whose fault it was that the date went badly, don't take it out on yourself. What has happened has passed and it's a lesson about dating, not a reflection on your own worthiness.



🔍 Plenty other things to be getting on with...

- Think things such as "Well, at least I... [stood up for myself/ held myself together and didn't cry/ got out before getting hooked up with a control freak... etc.]."
- Congratulate yourself on being a good judge of character for not allowing yourself to get entangled with someone who isn't right for you. Early exits leave the least debris.
- Congratulate yourself for not being a people pleaser. Congratulate yourself twice for not succumbing to sleeping with them on a first date to "try and make things right".
- Things will look brighter in the morning. And a month or year from now, it'll be but a memory. And most importantly, you're still free to look for Mr or Ms Right now...

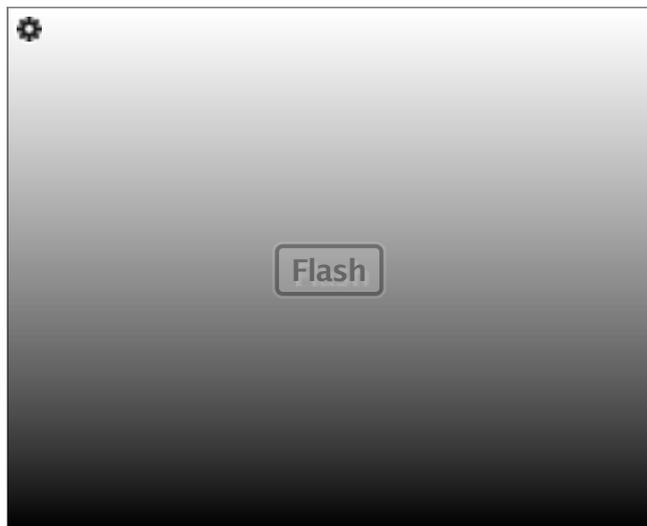
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Here are some scenarios for ditching a bad date.

Tips

- Try to remain polite. If you don't want to be on the date, end it. But if you don't want to end it, then play nice. Don't be rude; being rude is a passive aggressive way to say "I don't like you." and if you're willing to be like this to your date, you'll start an unhealthy pattern with all future dates and potential spouses. Learn to be assertive and speak your mind openly but kindly.

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- If your date is pushy or disrespectful, and you feel unsafe, end the date without hesitation. Look for help from other people around you if you're being harassed. This is why it is always important to date in public places until you know your date well enough.
- If you're feeling super lousy, be grateful you're free to date. Not everyone has this luxury, even in this day and age.

Warnings

- First dates are best taken in public places; unless you already know the person really well, don't take unnecessary risks.

Things You'll Need

- Exit strategies already thought through
- Cell phone

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Sources and Citations

1. ↑ [Jacqueline Burns, *The Handbook of Girly Emergencies*, p. 25, \(2001\), ISBN 1-57145-881-6](#)

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