

Easiest-ever ways to Make your marriage even happier!

Scientists are constantly discovering new ways to keep love alive and thriving, many so simple, they take less than a minute! Curious to see what you can do for your relationship in virtually no time at all? Then go ahead and try . . .

Saying "I" more often!

Would you be amazed to learn that talking about yourself—not your spouse—can make your marriage stronger? It's true! One recent study, for example, found that the more a woman uses the "I" word in instant messages (IMs) to her mate, the more satisfied she is with her significant other and the happier her guy is. In fact, it boosts the odds that they'll stay together a whopping 30%! "For women, using a lot of 'I's says you're comfortable with your partner and haven't gotten so submerged in the relationship you've lost yourself," explains Wayne State University psychologist Richard Slatcher, Ph.D.—and when you're happy, so is he!



Imagining your life without him!

When you do, according to a new University of Virginia study, you get what researchers call "the George Bailey effect"—a reference to the movie classic *It's a Wonderful Life*, in which an angel saves a suicidal man by showing him how much poorer others' lives would have been if they hadn't crossed his. Result: A rush of appreciation for what the two of you have that instantly reinvigorates your relationship!

Doing crossword puzzles together!

When you tackle that kind of challenging activity together, studies show, you both get a feel-good rush of the "attention" hormone dopamine, which is also associated with romantic attraction. And apart from building up your spouse's self-esteem by acknowledging his savviness and skills, you'll be cementing the notion of the two of you being a can-do team, says Monmouth University's Gary W. Lewandowski Jr., Ph.D.



Surprise: Saying "I love you" isn't the best way to say you care!

Not saying "I love you!"

Yes, you heard right: "Those famous 'three little words' have become the most overused in America," says Todd R. Reed, author of *Conversation*

Is Sexy. His recent survey found that 85% of us use or hear them at least three times a day—when talking to friends, family, even co-workers! "So a phrase once reserved for couples in love has become casual—and a lot less meaningful." Looking for a better way to let your guy know he means the world to you? Try a more creative approach, advises Reed, something like, "There's no one more important to me," "You're still the one," or "You're amazing!"

Double-dating!

If a romantic night out sounds like a surefire marriage booster, inviting another couple along can make your date even better! When Wayne State University researchers paired 60 couples up on double dates, each person in the foursome reported feeling closer and experiencing more of a "spark" with his or her partner afterward! The reason: More people mean a wider variety of opinions, viewpoints and conversation topics, which keeps things fresh and provides new things to talk about with your partner later!

Checking before accepting invitations!

Think couples who show their affection by kissing or holding hands in public are the most



likely to stay together forever? Think again! Scientists discovered that public displays of *commitment*—like consulting each other before making joint plans or actively looking out for each other's comfort at parties—are more reliable predictors of lasting marital bliss. These actions show "you never forget that you're half of a couple, which reinforces your mutual sense of trust and respect," explains Pat Love, Ed.D., coauthor of *How to Improve Your Marriage Without Talking About It*.

—Barbara Hustedt Crook

Staying connected by texting!

Several new studies suggest text messaging is a powerful marriage booster—for several reasons! "In some ways, 'electronic' love mail is more romantic than love letters of the past because it says 'I'm thinking of you right now,'" says relationship coach Michael Fiore, creator of TextTheRomanceBack.com. And for men, a text from you during the day tells him he's special no matter how busy your life gets. Just a quick *I'm still smiling about what you said* can keep your guy glowing and the flame burning, he promises.

Did you know? Read or hear an interesting bit of news? Share it with him! A new study shows people who feel their mates expand their horizons are happier with their marriages!

