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Diving Into The Online Dating Pool

By C Raymond Merrick

Looking to spice up your single life a little?, add some romance?... or maybe find that perfect love connection?

Cool! – jump in, the online dating waters are just fine. And by the way, you'll encounter over 3 MILLION others already splashing around when you do decide to take the plunge. So you'll have lots of new and interesting company.

If you're new, or relatively new to the online dating scene, this article will get you headed down the right path. Follow the tips and recommendations presented here and your initial experiences will be more enjoyable and yield better results.

Do a search of "online dating", and you'll be presented with more than 2.9 MILLION web pages from which to make your selection! Hmm, a bit overwhelming to say the least. But don't let the huge numbers discourage you. Try the selection method below, and you can easily find your perfect dating site match.

Your first order of business, as stated above, will be getting matched up with one or more dating sites that fit you and your needs. The questions below should help you narrow things down.

What Type Dating Site?

Plain Vanilla – no ethnic, religious or cultural themes. Black/Ebony/African American, Asian, Italian, Christian, Senior Citizen, the choices are numerous.

Do some searching using the terms below as a guide.

"online dating" + senior "online dating" + Christian "online dating" + ebony OR black OR African American "online dating" + Asian

"online dating" +

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Get the idea? A search on each of the examples above will yield pretty much what you would expect.

If you're on a tight budget, just add the word "free".

"online dating" + free "online dating" + senior + free ...etc.

A note about free sites..., REALLY FREE dating sites with lots of members, and lots of member services, and activity are pretty hard to come by. You'll understand better after you do a few searches for free dating websites.

A search for dating reviews and forums can be helpful also.

"online dating" + reviews

"online dating" + forum

With the dating related forums you can read about good and bad experiences others have had with particular dating and personals web sites.

Dating services reviews will give you some good info as well. Look for genuine, unbiased reviews. Many of the dating reviews sites out there are willy-nilly listings someone threw together to earn commissions.

Another way to find good dating sites, is by asking friends and co-workers who may have tried, or are using online dating or personals services. You may be surprised to find out how many of your friends are members of some personals site or other.

How Much?

Monthly fees vary widely, but the average is around \$24. Most dating/singles sites will give you a discount if you pay for 2, 3, 6 or 12 months in advance.

I would suggest you only buy into a one month membership with any new dating service you join. If you decide you like it, then extend your membership. If you don't like the service, you've cut your loses, and avoided the hassles of requesting a refund, or canceling billing.

Tight Budget Dating Tip: Most free dating sites have low activity, and member activity is what makes personals and dating sites tick.

Solution: Join 3, 4 or more free dating sites. If you find that their combined activity serves your needs... you're good to go. If not, you'll have gained a good familiarity with online dating, and a better understanding of what you want, when and if you decide to plunk down some bucks for a paid membership.

Telling Your Pool-Side Story

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Now write your story (aka: member profile). No great detail, just write like you're writing to the man or woman you seek.

Write a little about you. State one or more of your unique qualities. Write a little about the person you're seeking.

You'll save some time if you write and save all your profile data to a text editor or word processor file. Then, you can COPY and PASTE it to the proper area of your online dating profile.

As things change, and as you grow, you will want to update and modify your profile statements.

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

You will generally get 3 to 10 times better response with a posted photo than without. People don't generally dwell too long on profiles with no photos... so take the hint.

If you don't have a digital camera, web cam or scanner, take a few photos and a diskette to your local

OfficeDepot, Staple or office supply store. They should be able to scan you photos to diskette. Then you can easily add one or more to your dating site profile. You could also ask friends and relatives who own a digital camera or scanner.

Digital cameras, web cams, and scanners are very inexpensive these days. Check eBay for some of the best deals.

Stay Focused and On-Track

You may want to start a journal, (on paper, or in a text file) to log your "love search" progress. Make notes of URL links of sites you liked, new member specials, monthly fees, member benefits and services, restrictions, etc.

When I first started, I also wrote out a statement describing what I wanted to accomplish by joining a dating site. You may want to do the same. These statements, and a journal will help keep you focused and organized. Organized endeavors always yield greater results than haphazard approaches.

Date-Safe Policies

This is actually part of the title of an upcoming article, but I mention it here to stress use of common sense, safety and caution when dealing with ANY dating situation – on or offline.

Now... jump in your skivvies and take the dive!

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C Raymond Merrick, owner of Dating Secrets at:

<http://dating.niche-links.com/>

Visit and discover some

of the best dating tips, information, free and fun dating and personals resources available.

Getting Started Again

By Jennifer Lester

Getting Started Again by Jennifer Lester

Dear Jen,

I am a 31 year old woman and haven't dated in 3 years. I went through a bad break-up and haven't been the same since. How would you suggest I get started?

Signed,

Broken but Mending

Dear Broken and Mending,

Let me start by saying I am sorry to hear about the pain you have had. As they say, "time heals all wounds". I would normally advise anyone to take their time to work on themselves first. Before you dive into the dating pool again, you need to be certain that you are feeling good about yourself and are really ready to share yourself with another person. If you feel you are ready now, then an online dating service is a great way to start. An online dating service will give you a chance to set your own pace. Start by looking over some of the personals already posted. This will give you a good idea on how to write your own. Remember, confidence without arrogance is one of the most attractive traits a person can have. Humor keeps them coming. Combine the two and you will have a winning personals ad of your own. Be sure that you stay honest with yourself and your prospective match. Honesty leads to a better relationship and fewer heartbreaks. After all, when you are dating, the real you comes out sooner or later, why not allow someone to fall in love the real you first instead of a persona you have created. Don't forget to check out my "6 Simple Rules of Internet Dating". Never let fear of another heartbreak guide you in your quest. As I have always said: "A risk not taken is a joy not found!"

Jennifer Lester is an online dating expert who offers her advice and guidance through the world of online dating at her website: <http://www.lovepersonally.com> - The tour guide to your online dating experience.



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