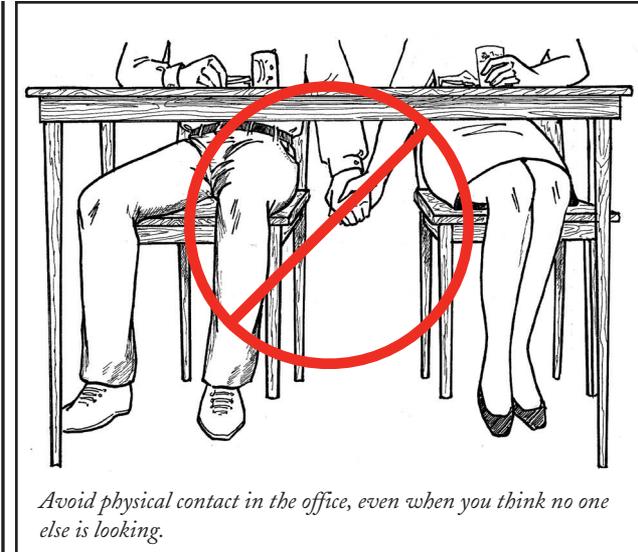


# HOW TO SURVIVE A WORKPLACE ROMANCE

- ★ **Do not tell colleagues.**  
Do not discuss any aspect of your relationship with anyone at work, even close friends. Avoid telltale references, such as, “When we were at the movies last night . . .” Do not play guessing games with co-workers, such as, “I’m going out with someone from the office but you’ll never guess who.”
- ★ **Resist physical contact at the office.**  
Avoid all physical contact, including kissing, hand-holding, hugging, casual touching, and back rubs, even if you think you are alone. Maintain at least a foot of personal space between you and the person you are dating.
- ★ **Send gifts to the home.**  
Do not have flowers, candy, clothing, or other personal items sent to the office, even with an unsigned card: People will begin asking questions.
- ★ **Do not use company e-mail to send personal notes.**  
Many employers monitor e-mail messages, and even deleted messages are stored. It is also too easy to send an e-mail to the wrong person or to “everyone.”



- ★ **Avoid long or excessive lunch dates.**  
While it is acceptable for colleagues to eat together, extended or repeated outings may attract notice. Maintain the lunch routine you practiced before you started dating your co-worker.
- ★ **Avoid arriving and departing together.**  
Unless you are in a car pool with others, stagger your arrival and departure times.
- ★ **Use discretion.**  
At company picnics or parties, or at off-site meetings, do not drink excessively, dance intimately, or openly display affection with your office significant other.

## Be Aware

- Most office romances begin in the spring.
- Dating more than one person from the same company at the same time is not a good idea.

## THE BREAK-UP

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### ★ Do not break up at work.

Emotions can be difficult to hide, and people can act irrationally when they are upset. The workplace, especially in a cubicle but even in a private office, is a poor choice of location for a confrontation. Avoid breaking up over lunchhour, as well.

### ★ Break up over a long weekend.

Choose a time when your partner will have several days to heal before having to see you at the office. Try to be sensitive to his or her feelings, however: Do not break up just before the other person leaves on an extended vacation.

### ★ Be prepared for the worst.

A bad break-up may require you to transfer or even resign, particularly if you are dating someone above you in the office hierarchy. Ending a relationship with someone who reports to you could lead to a charge of sexual discrimination.

### ★ Do not immediately begin dating someone else at work.

Your new relationship may be hurtful to your ex, if you are spotted. You may also gain a reputation for being opportunistic or desperate.

### ★ Do not discuss personal feelings or emotions with your ex while at work.

If you want to check on how your former lover is doing, call at home.

## Be Aware

No matter what you call it—fishing off the company pier, mentoring the intern, kissing company cousins, refilling the toner, mergers and acquisitions—office romances are dangerous.