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8 Tips for Kissing Toward a More Passionate Marriage

Written by Cara Plett

What's it mean to "kiss like you're married"? A routine, lifeless, cool peck? Or a passionate, erotic, steamy smooch? The first response describes stereotypically dull, post-honeymoon marital intimacy. The second depicts electrifying, full-body expressions of lifelong sensuality between husband and wife. Sadly, reality confirms the stereotype: Average marital kissing habits are dry – and destructive.

In *Kiss Me Like You Mean It*, Dr. David Clarke bluntly writes that passionate kissing fades in 100 per cent of marriages. Supporting this statistic, a recent British Heart Foundation survey found that one in five married couples goes up to one week without kissing. And for 40 per cent of the survey respondents, the few-and-far-between kisses last no longer than five seconds.

But don't give up hope! Rather, give your marriage the gift of exhilarating intimacy, in and out of the bedroom. Read on to learn the whys and hows of kissing your way toward a spicier relationship.

Why kiss?

To understand the power of a kiss, realize there's more to a kiss than meets the lips. Even if it were all in the lips, author Sheril Kirshenbaum remains optimistic. In *The Science of Kissing: What Our Lips Are Telling Us*, she explains that lips disproportionately dominate your neural space relative to other body parts. This means that lips are extremely sensitive, so a single sensual kiss rouses a great deal of neurotransmitter and hormone activity. For instance, a spike in dopamine increases pleasure and longing, elevated oxytocin fosters bonding and rising serotonin boosts feelings of contentment.

In turn, a study conducted by Arizona State University professor Kory Floyd shows that bodily pleasure translates into marital satisfaction. His intriguing research reveals that when couples increased their kissing during a six-week period, their cholesterol and stress-levels lowered and their relationship satisfaction rose.

As a bonus, science suggests that men transfer testosterone through their saliva! Since testosterone raises libido in men and women, swapping saliva can elevate sexual desire. Needless to say, while kissing feeds desire and can prime you and your spouse for more physical intimacy, it need not always lead to intercourse.

How Not to Kiss

Good kissing bonds a couple. Poor kissing threatens to erode marital intimacy. Invest a moment to complete Clarke's amusing "Kissing Test" to reveal how frequently your kisses fall under these four subpar categories:

1. **The Pathetic Little Peck Kiss:** Husband and wife bump their lips together for a millisecond, as if reluctantly or by accident.
2. **The Poofy Lip Kiss:** Husband and wife stand a few feet away with two sets of poofed lips stretched out, struggling for a point of contact. Lips touch; bodies don't.
3. **The Sound Effect Kiss:** Husband and wife stand across the room from each other and one spouse purses their lips to make a kiss sound.
4. **The Dreaded Kiss on the Cheek:** Cheek kissing is a common greeting in Europe – between friends. As passionate lovers, husband and wife should move beyond this impersonal salutation.

Of course, there's nothing inherently wrong with these types of kisses. But they should be only part of a balanced diet. On their own, these lifeless kisses can result in a malnourished marriage.



Top Eight Kissing Tips

For a more passionate, flirtatious and exciting marriage, practice these eight tips:

1. **Kiss for kissing's sake:** Kissing deserves respect and attention as an essential act of marital intimacy. Without proper prioritization, the ardent embrace and flirtatious smooch dissolve into a hand wave and a peck for a couple overwhelmed by the pressures of kids, bills and busyness. Granted, you may kiss sensually during foreplay, and that's good. But if erotic kissing occurs only preceding intercourse, Clarke flags this as a "huge mistake and a sign of decreasing passion." Moreover, if kissing is viewed merely as a precursor to sex, one partner may avoid it when they aren't in the mood for more, marriage and family therapist Karen Wells cautions.
2. **Put your body into it:** Is "make-out touching" a lost art in your marriage? If so, reengage your body – and your spouse's. A "full-body, all- the-right-parts-touching, sensual hug is part of a great kiss," Clarke writes. Try using your arms to embrace your husband or wife. Touch their face, back, shoulders and legs. Gently caress your wife's neck. Seductively squeeze your husband's bicep. Kissing like you're married should mean more touching, not less!
3. **Greet with a kiss:** The way you greet your spouse sets the tone for the rest of the evening. Start the night right with a 20-second kiss, which Clarke says breaks the mold of saying "How are you?" and instead says "I'm crazy about you!" Taking the time for a physical, intimate greeting also provides a buffer zone for a stressed husband and frenzied wife before one or both of you start venting about the day.
4. **Kiss and Tell:** Perhaps you don't enjoy kissing. Maybe it causes you physical or emotional discomfort. Or maybe you think your husband or wife is a bad kisser. Rather than resigning yourself to a kiss-less marriage, Wells suggests having an open discussion with your spouse, approaching the subject from a "learning" perspective to avoid blame or embarrassment. She recommends using positive phrasing such as, "I'm wondering if we could try kissing this way, as I think it would be really stirring for me." You could also play a simple game of "kiss and tell." Start by asking your spouse to stand still for one minute while you kiss them the way you want to be kissed. Reverse roles, then discuss your preferences.
5. **Open your eyes:** Make kissing an eye-opening experience – literally! Will it be awkward at first? Yes, but that's a good thing. If all else fails and eyes-open kissing leads to nothing more than a giggle fit with your spouse, at least you're laughing together, Wells highlights! More seriously, however, peering deeply into each other's eyes while you kiss forces you to confront your insecurities. Plus, eyes-open kissing keeps you in the present. To illustrate, Lenae* admitted that she used to dissociate when she kissed her husband for more than a few seconds. Her mind habitually scanned her to-do list, or even fantasized about romantic film scenes. Now that she's physically opening her eyes to the intimacy she was foregoing, Lenae has an enlivened desire for her husband!
6. **Focus on quantity and quality:** Rhett Butler, iconic romantic hero in *Gone With the Wind*, sweeps his lover into his arms saying, "You should be kissed, and often – and by someone who knows how." The same goes for you and your spouse! Make it your goal to frequently shower your husband or wife with the best kisses you can. When you think one peck will do, opt for "lingering and multiple kisses," Clarke advises. Focusing on quantity and quality maintains a steady flow of romantic feelings so there are no more dry spells in your marriage.
7. **Kiss by the Book:** Read the Song of Solomon and let the Scriptures be your (kissing) guide. King Solomon, the Bible's greatest lover, filled this book with accolades of marital love, passion, intimacy – and kissing. In fact, the second verse in the Song references smooching: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" Later, by writing that honey and milk are under his lover's tongue, Solomon heats things up by alluding to French kissing (4:11)! "All the kisses described in the Song," Clarke notes, "are good, solid, put-your-heart-and-soul-into-it efforts."
8. **Kiss anyway:** Undoubtedly, there are days when you don't feel like looking at your spouse, let alone kissing them. On the days you feel hurt, frustrated or angry, Clarke advises that you kiss anyway. "You must engage in romantic behaviour first and then your feelings of passion – deeper and more intimate – will follow." Marriage is based on loving and respecting your spouse no matter what, and the practice of passionate kissing speaks this message loud and clear.