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# PULSE



# Lip service

## Master the art of the perfect kiss

By MACKENZIE DAWSON PARKS

**A**LL was well in the world of romance, and Ryan had gone on three dates with a girl he thought was smart, attractive and funny. There was just one problem — “She was the worst kisser ever,” the 29-year-old says.

“She would stand there, arms placed on my shoulders with hands in that non-committal not-quite-open but not-quite-closed position while she opened and closed her mouth like a salmon just about to kick the bucket.

“I was in one of my ‘Let’s not be so quick to judge prospective girlfriends’ phases, so I kept going out with her trying to convince myself that it wasn’t so bad. But it was so bad. And there was never a fourth date.”

Ryan’s not alone. And despite the song lyrics that suggest otherwise, a kiss is not “just a kiss” — it’s one of the most important ways in which

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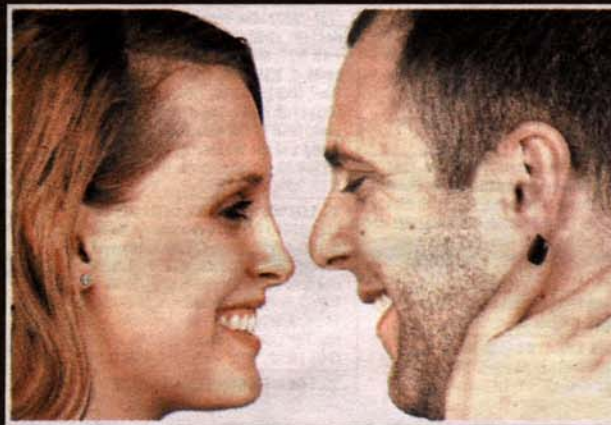
# Must remember this



## Tell, and kiss ...



**1** When you start, less is more. Make soft, light contact with your lips. Stroke their lips with yours. Alternate kissing the corner of their mouth, nose and cheeks. Then come back and part your lips. And the most important thing: Make eye contact.



**2** Kissing might be passionate, but there's no rule that says it needs to be a solemn, somber act — in fact, it's quite the opposite. Smiling and laughing during a smoochfest is a definite yes, and increases the intimacy of the act.



**3** For French kissing, caress your partner's tongue like you would soft-serve ice cream. Lick it slowly. Stroke it. Flick the tip of their tongue with yours. Roll your tongue along their lips. Don't be too aggressive or push too hard; be slow.

N.Y. Post/Zack Sackler

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people romantically relate to each other. When it's good, it's good, and when it's bad, it's... a complete deal-breaker.

Luckily, at least according to Andrea Demirjian, an advertising consultant, there is such a thing as lip service. The art of smooching can be learned, says the self-proclaimed "kissing connoisseur," who has written a book for the sad snogger.

The aptly named "Kissing: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About One of Life's Sweetest Pleasures" is an encyclopedia of sorts on the art of kissing; tonsil hockey, lip-locking and canoodling, as it were.

It includes factoids — did you know, for instance, that our brains have a function that helps us locate each other's lips in the dark — and random statistics, such as the fact that the average woman will kiss 79 guys before she's married, or the fact that 40 percent of the women surveyed listed their kissing ability as "red hot."

Celebrities reminiscence about their own first kiss — Lisa Kudrow smooched the best-looking boy in her school and was so overcome by the experience, she cried, while Charlize Theron had a first kiss at 12 that was "just awful... darkness, saliva and tongue."

And everyone, it seems, has a bad kissing

story, whether it's being lip-locked with a dead fish or attacked by an aggressive tongue.

That happened to Sara, a 26-year-old who recently went on a first date with someone. The date went well — until, that is, he walked Sara to the corner and they were about to go their separate ways.

"Being the nice Southern girl that I am, I was intending to give him a nice peck on the lips before ushering him into the taxi. He, however, decided that our few hours of knowing each other was validation to stick his tongue halfway down my throat," she said.

"Seriously! Halfway down my throat and then slamming it around like his tongue were spasming. I felt dirty."

Unnecessary noises also don't go over well — one woman recalls an episode with a guy that she now refers to as "The Grunter" for the animal-like noises he made during even the gentlest of kisses.

Overzealous licking is another serious offense.

"I went on a first date with this boy, and afterwards we're kissing on my couch and things were going OK at first," says Natalie, 28.

"Then he literally pulls a Lassie move and licks up the side of my face! We're talking the full flat side of his tongue making its way from my chin to my temple. I pulled away and said,

"What the hell was that?" His response was, 'It's my thing. Don't you like it?'"

Those are the standard battle stories from the kissing trenches that

anyone will readily share. What about the good ones?

The book includes tips and techniques on how to ace smooching. In addition to "watching the tongue," Demirjian counsels readers to hold steady.

"Avoid weaving your head from side to side," she says. "You could end up accidentally banging a nose or knock out a few teeth."

And keep it loose and relaxed, so to speak. "Kissing a statue or wooden board isn't pleasant... be soft and gentle. Move slowly from his mouth to his ears and neck, then back again."

And while kissing should be passionate, it's a gentle art.

"You should take your time and kiss like you are caressing a soft marshmallow and not stuffing your tongue down someone's throat, so they can't breathe," says Larry, 27.

The results of Demirjian's research revealed that men and women have similar thoughts on what comprises a good kiss. This includes softness and tenderness, "a tongue that knows just much and how little," good smells and tastes, passion and enthusiasm, and "moist, strong lips on all parts of the body — lips shouldn't be flimsy or noncommittal."

But perhaps the best description comes from Sara, who still hasn't gotten over her mouth-wrestling experience with the over-eager man, "Seriously, how do men not know that a first kiss should be as gentle and innocent as if he were kissing me when I was asleep?"

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**4** Just remember — it's not all about the lips. The ingredients of a good kiss have just as much to do with the hands. Holding, touching and squeezing — be it on the neck, the chest, the hair, etc. — are key as well.



**5** Take a break from the mouth and acquaint yourself with the earlobe, a delightful area indeed. Nuzzle, but do it gently — no one wants their ear chomped! Then whisper, very softly.

Source: "Kissing," by Andrea Demirjian

## Star smooches

**F**AME does not always equal top-notch kissing. Andrea Demirjian rates these star smooches:

**Anna Kournikova/Enrique Iglesias:** My immediate reaction was that it looks so stiff; stiff-lipped and uptight. You have to be loose — there's nothing worse than kissing someone stiff. I think of these two kids as passionate people — she's this hot Russian girl, he's Latin and sexy, so it was surprising that they

look so stiff and awkward, especially the way their lips are pursed.

Rating:

**Katie Holmes/Tom Cruise:** I gotta say, for all the craziness of these two and the rumors surrounding them, what is totally evident is they really dig kissing each other. I don't think that's something you can fake. If a woman is not into a guy, her eyes would not be twinkling all the time. And clearly he's into this woman. Their kisses are soft, juicy happy kisses. They way he's touching her face, they're very intimately connected — she looks so young and

fresh; what man wouldn't want to constantly be kissing her?

Rating: 1/2

**Madonna/Britney Spears:** This was a very peculiar moment in entertainment history. Everyone knew there was nothing spontaneous about this, and yet it looks so awkward. They both look like this is not something they're enjoying. Their body language says, 'I don't want to touch you,' and Britney's lips are puckered like a fish. Neither of them are enjoying this.

Rating:



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