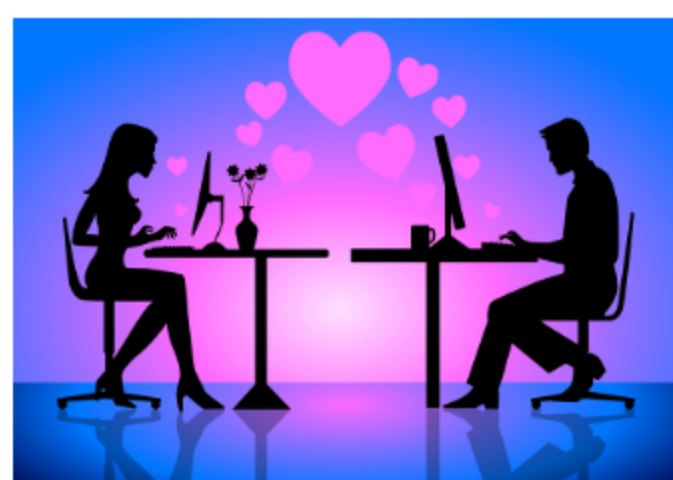


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Spice Up Your Dating Profile This Valentine's Day

by Jocelyn Baird February 10, 2014



The internationally recognized commercial day of love is upon us once more. With [online dating](#) becoming the norm, those who are still single may be turning their attention to big-name dating sites like [Match.com](#) and [eHarmony](#) to look for someone special to cozy up to on February 14. Looking to spice up your dating profile before Valentine's Day? Here are a few tips and tricks to help you dazzle the plethora of eligible singles out there.

1. Add effective keywords.

According to a recent study conducted by [Wired](#) using OkCupid and Match.com, the most highly-rated profiles on both websites contained similar words. The top 5 keywords on men's profiles that women found most attractive are **surfing, surf, yoga, skiing and the ocean**, while men on average rated women with the words **London, NYC, yoga, surfing and athlete** higher than others. The entire chart of 300+ common keywords is extensive and shows an interesting glimpse into the mindset of both men and women when it comes to what they find attractive. So how can you use this to your advantage? The important thing is not to embellish or outright lie (few things could be more embarrassing than whipping out on your first wave after telling your date that you're an expert surfer). Instead, highlight your most interesting hobbies, experiences and traits — using the list as a primer — and paint a picture of yourself that potential matches can use to decide if you are right for them. Love the ocean or the idea of London but haven't ever been? Talk about your dream of taking Mr. or Miss Right to either place for a romantic getaway.

2. Avoid sticky subjects.

On the flip side, there are topics that you should definitely avoid if you want to attract others to your profile. Hopefully it's obvious that you shouldn't be talking about your many exes or your pending divorce, but what about your kids or furry friends? In addition to charting the most common keywords in highly-rated profiles, the folks at [Wired](#) also found that going against gender ideals is seen as attractive. So men, go ahead and flaunt your offspring — but women may want to avoid phrases like "my children." Similarly, while expressing your love for cats is acceptable, it would appear talking about all the cats you own can create negative connotations and should thus be avoided. While we're at it, don't be self-deprecating or talk about your negative qualities. Sure, we all have them, but when you're trying to land a date it's not a great idea to go on about your money problems or how insecure you are about your thighs.

3. Upload a few great photos.

Online dating is just as much about the content of your profile as the pictures you put up. There are some secrets to choosing photos that will catch people's attention. For women, full-length body shots taken indoors generally receive a positive response. Selfies are acceptable, but try not to post too many of them, and whatever you do, don't make the "duck lips" face. Men are better off posting full body shots taken outdoors, preferably showing them in the middle of an activity. Both genders are encouraged to post photos of them smiling, especially with teeth showing. Another great tip from Jim Talbott, Match.com's Director of Consumer Insights, is to swap out your profile picture frequently. Doing so will potentially cause those who've already seen you before to take a second look, thinking you are someone new rather than skipping over your profile. If you've been using the same old bathroom mirror selfie for a while, then it's time to get out to the woods or get dressed up and have friends snap some new photos to upload.

4. Take your profile on the town.

Last year, Match.com introduced [The Stir](#), a new series of events in cities across the country for singles to meet other singles hosted by the dating website. With everything from cooking classes to happy hours, there's sure to be something up your alley. They even host events tailored to specific age groups so you can feel comfortable going in that you'll be meeting people in the age range you desire. Rival dating site OkCupid also hosts real life events where members can meet and mingle, though with Match.com your profile needs to be approved before you can view these events — making it less likely for shady characters to show up.

5. Upgrade.

Most popular dating websites let you create an account and browse or receive matches for free without subscribing, but often a free membership is limited in what you can view or who you can communicate with. All three of our top-rated dating websites are excellent choices for meeting your potential soul mate and have affordable subscription pricing. [Chemistry.com](#) will send you potential matches with a free account, but you can't start getting to know them until you subscribe. A subscription with [Match.com](#) lets you communicate with your matches by phone, chat and email as well as see who's interested in you and who has viewed your profile. Similarly, [eHarmony's](#) free accounts let you send brief icebreaker messages to interesting profiles, but you need to subscribe to send or view custom messages as well as photos. So if you've been waffling on subscribing, why not give it a shot?

Dating is tricky on or offline, but with a little ingenuity and effort, you can shake the dust off of your profile and get back into the game. Want to learn more about what popular matchmaking sites have to offer? Check out our [online dating reviews page](#) for comparisons and full-length reviews.

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Kian April 14, 2014

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Jocelyn is a NextAdvisor.com writer with a love for coffee, reading and all things personal security. She currently covers identity theft, credit monitoring and credit cards. She has been a guest on several radio shows nationwide and her cybersecurity and personal finance expertise have been featured by Forbes, USA Today, Kiplinger's Personal Finance, The Huffington Post and more. She is a graduate of Syracuse University with a dual degree in Writing and Rhetorical Studies and Anthropology. Follow her on Twitter [@JocelynAdvisor](#).

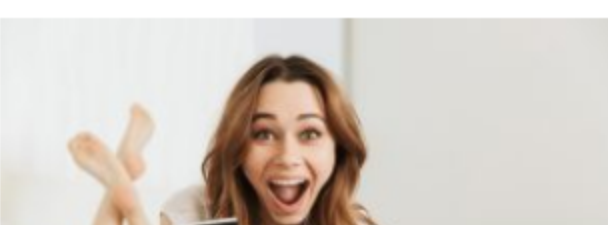
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