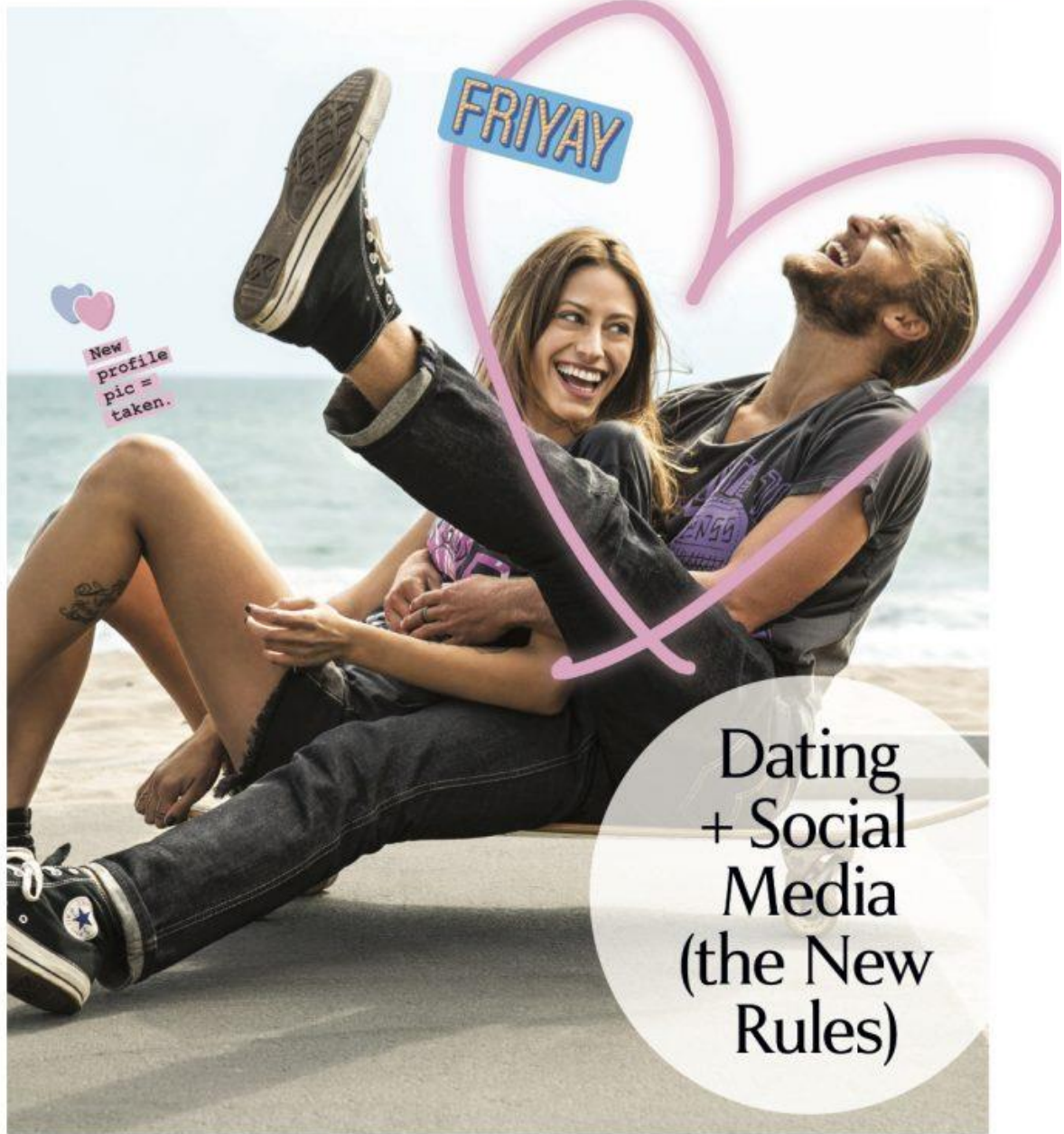


love&sex



IAN MADDOX/THE LICENSING PROJECT.COM

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Showing your romantic interest without looking

too thirsty is a hard balance to strike...especially on social media. After you've "researched" your new crush online and gone on a few dates, when do you add them on Snapchat? Is it cool to Like their Facebook status? How soon can you post an Instagram pic together?

Don't be fooled—these moves matter. "They're baby steps for testing your partner's interest in being public and showing affection with you," says sociologist Lisa Wade, PhD, a professor at Occidental College and author of *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*.

With that in mind, here are your (super) specific guidelines for integrating a new partner into all aspects of your social-media life during every phase of your budding relationship.

LOVE

Not just doing it for the 'gram!

20

percent of singles think it's okay to Like a date's post or photo before the first date.

SOURCE: MATCH.COM'S 2018 SINGLES IN AMERICA SURVEY



AFTER THREE DATES

Friend or Follow

"Wait at least three dates before making the first move (sending a Friend request or hitting Follow), so you're sure you like them enough to see them in your feed," suggests Laurie Davis Edwards, founder and CEO of eFlirt. "If you do it before this point, it could come off like you're trying to dig up dirt." (Of course, you can carefully backstalk them before this if their account isn't private.)



"Hope he sees this..."

WITHIN SEVEN DAYS LIKE A POST

Once you're in the Friend zone, throw them one or two Likes that same week, says Leonard Kim, personal-branding and social-media expert at Influence Tree. But if you're scrolling way back (we all do it), be careful not to double-tap any photo that is more than a year old. It'd be creepy if he hearted that pic of you from college in a bandage dress, right?

AFTER A WEEK

Watch His Stories

Don't overthink it! At this point, watching each other's Stories on Insta or Snap is totally fair game, so get out the popcorn!

LOVE



65
percent of people would Friend their S.O.'s family after becoming official.

SOURCE: MATCH CO.'S 2018 SINGLES IN AMERICA SURVEY

WITHIN TWO WEEKS

Slide Into His DMs

It's cool to send a direct message in response to his funny Snap or a meme that relates to a convo you two had recently. But do so infrequently, and avoid having full talks in DMs (which are erased in Snapchat), says Edwards. Stick to texting to chat and make plans.



AFTER ONE MONTH

LEAVE AN EMOJI COMMENT

"Comments are sure to be seen by your new boo and their friends," says Edwards, so this should be a move you make after you've established your connection. And unless you want his Aunt Beth asking when she's going to meet his "very forward lady friend," steer clear of writing things like "u look so hot xoxo ❤️❤️." Instead, leave a simple, sly sentiment, like a 🔥.

ONCE YOU DTR IRL

Post a Low-Key Photo Hint

Congrats! Now, you can upload a casual nod to your new status, like a pic of you two at the park or him sitting across from you at brunch...as long as you have his permission. "Some people really value their privacy," explains Kim. Simply ask, "This photo is so good! Cool with you if I post?" (C'mon, you'd also want the option to veto.) Then, pair it with a funny-cute caption like "I don't hate him."

BETWEEN SIX MONTHS AND A YEAR IN...

Make It Insta-Official

Pull out the big guns with a heartfelt couple's post that your partner (and followers) will find super sweet. Just make sure your bond is in a healthy, happy place before you press Share. Otherwise, you'll be embarrassed if you break up soon after, says Alysha Jeney, founder and relationship therapist at Modern Love Counseling in Denver.

WHEN YOU WANT THE WHOLE WORLD TO KNOW

Update Your Status

There's something painfully 2007 about becoming Facebook official by changing your Relationship Status. Then again, once you two are really serious, it may suddenly feel not as funny. "It's a public announcement that you have chosen each other," says Wade. So here's a golden rule: When you two are talking engagement, you can let the whole online world know who's yours.



IAN MADDOX/THE LICENSING PROJECT.COM

When He's Just Not That Into You... Socially

He's not watching your Stories, favoriting your tweets, or posting pics of you. WTF?! Before you freak, remember: "Not all men are active on social media," says Edwards. If his last post was from 2017, he may not be into online sharing—and that's fine. As long as you're happy together in person, "your social-media connection is not a reflection of your relationship," says Edwards. But if you feel the need to bring it up and he stands firm yet can't explain why he can't be connected to you online, he may be hiding something.