



# R U sexting?

Ninety-two percent of women say they exchange sexy texts. But sexting can be as perilous as it is popular. Learn how to, ahem, give good phone. **By Erin Zammett Ruddy**

**T**hanks to philandering politicians and cocky pro athletes, sexting has gotten a bad rap. Not fair! A SELF poll finds that 93 percent of sexters are sending suggestive texts not to some near stranger, but to a husband, a boyfriend, someone she's dating or a friend with benefits. Why? Thirty-five percent say it's fun and makes them feel sexy; 20 percent do it to let their guy know they want him. "Sexting is a simple way to spice things up and expand sexual boundaries," says Michelle Drouin, Ph.D., psychology professor at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne. Plus, some women feel freer to say racy things in a text than they do in person. Of course, that freedom can get you into trouble. Nearly a quarter of sexters have regretted pressing SEND. The next time you're in the mood, use these tips and type your way to big bedroom benefits without the embarrassment.

The most popular places to hit send: in bed (86%), while out with friends (60%), even from work (52%)

## Slightly risqué beats all-out raunchy

Seventy-one percent of sexters have sent R- or X-rated texts.

Yet 32 percent find very graphic sexts to be a turnoff. Lesson: *Graphic* is in the eye of the receiver. "Less is more," say Debra Goldstein and Olivia Baniuszewicz, authors of *Flirt texting*. "A little mystery keeps everyone's interest piqued." Gear up for bedroom action with a sexy but subtle "This A.M. was amazing! Round 2 2nite?"

## Keep an eye on autocorrect

Something hot can quickly become something bizarre when your smartphone plays dumb (e.g., "I can't wait to get your *oats* off!"). Switch off autocorrect, but do double-check your spelling: Survey takers rated misspelled words as the second biggest sexting turnoff—three times as offensive as emoticons! :O

## Avoid sexting too much, too soon

Only 5 percent of sexters have done it to get a guy's attention and increase his interest. That's a good thing, because unless you want to be known as "that crazy sexting girl," it pays to get to know someone before going there. A useful rule of...thumbs from Amy Levine, a sex coach in New York City: Wait three dates before texting something sweet: "Thinking of u!" And wait three months until you send something *really* sweet: "Thinking of u...naked."

## Nix the full-bod birthday suit shots

Fifty-eight percent of sexters have sent partially nude photo texts—and **33 percent have gone totally bare**. But if you're showing your face, it's unwise to also reveal any body part you would cover at the beach because any text could get forwarded. If your guy requests a naked pic, reply, "How about holding out for the real thing?" Goldstein and Baniuszewicz suggest.

## Don't sip and sext

It's not surprising that **15 percent of sexters say they're most likely to whip out their phones while drinking**. A few glasses of wine give us courage, and drunk sexting takes even less effort than drunk dialing. But we guarantee you're not as clever/adorable/bold as your clouded brain thinks you are. So stick to one drink, if you must, to get the words flowing; any more than that and you're better off stashing your phone in your handbag.

## Blushproof your phone

Bystanders can't help but look when they hear the ding that means you've gotten a text. If you don't want them to see anything too personal, tweak your settings so messages don't automatically pop up on your screen, says social media expert Shawn Edgington, author of *Read Between the Lines*. Oh, and obvious but worth repeating: Never sext from your work phone.

## Hit DELETE ASAP

That way, you'll avoid a major oops! moment when showing pals shots of your cute nephew. Concerned your guy may not be as careful? Make sexts tame enough so that you wouldn't be mortified if his buddy caught a glimpse.

**Think of the future. If you're a celeb, involved in politics or otherwise in the public eye (or want to be), don't sext. Seriously, put down the phone!**