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**THE RISE OF SNOW-FAKING: ONE IN FIVE SINGLES ADMIT INVENTING A PARTNER AT CHRISTMAS**

*eharmony experts identify new Christmas dating trend, which sees singletons pretend to be coupled up to avoid prying questions from family and friends*

* One fifth (20%) of singles will make up or consider pretending they have a partner this Christmas
* Twice as many men than women resent being asked if they’ll be single for long
* Coined ‘snow-faking’, trend is most common among millennials aged 18-34
* Relationship expert Rachael Lloyd offers her advice on how to fend off unwanted questions from those pine-ing for details about your love life this Christmas

This festive season one fifth (20%) of singles will make up or consider fabricating a partner to avoid bubble-bursting questions from family and friends about why they’re not in a relationship.

The question of how long their singledom is expected to last is irking twice as many men than women1 at Christmas this year, possibly because women are more used to it.

Coined snow-faking by the relationship experts at [eharmony](https://www.eharmony.co.uk/), this Christmas dating trend is most common among millennials who are fed up being of interrogated about their love lives.

Over one in ten (13%) singles say they routinely fend off questions from close ones about their relationship status at Christmas, and the questions that bother people the most are – ‘have you got a partner yet?’ (19%) and ‘do you think your standards are too high?’ (14%).

The ticking clock also seems to be driving the snow-faking trend, with 16% worried about being asked if they might be leaving it a little late to couple up or how long they imagine they’ll be single for (15%).

Thankfully, not everyone feels pressured romantically over the festive period. Three in five singles (58%) prefer to prioritise seeing family and friends. And lacking a partner is clearly not an issue for the one in five (21%) scrooge-like singles who say they’d rather not splash out on a gift for a partner this year2.

**eharmony relationship expert Rachael Lloyd comments:** *“I completely empathise with singles who feel they have to snow-fake – in other words, make up a fake partner to fend off festive questions from family. It can be excruciating when you feel that you are being judged on your relationship status. This kind of single shaming must stop, and it’s fantastic that younger generations are no longer willing to put up with it.*

*“If you are yearning for love, what’s important is finding someone who shares your core values and character traits, rather than being pressured into the wrong relationship. And that often takes time and careful consideration. Meanwhile, for those who haven’t reached the snow-faking stage, I would say that preparation is key to help you get through the festive period unscathed.”*

Here are relationship expert Rachael Lloyd’s top tips for making those unwanted questions melt away:

* **Practice makes perfect:** Think about questions you’d want to hear the least and prepare responses. While you don’t owe anyone any details about your love life, but it may help lower your agitation if you’re sufficiently armed. You could always take a leaf out of Emma Watson’s book and explain that you’re ‘self-partnered’ and that you’re happy on your own
* **Deflect:** Deflecting the conversation with a joke about why you’re single can easily help show somebody that they’ve overstepped the line and that you want the conversation to move on
* **Answer with a question:** Why should you be the one being interrogated? A response like ‘why do you ask?’ is often enough to cut a conversation short
* **Honesty is sometimes the best policy:** If somebody asks you a question that feels patronising or belittling, it’s ok to put your boundaries in place and shut it down. Something as simple as ‘I am not comfortable talking about that’ can be a powerful retort. If they keep going, don’t fall into the trap of self-justification. Just restate your boundary ‘As I said...’
* **Remove yourself:** If none of the above work then get yourself out of the situation as soon as possible. Pretend something or someone else has caught your interest and drift away

**ENDS**

**For more information, or further festive tips from our dating expert, please contact:**

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**Methodology**

Unless otherwise stated, data is based on research commissioned by Opinium between 30th and 1st December 2021, comprising a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults (18+).

1Twice as many men than women resent being asked if they’ll be single for long (10% of men vs. 5% of women)

2 Data is based on research commissioned by Opinium between 24th and 28th September 2021, comprising a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults (18+) with a boost to 1,000 singles

**About eharmony**

eharmony launched in 2000, and now forms part of the ParshipMeet Group the international market leader in matchmaking. Real love remains at the heart of everything we do. In an increasingly fast-paced dating culture, we take a more bespoke and supportive approach to creating relationships. Our unique Compatibility Matching System brings together like-minded singles who share core values and personality traits, which are key indicators of relationship success. We are constantly evolving our matching system, designed by psychologists, which measures each member’s profile across 32 dimensions of compatibility - factoring in traits such as kindness, openness, and communication style. The results speak for themselves – every 14 minutes someone finds love on eharmony. Take our virtual tour at [www.eharmony.co.uk](http://www.eharmony.co.uk).