

Tips for Being a Safe Submissive

Online dating has become **the way** for those in the BDSM community to meet potential partners. Countless sites have sprung up offering dates, profiles and social networks specifically targeted at kinksters, fetishists and SM fans.

What follows are 28 tips to help submissives find a potential match and stay safe in the process (if you're a Dominant, try these 29 instead). It requires time and patience and I know quite a few submissives who have moved from one disappointment to another. Hopefully, these will create some better luck for you...

1. Remember this is about sexuality, not sex

I cannot stress this enough: BDSM can be extremely sexual and conversations, even amongst people who don't know each other, can be explicit and laced with fantasy. But this does NOT MEAN you have to jump into bed, perform sex acts or agree to submit to everyone you connect with.

It does, however, mean you will be dealing with people for whom their personal fantasy, kink or fetish defines a part of who they are sexually. So be sensitive when you reject people and do not judge them. You may not like what they're into, but nowhere does it say you have to do it.

2. Stay anonymous

If you've met through a social network or kink friendly dating site keep your personal information out of site. Don't reveal your name, your "real" email address, where you live or even your phone number until you are comfortable.

3. Careful how to message someone

If you're using Whatsapp as soon as you hand out your phone number, the other person knows your real name. If you use a fake name in line with your kinky persona then all your friends will know. For those who are serious about using this kind of messaging technology I suggest buying a pay-as-you-go (or disposable cell) phone.

4. Segregate your persona

BDSM is not like vanilla online dating – it carries a degree of stigma from society as a whole. Try segregating your BDSM and vanilla identities through separate email addresses, Facebook, or Google+ accounts and even phones.

5. Approach with care

When you approach someone you like be polite, show that you've read their profile in your message and don't be upset if they don't reply. Sending message after message to someone who isn't interested will get you blocked at best, deleted at worst.

6. Careful with your images

The selfie has become defacto for dating. In vanilla dating the advice is produce a close-up shot, a full-length one and one that shows you in your normal environment. In the BDSM world this doesn't always work as we don't like to show our faces to random strangers! Three or four well-chosen, discreet, and private images should be sufficient for your profile. Just remember you can often set images to be private, so don't feel you have to show everything to everyone.

7. Craft your profile

A few well-chosen words will help you attract potential Dominants. You should set out what qualities you believe you have, what you're looking for in your Dominant and an encouraging "call to action" that sets out how you'd like people to contact you. Writing a detailed "this is what I want you to do to me" is a no-no.

8. Network

If you want to attract more than the casual browser of profiles spend some time networking. Contribute to forums, post blog entries and do whatever else is required to show that you're engaged in the community. You will increase the quality of responses that you get from people.

9. Don't get disheartened

Unfortunately, you will get completely inappropriate replies, varying from one liners to explicit fantasies. This is part of the game and the best thing you can do is delete the message, block the user who sent it and move on. If, however, someone has taken some time to write their reply then a polite "thanks, but no thanks" may make a friend if not a lover.

10. Connect online first

When someone comes along who interests you don't think you have to rush into a full-blown scene. Take some time to get to know them online first. Check out their profiles, any pics, their interests and so on. Then start to discuss them. Have a conversation so you can build up a more complete picture of them.

11. You did "what" on webcam?

Be aware of what you're being asked to do on webcam. Being asked to "put on a show to prove you're really a submissive" is bullshit and don't fall for it. Conversations may be sexual, may involve fantasies and may be extremely explicit, but acting them out is just silly.

12. Watch the pressure to meet

Take the right amount of time for you but do have a time in the back of your head when you will commit to meeting someone. If they are pushing you to meet before you are ready resist. If they are unwilling to meet in the timescales you expected nudge. Just be aware of creating or responding to too much pressure that may kill an otherwise promising relationship.

13. Talk first

It doesn't matter if it is on Skype, Hangouts, or the phone, talk to them first. It is all too easy to hide behind a digital persona, so check that their voice matches what you were expecting. That isn't just about making sure they're the gender they say they are, it is also about picking up on whether there is something about them that makes you feel uncomfortable.

14. Meet in public

It goes without saying that the first meeting has got to be in a public space. It could be that you meet at a tube station, or a specific restaurant, but whatever it is make sure it is somewhere there are a lot of people around. Given you will probably want to talk kinky that might seem uncomfortable, only it is far better to be safe and have your conversation stunted a little.

15. Stay connected to friends

Your friends don't need to know you're meeting a man you'll hope will tie you up and spank you! Heading out on a date is sufficient! Make sure a friend knows where you're going and check in with them before, during and after your date. A responsible Dominant will have no problem with you doing this and won't find it rude in the slightest.

16. Don't choose a restaurant

Going out for a meal might seem like a great idea, but it restricts your option to leave. There's a social pressure to remain at the meal until the end, whereas you

might realize the person you're with is a complete douchebag in about 5 minutes. Coffee shops are far better as there is no obligation to stay.

17. Fetish events aren't great for first dates

Generally, keep away from meeting someone at a fetish event. The place is charged with sexuality and those around you may not understand if you get into difficulty and may instead assume, you're playing.

18. Don't leave your stuff unattended

Whether it is your food, your drink or your bag do not let anything out of your sight. If you need to go to the bathroom finish your drink first. Leave your coat on a hook somewhere (or not take one if it is warm enough). Finding your drink has been spiked or your keys stolen is not fun.

19. Avoid getting pissed

As the date progresses and defenses come down you might find yourself drinking more than you expected. If you can, stay on the soft drinks.

20. You can leave when you want

Don't feel obligated to stay. If something doesn't feel right or look right or they've said something that worries you there is always the option to thank them for their time and move on. Just be polite about it as what you don't want is a confrontation that ends up making you look and feel bad.

21. Never accept a lift

No matter how nice you think they are don't accept a lift. Which in turn means ensuring you know how you're going to get back home!

22. Don't disclose where you're staying

Sometimes you'll meet someone far enough away that you have to stay overnight. If that's the case book a hotel and don't tell your date where you're staying. Don't let them "walk you home" and certainly don't let them up to your room.

23. Play on the first date it not mandatory

I have heard Dominants tell submissives they must prove their submission by performing some act on the first date. This is bollocks. Do not feel pressured into doing it.

24. Set up the second date later

If you like them and want to see them again don't make the second date at the end of the first. Walk away, commit to contact them the next day, but don't commit to the next date.

25. Get help

If you need help, ask for it. Screaming probably won't help, but if there are people around be polite and firm in asking them. Apparently, the best thing to do isn't scream "help", but rather look at a person and call out to them using something they're wearing as an identifier ("Sir in the blue coat, could you help me?")

26. The tricky follow-up

When it's time to do the follow-up from the date don't think it is a game of "who blinks first loses". If you like the date say so. If you didn't, find a polite way of letting them down. If they reply first and say what you didn't expect them to (they like you, you don't like them or vice versa) handle it accordingly.

27. Let down gently

If you didn't like the date say so. Don't labor the point though, a succinct "sorry, I don't think we connected but good luck for the future" will do. Then move on. They might reply or they might not. If the reply is abusive or threatening hit the block

button and report it to the site's operators. If not, well maybe they'll be a decent friend in the future.

28. You're not a submissive until you submit

Until you commit to submit to someone you are under no obligation to feel inferior, nor obliged to follow a Dominant's directions. Up until that point anything the Dominant says is nothing more than a suggestion that can be ignored. Responsible Dominants know this and won't take offence if you decline something they suggest while you are still getting to know each other.

The online world is fantastic as it means a submissive no longer has to hide their BDSM fantasies and desires. You can step out and make your own luck through the plethora of websites. Just make sure when you're doing it you stay safe.

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