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lifestyle Verve



TRY googling information on how to be a happy single person. What you'll find is that the web is packed with dating tips; reasons why you are single (like it's a certified affliction) and tips on how to stop being single (like it's a drinking problem). But it's tough to find information on how to actually enjoy being single.

There are one or two sites, but they tend to go to the opposite extreme, emphasising how you can be "sublimely single" or "sensationally solo". They offer various steps towards achieving these advanced states of super-singledom, yet on the same pages they also manage to squeeze in several dating sites, tips about "how to get him or her back", advice on how to meet "the one" and adverts for meeting "pretty Ukrainian ladies". There are no adverts for meeting handsome Ukrainian gentlemen. Maybe there aren't any.

To crown it all, the "sublimely single" sites reassure singles with that oldest of lines that if you show how much fun you are having alone, you will attract true love.

No wonder most people fear singlehood or think it's something they should shed, or, worse still, justify.

For whatever reason you might be single – whether you're between relationships or you're a misanthropist or married to your career or you can't bear the thought of dating or you're divorced or widowed or weird – go and lie on your bed with all that beautiful space to yourself as you soak up the power of positive single thinking.

Relish the fact that there is no one snoring beside you or switching on the light at all hours or complaining that you monopolise the duvet. Drink in the joys of being single. Do it for yourself, and do it for humankind, because even though we are well into the 14th year of the 21st century we are still being brainwashed with archaic notions that coupledom is desirable and singledom is not.

Where are the Hollywood movies showing people being single and



PICTURE: MOEKETSI MOTICOE

enjoying it? Usually they're either dying or suffering from some kind of psychiatric affliction or stealing someone's spouse. Little wonder single people are not *numero uno* on dinner party invites.

Believe it or not, there are some balanced, witty, happy single people in the world, who are great fun at dinner parties and who have liberated themselves from the usual fears of going to movies on their own, on holiday on their own or buying a house on their own.

There is no doubt that most of us would prefer to do all these things

with a great partner – that person with whom we can awaken on a Sunday morning and suggest a spontaneous champagne picnic or a walk in the rain. But it doesn't mean single people can't also do this or lead rich, fulfilling lives; it just takes more organisation and effort. And it takes more courage to claim your own self-styled happiness in this couples obsessed world.

Below are seven suggestions towards loving being single:

1. Train your friends

Ask your friends to stop enquiring

whether you've met someone every time they see you. It's embarrassing and it sets you up as someone who does nothing else in life other than looking for someone. In truth it's more about your friends' need to live vicariously through you, the single, available one. After all, you are free to do whatever you please and with whomsoever you please.

2. Create a calendar

Because you don't have a partner, it doesn't mean you need to do everything alone. Make arrangements with friends, think of interesting

outings or invite them round to cook something tasty with you, or, if you both have children, to do something fun with the children.

Make the effort. Have at least one thing lined up for the weekend. Especially if you are recently single or divorced, it's dangerously easy to slip into self-pity and depression. While your friends will be sympathetic to a point, there is only so much negativity even the best of them can handle.

3. Join a club

It sounds like a total cliché but there

are so many interesting clubs you can join. Join a tennis club, or a hiking club or a dance class. Join a book club. Join a church or a mosque or a synagogue. There are communities of people everywhere. Find one that suits you and make the effort. Of course you'll feel strange and alienated at first, that's what happens with all new adventures.

4. Eat well and exercise

As a single person it's so easy to head home from work, hop on to the couch and eat a huge packet of chips or takeaway, avoiding all effort to cook

healthy meals and exercise. You have to make sure you eat well and exercise – it keeps you strong and opens those brain pathways that make you feel good. This goes for everyone but it's especially important if your singleness makes you feel vulnerable. Bolster yourself physically even if it's a gentle daily walk around your neighbourhood, followed by something grilled.

5. Indulge yourself

Single people often forget to indulge themselves, as if the absence of a partner means you must become a slave to your work and forgo all pleasure. Add luxurious elements to your day – they can be simple pleasures like taking a long bath or buying yourself some peppermint foot cream and giving yourself a foot massage – the tingly cool of the peppermint feels exquisite on tired feet.

6. Rethink living alone

If you feel lonely living alone, change this. Many single people live with their extended families, which provides a strong sense of belonging. Or, if you have more than one room in your home, think about getting other single people to share it with you. They'll pay rent and it can be fun living in an adult communitarian arrangement, just like students do, but hopefully with people who aren't going to puke on your pillows.

7. Take a calculated risk

Don't shy away from dating. If your friends aren't introducing you to anyone, take a calculated risk and ask someone out. You don't need Ukrainians or the internet for this; preferably ask out someone face to face. If they say no, so what? There are good, interesting attractive people in this world to offset the creeps. And if you've just escaped a creep, don't be so desperate to escape your single state that you fall for another – get professional help to avoid making the same mistake. And don't think you have to dive into a relationship if you happen to sleep with your date. Man or woman, take your time, and don't be too quick to let go of your singleness.

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A DIM VIEW OF CHEAP READING GLASSES

London: Picking up a pair of reading glasses in your local pharmacy probably seems like a far-sighted budget solution.

But while they're relatively cheap, ready-made glasses may come with a hidden health risk. They can potentially cause eye strain, dizziness and even double vision, according to an expert study.

Consumer watchdog Which? asked an optometrist to assess 18 pairs of ready-made reading glasses.

The magnification was correct across all the samples. But he noted other faults in eight of the pairs of glasses.

Which? said: "These had three main faults. The lenses were not centred correctly; they were distorted and loose in the frame."

And the faults were not confined to the cheapest.

The spokesman added: "Buying ready-made reading glasses may be easy on your wallet, but our snapshot investigation shows that some could put your eyes under too much strain. The faults we found could cause symptoms in the wearer, from headaches to eye strain, slight dizziness and even double vision."

The consumer group said the research findings made it difficult to recommend a particular brand or retailer.

Rather, it said buyers should look out for glasses protected by packaging which showed no evidence of dents or scratches.

"Ensure the frame fits comfortably and try them out. You should be able to read easily for two minutes.

"If you buy them from an optician, ask for the lenses' power and centre positions to be checked."

Which? also advised buying pairs which have a spring hinge and to go for plastic frames rather than cheap and thin metal, which can break. – Daily Mail

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