

THESE days anyone who's single is generally looking for a mate via an app or website. But one expert is arguing that we're all single *because* of this online dating revolution. And, just like people who joined a gym in January but don't really go, we need to jump-start our flirting regime and get those 'chatting up muscles' working.

Jean Smith is a 'flirtologist' and runs tours in London, where she leads groups of singles around town, teaching

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them to chat people up. Not rocket science, you might think, but here's the thing: Jean's trip does suggest we are all a little lost when it comes to the 'real world' of chatting each other up.

Flirting is scary because you have to do it in person and that makes the potential rejection involved very real. You can't think out a message or right swipe then carry on watching the telly. Just as you wouldn't run a marathon without training, you need to be ready

Lust lessons:

Jean Smith runs singles' flirting tours



to chat with other singles as if it's second nature.

'Both exercise and flirting produce feel-good chemicals in the body when done correctly,' she says. 'Three out of six of the Signs Of Flirting Attraction that I gathered during research on flirting – eye contact, laughter and touch – all produce oxytocin, the "love" hormone.' So here are Jean's top ways to flex those flirting muscles.

1. Do it regularly and give results time

Irregular flirting won't help your skills. Flirt more often and you'll feel more relaxed about it. 'You can't just put a gym membership card in your pocket and think you'll be fit,' says Jean. Don't leave a dating event until you've tried those flirting lines. And be patient: just like when toning your abs, six-packs don't happen overnight.

2. Mix it up and find what you are best at

So you tried spinning and hated it? You might prefer yoga. Same with flirting, says Jean. 'Perhaps you are happy chatting to strangers in art galleries or maybe bonding over a losing team with a stranger at a sports event? If your hearing's not so hot and your dancing worse, you're not going to do well at a club. If your wit is your secret weapon, share it at a friends' dinner party.'

3. But don't entirely neglect your weaknesses

If you're good at witty banter and bad at small talk, work on the latter. Just like you should probably go to spinning more if you need to tone your legs.

'Eighty-five per cent of people I surveyed said their greatest obstacle when flirting with people was their mind,' says Jean. 'Don't think – instead, be in the moment and enjoy.'

FIVE PHRASES TO BE A CHAT-UP CHAMPION

'You remind me of someone I know...'

Good for a dating event or a bar.

'Do you know anything about this... (food, band, lecture)?'

Try this one in a supermarket or at the local farmers' market at the weekend!

'Can you recommend a good [coffee shop, restaurant, bar]?'

They feel good for helping you and you learn their tastes too.

'You look like you know what you're doing. What's good here?'

Gives them an instant ego boost, plus you might end up sharing a drink or dinner.

'You look thirsty and I'm going to the bar. What are you drinking?'

For instant feedback! They say no thanks, you move on to the next flirting moment.

flirtology.co.uk