



LEISURE ACTIVITIES

THE DATING EXERCISE

If you want to keep your relationship alive and growing, our best advice is to date your mate! Dating will help you maintain a friendship—one of the best indicators of a successful, long-term marriage. The habit of dating is the catalyst for building your couple friendship and staying emotionally connected through the coming years. This exercise will help you establish, reestablish, or reinforce the dating habit.

1. Separately write down your answers to the following questions:

- As you think about the life of your relationship, what have been your most favorite dates?

- What do you enjoy doing together? (sports, hobbies, interests, and recreational activities)

- What are some things you would like to learn or pursue together? (e.g. sports, cooking, hiking)

2. Share your answers with each other and brainstorm a combined list of potential dates.

a. _____

c. _____

b. _____

d. _____

3. Evaluate your combined list and rank the order in which to do them. Use the criteria below to evaluate your dates. For instance, if your budget is tight, you may want to recreate a favorite date when you made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and had a picnic in the park.

- **Time required for date** (for instance, 1 hour, 2 hours, evening, afternoon, morning or whole day)
- **Financial resources needed for date** (\$ = inexpensive, \$\$ = moderate, \$\$\$ = expensive)
- **Energy level** (low energy, medium energy, high energy)

a. _____

c. _____

b. _____

d. _____

4. Now pull out your calendars and write in one date a week for the next two months. It takes three weeks to make a new habit (or relearn an old one) and six weeks to feel good about it. Date your partner once a week for the next two months and you will be well on your way to energizing your relationship with fun, romance and laughter!

For information on the *10 Great Dates* By David and Claudia Arp visit: www.marriagealive.com