



respect say no to

Okay, here's the scenario: You're out on your fifth date with a guy you think is yeah-yeah cute. He's funny, you talked a lot, and he blew some bucks on dinner and a romantic movie—that you picked. You get into his car. He leans over and kisses you, and your heart starts pounding. Then, after a little close cuddling, he asks if you wanna get comfier in the backseat. There's plenty of room for you two to lay down, he says, kissing your lips, your neck, your...freeze!

What do you do? You know he wants to have sex, but you also know that you're not ready. Suddenly, it's like the world will end if you don't please this guy. You feel the pressure being poured on! How do I know? Because the girl in that story was me.

So what did I do? I told the boy I'd had an amazing time, but if I got in the back of the car with him, I was going to do something I really didn't want to do yet. I was lucky—he was cool and took me home.

Sometimes girls aren't so lucky. They ignore their gut

reactions or let a guy talk them into something they aren't comfortable doing. That's why you need to know ways to say no to a guy—ways that will leave absolutely no question in the dude's mind that you're serious. But in order to do this, first you've gotta believe that when you allow a boy to be with you, he should feel honored. Sounds weird, right? "Honored." But that's how we women need to view our bodies. Whether you're a virgin or you're already sexually active, now's the time to empower yourself with the confidence to say no. So read on, girl, for ways to deal with the toughest sex situations.

He Pays, You Play

"If he's nice to me or takes me out and pays for everything, I almost feel like I owe him something back."

—Jane, 17
Somerset, KY

Pressure pointers:

Your body is not a thank-you note. A guy does not deserve any rewards for taking you out or treating you well—after all, he got to enjoy the pleasure of

your company! Most important, you have to live with your own decisions. How good will you feel about trading something as priceless as your body for the mere cost of dinner and a movie?

Tell yourself: "Everybody in my life should treat me decently, and this guy is no exception. If I'm out with him, I don't have to feel bad if I don't show my gratitude with my body."

Tell the guy: "Thank you for showing me such an awesome time. I really liked hanging out with you. Good night!" (Give him a peck on the cheek if you really do like him.)

The Third-Month Maneuver

"Some guys think that just because you've been going out—and making out—for a few months, that means you should be ready to go all the way."

—Heather, 19
Fresno, CA

Pressure pointers:

Even if you've been dating for three years, that doesn't

mean you're in the play-offs of the sex championships. Becoming intimate with a guy is not something that's determined by how far you've already gone together or how many days you can mark off on the calendar of your romance. Is he with you because he likes you, or just so he can get some? Remember, just liking a guy doesn't necessarily mean you want to have sex with him now—or ever.

Tell yourself: "It doesn't matter if it's the end of our first month or our first year. I'm not having sex just 'cause my guy feels it's the right time. I need to feel it's right, too. We have to establish the right time together."

Tell the guy: "I like kissing you, but to me that's not a warm-up to going all the way. I'm not ready, and I need you to respect that. If you can't, you're not the guy I thought you were."



Protect yourself—

to sex!

EVERYONE'S DOING IT, RIGHT? WRONG! HERE'S HOW TO PUT SEX PRESSURE IN ITS PLACE. BY ANANDA LEWIS

His Cheating Heart

"The guy I'm dating told me he'd be more willing to be faithful to me if I would have sex with him. I don't know what to say!"

—Kelly, 15
Fort Worth, TX

Pressure pointers:

This guy is acting rude, selfish, and slimy! What gives him the right to threaten you like that? Sure, it's harder to handle the situation when you've been together for a while and you're afraid you'll lose him if he has to keep waiting for you. But the truth is, you can't control whether or not your guy will cheat. And even if you do sleep with him, that won't ensure that he'll always be faithful. There are no guarantees in relationships.

Tell yourself: "If he doesn't want to be with me just 'cause he's not getting any, then he's not the guy I wanna give it up to."

Tell the guy: "I really like going out with you and I don't want you to be with anyone else, but threatening to cheat on me if I don't go all the way won't change my mind. And it won't turn me on, either."

Beers, Babes, Bad Moves

"I hate it when guys try to get girls high or drunk just to have a better chance of scoring with them."

—Jill, 16
North Creek, NY

Pressure pointers:

When you're under the influence, your instincts are dulled. Slimy guys know this. Any dude who tries to make you lose control of your body isn't worthy of you. He should want to get to know the *real* you—not the wasted, can-hardly-speak-without-slurring you. And one more thing:

With your danger radar on the blink, you may not recognize a risky situation if you stumble into one.

Tell yourself: "Well, I wouldn't drink and get behind the wheel of a car, so why would I drink and get busy with a conniving guy who's just trying to get me into bed? It could be just as dangerous."

Tell the guy: "Yes, thank you, I think I *will* have a drink. Would you please get me some water?"

The Condom Conundrum

"It's just too embarrassing for me to bring up the subject of condoms and safe sex with someone."

—Abby, 15
Salem, OH

Pressure pointers:

Safe sex is not debatable. If the two of you don't want to talk the talk, then you're not ready to walk the walk. If you are discussing protection, and your guy tries to sway you to do it without a condom, stop and think about the situation. If he's trying to convince you to do something that stupid, he's probably not mature enough to handle the serious consequences of sex—or to truly care about you. Here's when you need to love yourself enough to just walk away.

Tell yourself: "I don't want to spend my time worrying that I'm pregnant or that I've been infected with HIV or some other STD."

Tell the guy: "Close your eyes and picture yourself as a daddy, warming up bottles of milk instead of warming up before a basketball game. Or picture yourself in a doctor's office being told that you're infected with HIV and being handed a prescription for lifetime medication—and then having to go home and tell your parents about it. Either you put on a love glove, or I'm putting on my coat and leaving."

Am I a Loser for Not Losing It?

"It seems everyone else is having sex. It feels like if you're not doing it, then you're not cool."

—Precious, 17
Brooklyn, NY

Pressure pointers:

Sex is not a rite of passage that you advertise to your friends, like getting your driver's license. Unfortunately, sometimes when a girl has sexually active pals, they make her feel left out or immature for not having sex. In reality, everyone else is *not* doing it. It only seems that way because sex is always shoved in our faces by the media.

Tell yourself: "I am not like everybody else, so I don't have to do what everybody else is doing."

Tell the world: "For me, having sex is not a trend to keep up with, like rolling up my jeans. When I have sex, it will be because I'm ready. And I'm cool with that." □

