

How To Cure Pre-Date Jitters

Cheryl Nankoo (therankoo.com)

Worried? Jumpy? Downright panicked? Fret not!

You've reapplied your lippie 16 times, changed your shoes 21 times and been to the loo more times than you care to remember. This can only mean one thing... you have a date. Yes, the butterflies doing a jig in your tummy before a date are exciting, but what about the gut-wrenching fear that accompanies them? How can you get a grip on your nerves before meeting up with the dreamboat du jour? Simply follow our top tips and he'll never suspect you were inches from decorating his shoes with your lunch!

1. AAAAND... BREATHE

When we're freaking out, our blood pressure rises, our hearts beat faster and our tummies start to churn. Not fun! But if you can breathe deeply and regularly, you'll be able to calm down because your brain will produce chill-out-for-goodness-sake hormones.

"When your breathing is controlled, it'll put your mind back in control," says life coach Cheryl Nankoo. Cheryl advises inhaling for four seconds, then gently exhaling for four seconds. "Think of something that calms you down like your favourite song."

2. STAND TALL

Stand with your shoulders drooping, your head down and your arms folded. How do you feel? Pretty pathetic, huh? Now stand tall with your shoulders back, your chin up and your arms relaxed by your side. How do you feel now? Confident, right? **Communication is 55 per cent body language so it's important to look sure of yourself.** "Practice standing tall so you can feel confident on your date," says Cheryl.

3. PLAN AHEAD

Get as much planned in advance as possible to avoid a mad rush on the night of your date. What will you wear? What accessories will you rock? How will you do your hair and make-up? Thinking about all these things beforehand is not only half the fun of a date, you'll also feel less nervous if you're prepared. After all, nothing ramps up your nerves like a last-minute 'drobe crisis. **"Also make sure you wear something you feel good in,"** adds Cheryl.

4. TUNE IN

Studies have shown that listening to music with 60 beats per minute can make you chillax to the max because it causes your brainwaves and heart rate to synchronise with the rhythm. So, before you start to get ready, listen to Coldplay's *Strawberry Swing* or Enya's *Watermark* and you'll arrive for your date feeling oh-so Zen.

5. RECOGNISE YOUR WORRIES

Cheryl suggests writing down all the things you're worried about, then rating the likelihood of each one happening on a scale of one to 10. So, for example, 'I'll snort when I laugh: six' or 'I'll fall over, knock myself out and he'll have to call an ambulance: one.' **"You'll probably find that most of your worries are unlikely to actually happen,"** encourages Cheryl.

6. THINK ABOUT HIM

"Put yourself in your date's shoes," recommends Cheryl. "He's probably just as nervous as you." Picture him getting ready looking just as anxious as you do. **Once you realise you're not in this alone, you should be able to relax and have fun.** After all, isn't that what dating's all about?

7. CUE A CONVO

If you're worried about clamming up, getting brain freeze and completely running out of things to say, plan in advance some convo-starters. Uninspired? **Check Twitter and your fave news sites for quirky and fun talking points.** Try: 'OMG, did you see that hilarious video trending on Twitter today?' After that, the convo should easily flow.