

Love & Lust

The PDA Moves That Guys Secretly Crave

Okay, so the couple to the right are a *little* over the top. But psychologists say different forms of public affection can make you and your man super tight. Not only that, it'll help you practically read each other's minds...and you don't have to gross people out to get the benefits.

BY KORIN MILLER

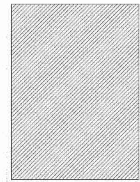
Public displays of affections have gotten a bad rap, and it's understandable why. Who really wants to watch a couple play tonsil hockey in broad daylight. And let's be honest, many of us probably cringe remembering a few public "Hey, get a room" performances of our own. But a new experiment from Harvard University suggests we

might want to rethink our stance on the matter.

Researchers found that couples who show each other affection (squeezes, light touches—nothing extreme) in front of others reported having more satisfying relationships than those who didn't. And while we know most of us women really dig loving moves like holding hands, experts say guys want more PDA in their lives too.

"Affection makes him feel special, and there's an extra layer of excitement when it's put on display," says couples therapist Scott Haltzman, MD, author of *The Secrets of Happily Married Women*. "That excitement keeps your relationship fresh." What's more, experts also say there are different types that convey all kinds of messages. This PDA primer explains all the important details.

CHRIS CLINTON, Fashion editor; Charles Manning, Hair; Lydia O'Carroll at Kate Ryan Inc for L'Oréal Professional Infinium 4, Makeup; Courtney Perkins using MAC, Manicure; Kim Chiu for Mark Edward Inc, Prop stylist; Robert Sumell for Walter Schurfler Management. (On her) top: Jessie Natori; skirt: SUND; shoes: INC; earrings: Helen Ficalora; bracelet: Roxanne Assoulin for Lee Angel. (On him) sweater: Zaneobe; jeans: Levi's.





"Does this
thing convert
into a bed?"

WHY YOU NEED TO SHOW HIM THE LOVE

Most people start off their relationship in that excited state where they can't get enough of each other—even in public—but eventually, the urgency declines.

"No matter how long you've been together, bring-

ing, says relationship expert Les Parrott, PhD, coauthor of *L.O.V.E.*

And then there's the adoration factor. Not that you're a jealousy-prone kind of woman, but connecting with your guy in public broadcasts to the people around you that you're in a relationship, says Dr. Haltzman. "It also makes both of

According to love pros, there are three main styles of public affection, and each conveys a particular message to your guy. The first type is actions that show love. These touches include gestures like lightly running your fingernails up and down his arm when you're waiting in line to see a concert, brushing your

PDA, Parrott says, but these are best when you want to let your guy know how much you care about him.

The second type includes moves that show support. The goal is to make each other feel that you're in it together when you're faced with a potentially stressful situation. Squeeze his hand right before you introduce him to your parents, or when you come back from the bathroom at a dinner with the senior members of his company, put your hand on the small of his back and firmly press in for a moment. Brief, strong contact signals you're there for him without delving into emotional stuff, says Orbuch.

Also, firm physical touches from a loved one relax the body and cause the release of hormones that downplay anxiety, says Dr. Haltzman. You could add in something like "He impresses me constantly" if it feels appropriate and won't be embarrassing to him.

The final—and most common type, according to Orbuch—is acts that show lust. You're probably already an expert at these: They're things like pressing your whole body against him while he orders you a drink at a bar, discreetly running your fingers along the waistband of his board shorts when you're at a barbecue, and stroking his inner thigh under the table at a restaurant.

Orbuch says these touches should feel exciting, drawn

According to love pros, there are three main styles of public affection, and each one conveys a particular message to your guy.

ing PDA back into your love life can resurrect that new-couple feeling," says psychologist Terri Orbuch, PhD, author of *5 Simple Steps to Take Your Marriage From Good to Great*.

That sensation is important, she says, because it keeps things light and playful to balance out the stresses that inevitably come with being together for a while.

The new-love feeling is key, but there are even more reasons to get the PDA going. There's the hormone aspect. You've read here in *Cosmo* about the cuddle hormone oxytocin and why it's so important to keeping your relationship strong. Well, showing your guy love in front of witnesses causes an even bigger oxytocin release than if you were to do it at home because it feels more excit-

you feel special," he adds, "since there's a room or street full of people around and yet you're focusing your affections on each other, tuning everyone else out."

AND NOT JUST BY GROPING HIM

Okay, so you get that PDA will make you and your guy tight. But experts say that simply pawing your guy won't work. Dudes prefer more subtle forms of PDA (think of how miserable a guy looks when there's a girl draped all over him). In fact, gentle nail scratches and strokes—what you'd think would bug him—actually feel comforting to a guy. These expert-recommended moves keep things on the DL to maximize benefits.

fingers against his as you walk down the street, and slow dancing at a friend's wedding. You can also stroke his hand during a dinner with friends or nuzzle his neck at the movies.

The touches should be gentle to get the message across that you're enjoying his company but don't want to rip off his clothes just yet. They should zero in on spots that have a lot of nerve endings (his hands, forearms, neck) and will feel amazing with your light caress.

And don't limit yourself to touching. PDA can be physical *and* verbal, says couples therapist Jan Hoistad, PhD, author of *Romance Rehab*. Whispering something like "I'm so lucky to have you" can have as strong of an effect as something more hands-on. It should feel organic when you whip out any

out, a little wild, and very in the moment. Basically, they signal that you're dying to spend some one-on-one time with him as soon as you can be alone. Try following up the actions with a line like "I'm so hot for you right now" or "You're so sexy" to drive your point home.

JUST DON'T SURPRISE THE HELL OUT OF THE GUY

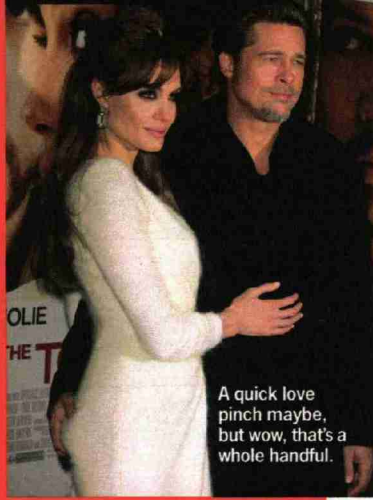
If your man has never engaged in PDA or keeps it to the bare minimum, that's okay. It doesn't mean your relationship is mediocre. "Some people didn't grow up witnessing their parents or families touch very much, and we tend to take cues from our upbringing," says Hoistad. If he rarely saw Mom and Dad hug or kiss—at home or in public—he's going to assume it's normal to restrict that kind of action to private moments.

So start slow. Try small moves like putting your hand on his knee when you're making a point in front of friends or throwing your arm around his waist followed by a quick squeeze. You can also toss him a non-gushy compliment, like that he was great to change your flat tire. For most guys, those teeny gestures won't register as PDA, says Dr. Haltzman, so they'll ease him in to getting even cozier in public. ■

You Know We Can See You, Right?

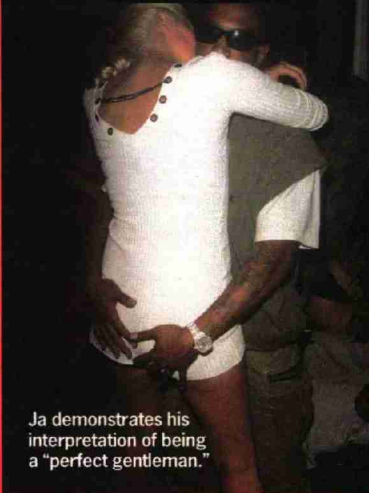
Uh, and then there's nasty public pawing. Allow these celebs to demonstrate....

Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt



A quick love pinch maybe, but wow, that's a whole handful.

Kristina Shannon and Ja Rule



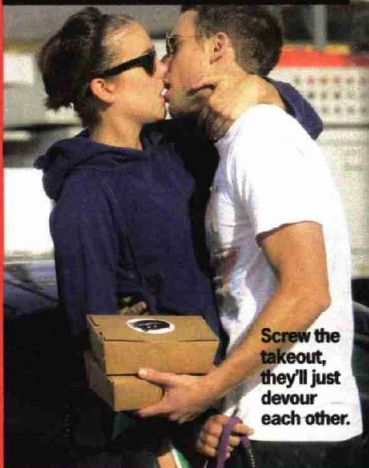
Ja demonstrates his interpretation of being a "perfect gentleman."

Joel Madden and Nicole Richie



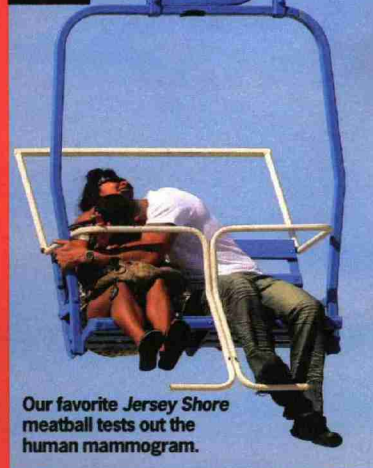
Wow. Kissing Joel looks, um, dreamy.

Jessica Stroup and Dustin Milligan



Screw the takeout, they'll just devour each other.

Snooki



Our favorite Jersey Shore meatball tests out the human mammogram.

(Jolie and Pitt) Amanda Schwab/startraksphoto.com. (Shannon and Ja Rule) Turgson/Rocky/splashnews.com. (Snooki) splashnews.com. (Madden and Richie) splashnews.com. (Blanco) 17online.com. (Stroup and Milligan) Stefan/infphoto.com.