

# Cosmopolitan

## Try a Little Tenderness

By: Noelle Hancock

Published: December 2003

It may not be something you lend a lot of thought to, but cultivating tenderness is key to a blissful, enduring twosome.

"It's a way for you and your man to smooth out the inevitable bumps that happen in any relationship," explains Joan Elizabeth Lloyd, author of *Naughty Secrets*. We're not talking about grandiose acts of amour.

"Tenderness involves the gentle moments and gestures that say I love you, often silently.," says Lloyd. "You have to consciously put up your radar to sense things you can improve in each other's daily lives."

To amp up the sweet side of your couplehood – without giving it gag-worthy sap – we've compiled this collection of compassionate tips for you to try with your guy. Not only will they help you feel more connected, but thanks to a domino effect, they'll bring out his inner mush ball too.

- Kiss him on the back of his neck as you walk behind his chair. "It's touching that's not sexually driven but still says you care," says Lloyd.
- Once in a while, place a cup of coffee, just the way he likes it, on the sink for him after his shower, says Rebecca Fuller Ward, author of *How to Stay Married Without Going Crazy*.
- "My boyfriend and I turn on the radio and slow dance around the living room. It's a way to be physically close in a setting other than the bedroom. – Summer, 27
- When he's crazed, ask how you can help. "Offering your time and energy, which are rare commodities, shows him that you value his happiness," says Mara Goodman Davies, author of *A Year of Romance*.
- "My girlfriend always asks me to zip her up when she's getting dressed, even if she can reach it herself. It's a nice moment between us." –Ben, 27
- Speak more softly to each other. "Not speaking in your everyday voice that you use at work and with other people brings a kindness to your rapport," says Lloyd.
- Read to each other. "Being focused on the same thing creates a bond," says Stan J. Katz, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in Beverly Hills.
- "Even though we have central heat in our apartment, sometimes my boyfriend and I will light a fire in the fireplace during the winter. It makes the night a little more special and encourages cuddling." –Amanda, 31
- Thank him for the little things, like picking up your dry cleaning or washing your car. "Couples often forget that the common courtesies we extend to our friends also apply to our partners," says Ward.
- "When we're out with friends, my girlfriend and I squeeze each other's hands three times to say I love you. That way, no one is put off by our PDA." –Pat, 26
- Tie his necktie for him in the morning to straighten the collar of his shirt if it's messed up. "It brings a sense of intimacy to a mundane task," says Lloyd. "And afterward, you can use it to pull him in for a nice smooch!"

