



# Life etc.

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relationships

## 5 simple relationship boosters

New research says the average marriage hits the rocks after 11 years. Beat the odds with our expert tips...

### 1 Take up tango

Strictly Come Dancing isn't a hotbed of simmering passion for nothing! Tango has been called 'vertical sex', and research shows the Argentinian dance has the ability to reinvigorate relationships and create a feeling of wellbeing. A recent study\* revealed the dance boosts men's and women's sex hormones and emotions. Tango's choreography appears to release stress and send testosterone racing, in women as well as men. The study participants were left feeling calmer, sexier and more closely bonded.

### 2 Talk - but not about the kids

If you feel you're not being listened to, it doesn't take long for resentment to build up. But it's easy to forget to talk to each other when you're in a long-term relationship, says Keren Smedley, author of *Who's That Sleeping in my Bed? The Art of Relationships for Grown-ups* (Headline Springboard, £7.99). 'We all love people who are interested in us, so show your partner that you're interested in them. Make time: spend ten minutes each day really focused on him and then swap so he focuses on you.' Try to have a giggle together, too, Keren adds. 'Laughing makes us feel good, and a shared joke increases our feeling of intimacy.'

### 3 Have a cuddle

The spark of romance can dim after years of sharing the same bed, but, Keren says, 'It's important to maintain intimacy. If you're in the habit of having sex in one place and at certain times, bring a bit of mystery back and do things differently. Find different places to have sex, make yourself attractive to each other, and dress up like you used



to when you first met.' Even if it's hard to find time for sex, be affectionate and touch each other more, Keren advises. 'Little pats can be more powerful than words,' she says.

### 4 Do something together...

'Often when we've been with people for a while, we spend very little time doing things with them,' says Keren. She advises thinking of a project you can do together. 'It could be painting the bathroom, getting fitter or learning French. Share the experience and encourage each other.' Make it important that you both succeed and feel good about the project, she adds. 'Working together will remind you that you're a good team, which can do wonders for a relationship.'

### 5 ... but take time out, too

Having a separate social life can be a factor in couples' contentment, a survey\*\* discovered. Researchers quizzed 4000 couples who described themselves as 'happy' and 'very happy' and found that they spent an evening away from their partner once a month. 'However well you get on, it is always good to have some time apart,' explains Keren. 'It allows you to enjoy your own friends and interests and to see each other as independent people - you'll have something different to talk about, too.'