

A dozen things couples do to keep their relationship healthy that
require work

D. J. Palmiter, Ph.D., ABPP

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1. Spend at least one hour a week communicating about intimate matters.
2. Pursue variety in their sex life.
3. Work out agreements about boundaries between the couple and other groups (e.g., extended family, friends, kids, etc.), and allow for each person to independently engage in a healthy amount of activity with those other groups.
4. Maintain good health habits.
5. Promote healthy rituals.
6. Reach workable agreements about children, money, household labor, vocational pursuits, recreation and vacation schedules, and other important matters affecting the couple.
7. Work out a method of fair fighting (e.g., avoid using vulnerable matters as weapons, learn an optimal level of self-disclosure regarding high conflict items, maintain some balance in the expression of anger, etc.).
8. Avoid a pattern of substance abuse.
9. Adopt healthy attitudes about relationships (e.g., believe things such as people change and so do relationships, relationships require tremendous discipline, periods of severe alienation and conflict are probably inevitable, sexual attractions to people outside of the relationship are probably inevitable, what one person in the relationship finds to be supportive may be different from what the other person in the relationship finds to be supportive, etc.).

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10. Seek to resolve individual psychological pain, particularly those that are long-standing.
11. Each individual tries to keep a healthy focus on what he or she does to promote or to interfere with intimacy in the relationship.
12. Do things to fix the relationship when there are signs that it is becoming ill (e.g., a person becomes sorely tempted to engage in an affair, the sex life stops, people become like ships passing in the night, the frequency or quality of conflict becomes toxic, etc.).