

# Comfort in single life

Though the world sometimes seems to operate for couples, the reality is there will always be a significant part of the population who live as single people. Everyone is single at some point of their lives – we all start out single, and many of us make our final exit with the same status.

The state of being single is caused by a range of reasons, partly to do with age. Many younger people opt to be single because they are having fun, living life and wanting to travel without emotional ties.

Whether society sees being single as acceptable tends to have a bit to do with your age – it seems acceptable for an older woman or man to be single, or young people off seeing the world or building an impressive career. But it's those middle years, the child-bearing years, when society's expectations about people settling down and building a home and family as a couple seems to bite.

There is also always a group who are the reborn singles – those who have been in relationships and end up single again through divorce or widowhood, often with children. In a sense, this is being single by accident than by design.

Most people would agree that it's easier today to be single than it was a couple of generations ago. Gender roles were clearly defined in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but today people have a better chance to decide how they want to live life and whether that involves a partner or not. Though being single today has its own range of complexities, it's certainly a different scene for women than being single was 50 years ago, when a woman needed her husband's signature in order to get a bank loan.

Both sexes now have the freedom to choose whether to be single and women have a choice about whether they want children or not. But society still has a heavy emphasis on family values, which can lead to single people feeling they lack visibility.

Conversely, today's more liberal sexual climate does have a positive effect. If either straight or gay people choose to be single but have an active sex life, they can. Being single is more about lifestyle, with sex as an add-on rather than an essential element.

It's important that if you choose to be single, you are comfortable with that decision and acknowledge others may not understand or accept your reasons. That's life.

## Survival tips

- **Being single is a valid lifestyle option**
- **A single lifestyle in 2009 doesn't mean that companionship and sex are forbidden.**
- **It's important to accept that others may not understand your decision to remain single.**