

# twenty four seven

what's up this weekend



■ drinks



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Being . . .

# Single for the holidays

## What to do if there isn't someone special to snuggle with

The TV commercial where a man drapes a string of diamonds around his girlfriend's neck ... a rosy-cheeked twosome grasping mittened hands on the skating rink ... The holidays are filled with images of togetherness which, along with a few too many "Silent Nights," can leave singles feeling like a Scrooge.

"One would think of the holidays as a great time to celebrate, but it can be a bit stressful for single people," says Paddi Rice, President of Executive Search Dating. "One half of the equation is just that people are so busy. You don't really have a whole lot of time to get out there and work on your personal life," he says. Add to that "this media maelstrom of positive imagery concerning being married and having kids," and the unattached can feel the equivalent of a coal-filled stocking.

While you can turn off the TV or fill your social calendar, the one thing you can't avoid over the holidays is the pitying looks from partnered-off siblings. And the plethora of opportunities for a well-intentioned mom or great aunt to ask, "What, no boyfriend?" or "Why hasn't a nice girl snatched up a great catch like you yet?"

"Address the issue up front," says Rice. "Say, 'I am single, but am enjoying being single' ... and then make it clear you want to put the issue aside and not have it come up over the Christmas dinner table."

Another way to deflect fireside debates as to your eligibility is to "imply that you have started seeing somebody but it's very, very preliminary ... whether it be true or not," says Rice. While this can bring a short reprieve it can backfire and require you to invent a tall, dark and handsome chiropractor you met while both reaching for the last carton of soy milk at the grocery store. You wish!

Rice shares some other tips on how to stay single, and sane, over the holidays:

### ■ Don't mix business with pleasure.

Sure Kathy from accounting looks pretty cute in that Santa hat and she has been standing suggestively under the mistletoe for the last 20 minutes. "But the sad reality is you do actually have to wake up the next day ... and work with these people again," says Rice. "Tread with caution." Use your noggin, not eggnog goggles, to decide if it's worth a year's worth of awkwardness around the photocopier.

### ■ Be jolly.

"Be positive ... smile and have a good time when you are out," says Rice, even if it's at the office Christmas party where you're the only one without a significant other. "A positive attitude, being someone who's fun to be around," can go a long way towards getting a later introduction to a co-worker's hot, newly single friend.

### ■ Leave the elves at home.

"Avoid going to any social activity in a huge pack. Women tend to do that a lot in Vancouver ... it does make it quite intimidating for guys to approach," says Rice. "Likewise for groups of four or five guys," says Rice. "It's unlikely they can approach women because they're going to terrify them."

### ■ Join in reindeer games.

It's never a bad idea to go out with a friend of the opposite sex or maybe a couple," says Rice. "If you're out in a mixed-sex environment in a small group, having a great time, it makes you a lot more approachable."

And while your office Christmas party is a no-go zone for hooking up, your friend's are fair game. Just make sure all involved know it's strictly platonic. And while mingling is acceptable, ditching your date to make out in the corner with the cute Santa is not.

### ■ Meet the parents ... maybe not.

"If you've just started seeing somebody, you might want to be a little bit

cautious about bringing them out to big family events," says Rice. You need time to get to know them before your family does. By New Year's you might have decided she or he's not the one, but you parents are still asking after her or him six months later ... or worse wondering about wedding invites.

### ■ Relax.

This time next year you may be half one those sickeningly sweet pairs on the skating rink. Besides, "If there's one thing that's worse than being single at Christmas it's being single on Valentine's Day," says Rice. And that's still a good two months away.

—Carly Krug, 24 hours

