

WHEN HIS boyfriend MUSCLE IS OUT OF shape

He's allergic to plans, can't remember whether you're a wine or beer girl and never texts. We're calling it the re-lazy-ionship – and we need a love PT, stat.



STEER CLEAR!

Some dates aren't even worth training. Get rid of him ASAP if the following applies:

- 1 He behaves like a gentleman for two dates, then disappears if the sex isn't forthcoming.**
- 2 He doesn't share much personal information, has no interest in yours.**
- 3 He stays strangely quiet if you talk about friends in relationships.**

"Most untrustworthy men try to avoid lying by remaining elusive around topics they know matter to you. Don't fall into the trap of helping the 'lost little boy' inside him – you deserve a man who has found himself."

To find out more about Leanne Allen's dating workshops, search for 'Mindset of online dating' on Facebook.

Remember a few months ago when the term 'dad bod' suddenly redefined men's physiques. Guys stopped aspiring to be Ryan Gosling in *Crazy, Stupid, Love* and started man-crushing on Leonardo DiCaprio on a boat – when he was lifting a beer and not a teary Kate Winslet.

"The dad bod says, 'I go to the gym occasionally, but I also drink heavily on the weekends and enjoy eating eight slices of pizza at the one time'," explains writer Mackenzie Pearson, who coined the term.

But now the dad bod has spread to dating, and instead of getting Leo, we're just getting lazy: the guy who texts but never rings, invites you for drinks but not on a prime Saturday slot, sends you a cat meme when you're all about dogs, and calls you babe because he's forgotten if you prefer Kathryn, Kat or Kath. In fitness

terms, he's replaced the work that builds your heart – the couples' cardio – and spray-painted on some abs.

Modern dating expert Damien Diecke (schoolofattraction.com.au) believes a flabby boyfriend muscle is a side effect of modern dating's 'abundance mentality'. "Tinder has made people lazy," he admits. "It lures us to believe so many people want to meet us. Instead of putting in effort, we play fast and loose, with the attitude that there's plenty more where that came from."

"I've grown lazy and didn't realise it," confesses Todd, 27, one of a new gen of tech-sexuals whose relationships rarely venture offline. "I've had entire relationships over texts. You can get someone to have sext with you for nothing more than strategically placed emoticons."

The problem is, our virtual flirting skills fall apart in the flesh. By the time the first date happens, traditional conversation

starters – what you do, where you're from, what you ate for breakfast last Sunday – have already been answered by Google and gap-filled by Instagram. And opening up beyond the basics can be scary. "With our lives shifting online and attention spans decreasing, we're getting worse at sharing thoughts and emotions; there are fewer opportunities to practise opening up," adds Diecke. Basic fitness laws apply, however: the less you do something – in this case, putting real, solid effort into meeting someone – the weaker you get at it.

Take 24-year-old Lee, who would like a relationship but isn't committed to the moves needed to get one. "I'm fine with a little bit of effort, but it seems like an uphill battle going on dates every single week. If I can't just skip straight to being in an established relationship, I'm tempted to stick to casual sex."

Nowadays, we "how expect miracles," according to psychologist Leanne Allen (reconnect-psych.com.au), yearning for romantic relationships to develop at online speed and with an online buzz. Dr Rachel Grieve, cyberpsychologist at the University of Tasmania, agrees. "If the rush of swiping through images becomes the norm – and people stop feeling that excitement as they get to know someone a little more – then promising relationships get written off. They move on to the next person for the thrill, but again this fades, and they start the same cycle over and over."

So what should you do when your current guy's boyfriend muscle is hooked on a permanent cycle of steroid hits? Allen believes that the first step in Boyfriend Bootcamp is acting tougher. "Have clear boundaries about what you expect from a potential partner. If not, it leads to more and more dates with guys who are still in

the mindset of 'I don't know what I want' or 'I just want to hook up'."

Reformed slack-boyfriend Jake, 30, admits that most men strive to work harder for a woman who lays her dating expectations. Take texting for example. "If a woman is happy to overlook some lazy communication, the guy wonders why his lazy communication worked. He gets to have you just by tapping his thumbs! Because it's so easy, he loses interest." His tough love continues: "If a guy only tells you that he likes you by text, and isn't making plans to see you or call you or prove it, he's also the kind of guy who would dump you by text."

So instead of getting selective amnesia over his shortcomings, address the weak spots. If he treats Facebook Messenger like his mother tongue, but you'd prefer a call, tell him that you love the sound of his voice and want to hear it more. If you

feel more 'social secretary' than girlfriend, delegate next Friday night's schedule to him. The fact is, sometimes we all get a little bit out of shape.

"Even when I met a woman I really liked, I still considered a few texts enough to secure a relationship. It was only when she confronted me that I realised in the three years since my last girlfriend, I'd totally let myself go, effort-wise," admits Hugh, 29, who also believes in outlining the level of effort you expect a partner to go to. "Set him a new bar – a man who's truly interested will reach it."

Because, like the toned bodies you see popping up in your Instagram feed, relationships don't miraculously appear. "Relationships never 'just happen'," adds Jake. "They occur when you put in the work, take risks, deal with failures, accept the odd humiliation and improve." In other words, just like going to the gym. 🏋️