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## How To Hurry Up and Speed-Date

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If you've had enough of e-mailing some online prospect for two weeks only to find out when you meet in person that he's completely not your type, we have a suggestion for you: speed-dating, which more than makes up in efficiency -- and sheer entertainment value -- what it lacks in romance. In one night, you go on eight to 25 "dates" lasting three to eight minutes each. Best of all, you get to *immediately* test chemistry.

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First, a few tips: Take a pen, some gum and a bottle of water (you don't always have the chance to buy a drink in the middle). Going with a friend is less intimidating and allows for post-event debriefings, but be sure to pick a pal who's attracted to a totally different type -- you don't want to be vying for the same people. Not surprisingly, participants possess a more urban edge in Washington and are more suburban in Maryland and Virginia. HurryDate and 8minuteDating allow participants to create online profiles, which helps you keep track of people, but above all, take notes on your dates (e.g., "Bill, blue shirt, pilot"). When you speed-date, it really is raining men (and women), and to enjoy the downpour, you need to remember who's who

**Curtis Sittenfeld**

### 8MINUTEDATING

[www.8minutedating.com](http://www.8minutedating.com)

**Cost:** \$35

**My Event:** About 20 men and women ages 21 to 29 at the [Helix Lounge](#) in the District.

**In a Nutshell:** Eight eight-minute dates, with a 20-minute intermission during which you can mingle with people you're not paired with (you don't automatically end up "dating" everyone). You evaluate people not just romantically, but also as "friendship" or "business" contacts.

**Distinguishing Feature:** If a date gives you the thumbs-down but you still want to contact him, you can access his e-mail address for \$8.88. (Stalking: It's cheaper than a movie ticket!)

**Highlight:** More women than men showed up, and we ladies were encouraged to chat when not paired with men. (Turnout for all the services can be uneven;



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The old adage may come to mind: so many women, so little time -- but that's the whole idea! (Photos Nate Lankford For The Washington Post)

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most will give you a refund if you complain.) I actually found the women here cooler than the men -- and attended a party one threw the next weekend.

**Also Offers:** Parties for black, gay and Jewish singles.

## **HURRYDATE**

[www.hurrydate.com](http://www.hurrydate.com)

**Cost:** \$35

**My Event:** About 45 men and women ages 25 to 35 at [Fado Irish Pub](#) in the District.

**In a Nutshell:** Up to 25 three-minute dates. Women stay in one place, men move around. When the three minutes is up, the whistle blows and you circle yes or no on your "score card."

**Distinguishing Feature:** Lawyers, lawyers and more lawyers. Also: out of 24 men, five guys named Matt.

**Highlight:** One of my dates was a magician who "removed" his pinky during our conversation.

**Also Offers:** Parties for Jewish singles, gay men and lesbians.

## **PRE-DATING**

[www.pre-dating.com](http://www.pre-dating.com)

**Cost:** \$32 to \$37

**My Event:** About 20 men and women ages 23 to 34 at [Las Tapas](#) in Old Town Alexandria.

**In a Nutshell:** Six to 12 dates lasting six minutes each, with one six-minute intermission; includes a business/friendship "yes" option.


**Distinguishing Feature:** Excellent free mints.



**Highlight:** I ran into a guy (and fellow serial speed-dater) who had told me at HurryDate that he was a shepherd. I'd realized afterward that he was pulling my leg; at Pre-Dating, I had the chance to call him on it.

**Also Offers:** The "nichest" service of all, Pre-Dating holds events for black men and white women, black women and white men, and athletes.

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