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How to Kiss: An Intro, or a Refresher

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As spring approaches, the kissing season is soon to descend on couples of all descriptions. The twitterpated atmosphere brings with it some anxiety as pressure mounts to kiss -- and kiss well.

Fortunately for the skittish and the inexperienced, there's a host of literature to help through the travails of the initial pucker.

For those in search of a basic how-to manual in the art of liplockery, there are several available options. William Cane (né Michael Christian) offers a [downloadable DVD version](#) of his step-by-step instructions on his Web site, [Kissing.com](#).

After discussing a kiss's most common preludes, which include [eye](#) contact, shoulder-to-shoulder touching, laughing and playful hitting taps, Cane cautions viewers not to make the most common blunders. Avoid knocking noses, opening the mouth too wide, or slobbering.

Being too aggressive, or even overly enthusiastic, can hurt the proceedings, says Tomima Edmark, a former kissing expert and author of [The Kissing Book: Everything You Need to Know](#).

"Do not rush the preliminaries," she says. "I really think it's always safer to hold back than to just blow in there." She reminds lovebirds to keep it soft, warm, and slightly moist, and recommends puckering up "the way you hold your lips when you drink water from a drinking fountain."

"Watch the tongue," warns Andrea Demirjian, who wrote [Kissing: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About One of Life's Sweetest Pleasures](#). "The tongue is a muscle. It's a very strong muscle." She says a common complaint involves excessive thrusting.

"Less is more," she counsels.

There's material for the more experienced, too. Cane's DVD details 30 different kisses, including the biting kiss, the vacuum kiss and lip-o-suction. He devotes 40 minutes exclusively to the French kiss, and even manipulates two enormous models of the human tongue to demonstrate how they should rotate around each other.

Edmark, meanwhile, includes a flow chart to detail proper step-by-step execution of a successful kiss.

Self-assured Don Juans may be skeptical, but the market for this literature is very real.

"Sex is great and all that [fun](#) stuff, but kissing is one thing that you can be doing until you're old and old and old," says Demirjian.

Because kissing is a lifelong enterprise, anyone can benefit from a little refresher course. The experts all initially saw their books as guides for the young, but have since remarked that people of all ages opening how-to books along with their hearts.

"How do people know how to kiss? No one really tells them," Edmark says.

The experts have put in the long, hard hours of research so the untutored and inexperienced can skip to the fun part. Motivated by a sense of romance, they hope to invigorate kissing as an act in itself, stripping it of its attendant baggage. If people can worry less about what comes after, they'll enjoy the initial romantic moments.

People are shy about kissing, Cane says, because "it can get very exciting and lead to other sexual contact." His DVD, however, is PG-rated, and appropriate for the entire family, he says. A self-described romantic, he was motivated to write on the subject by erotic scenes in high literature, including D.H. Lawrence's [Mr. Noon](#).

"Sex can be very perfunctory," Demirjian adds. "Kissing in itself is such an intimate act. You're taking in their scent, you're taking in their taste." Her book emphasizes that kissing makes people feel loved, and that to kiss is to express that love.

"We can get so much sort of provocative and sexy stuff," she says, but she views her book as more benevolent, but still fun.

Edmark's work appeared in the heyday of sex adviser Dr. Ruth. When her book came out, "everyone was discussing second or third base. No one was discussing first base."

In other words, going back to square one has its benefits.

"I knew that I wanted it to be above-the-shoulder fun. I didn't want to get into the more erotic sexual kissing."

The most important thing may be to relax and have fun. Demirjian says her book appeals to readers because it "makes people feel kind of cozy." She adds that because it's "tillating without being crass or crude," it helps dispel anxiety about the kiss. "People are intimidated because they want to be perceived as sexy and skilled. ... It's the barometer for connubial bliss."

Take it easy, though: If the first kiss doesn't exactly send the rockets flying, that's all right, she says. "It takes a couple of tries to find that rhythm." Take the pressure off, let loose, and get those lips a-moving, say the experts.

After all, even those who've spent years on the subject know there's life beyond the kiss. Cane was a professor of English at Boston College; Demirjian devotes most of her time to her marketing and consulting [business](#); Edmark currently operates His Room and Her Room, underwear sales sites, which she says are her true passion.

Kissing isn't an end-all, but to make it easier, lovers may want to page through a couple of books on the subject, so they can at least be sure they've done all they can so that touching lips generates the exuberant buzz it's supposed to.

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