

Online Dating for Women # How to Stay Safe

For today's busy single women, meeting new friends and potential dates online can be hugely appealing. Online dating offers a fun and secure environment to meet other people who share your interests. It's also a great place to find the "special someone" you've been searching for, and even build a loving and trusting friendships that can lead to a lasting offline relationship. Whether you decide to correspond online or meet members offline, using sound judgment and conduct yourself responsibly is strongly advised. On the virtual dating scene, as in the real world, dangers exist and common sense is the best safety tool.

* Begin by communicating strictly via email, and be aware of any odd behavior or inconsistencies. If at any point you feel nervous or uncomfortable, you are free to protect your safety by ending the correspondence.

* In preparing your new member profile and assessment, never include personal data like your last name, email or home address, phone number or place of business. It is crucial to maintain your anonymity at all times. If another member tries to pressure you for personal information, or tries to "trick" you into revealing it, end the communication right away.

* Never assume that every potential date is trustworthy. Keep your guard up and let the suitors earn your trust gradually, through consistently honest and forthright behavior.

* Feel free to request a photo of your potential date. Don't discount your woman's intuition. Viewing a photo gives you a clear view of the person's appearance, and may help you to achieve a "gut feeling".

* When you have established a consistent online relationship, the next step should be a personal discussion over the phone. You will have the opportunity to get to know the person even better, before agreeing to meet in person.

* Online dating means never having to say you're sorry. In other words, if the correspondence or initial discussions are not successful, you are under no pressure to meet the other person or continue contact. Should you reconsider and choose to pursue the match, you are always free to regain contact.

* If you decide to take your relationship to the next level and meet in person, be sure to meet in a safe place. Always tell a friend where you are going, and when you will be back. If possible, leave your date's name and telephone number with your friend.

As with any social encounter, certain precautions must be taken to avoid placing yourself in a vulnerable or even dangerous situation. Use common sense and be aware of the following behaviors:

- Provides inconsistent information about age, appearance, marital status, interests, employment and so on.
- Refuses to speak with you over the phone, even after you've established an ongoing online intimacy.
- Will not direct answers to your direct questions.
- Appears significantly different in person than the persona created online.
- Never introduces you to friends, family members, or professional associates.

If you're tired of the bar scene or simply don't know where to go to meet potential dates, online dating can be a great way of connecting with new people. Post your profile and start a new friendship today!