

Effects of Marriage on Couple's Relationship

Research Synthesis Paper: [164 Reasons to Marry](#)

1. Happiness

A larger fraction of those in always-intact marriages report that being married is very important to them, compared to those who are divorced, single, or remarried (although these may also regard marriage as important).¹⁾ (See [Chart](#))



Those who marry experience increased commitment and stability.²⁾ Men raised in married families have more open, affectionate, and cooperative relationships with the women to whom they are attracted than do those from divorced families.³⁾ Correspondingly, married mothers report more love and intimacy in their romantic/spousal relationships than [cohabiting](#) or single mothers.⁴⁾ Those [raised in married families](#) have higher expectations of eventually marrying,⁵⁾ and a larger fraction of those from intact families than non-intact families are happy in their marriages.⁶⁾ Similarly, a lower percentage of those raised in intact families divorce.⁷⁾ According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 18 percent of adults who lived in an intact family have ever been divorced or separated, compared to 28 percent of those who lived in a nonintact family.⁸⁾ The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that among adults aged 38 to 44, staying in one's first and only marriage is most common among those raised in an intact married family.⁹⁾ (See [Chart](#) Below) Daughters raised in intact families are less likely to say they do not plan to have children than daughters living with divorced or remarried mothers.¹⁰⁾ In contrast, cohabiting couples enjoy diminished relational happiness and fairness and increased relational disagreement and violence, relative to married couples. When duration of cohabitation was factored in, cohabitation's effect became nonsignificant, but increased duration of cohabitation worsened (relative to marriage) happiness, disagreement, and violence.¹¹⁾



2. Sexual Experience





Studies show that married men and women report the most sexual pleasure and fulfillment.¹²⁾ Married men and women report having more enjoyable sexual intercourse more often,¹³⁾ and married couples find their sexual relationship more satisfying than cohabiters do.¹⁴⁾ Those in always-intact marriages were most likely (91.3 percent) to report feeling thrilled and excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner, followed by those who were divorced and remarried (88.9 percent), those who were always single (82.7 percent), and those who were divorced or separated (81.8 percent).¹⁵⁾ (See First [Chart Above](#)) A larger fraction of individuals in intact marriages than always-single, divorced or separated, or divorced and remarried persons report “very, extremely” enjoying intercourse with their current sexual partner.¹⁶⁾ Likewise, a larger fraction of individuals in intact marriages than always-single, divorced or separated, or divorced and remarried persons report feeling satisfied,¹⁷⁾ (See Second [Chart Above](#)) loved,¹⁸⁾ (See Third [Chart Above](#)) “taken care of,”¹⁹⁾ (See Fourth [Chart Above](#)) and thrilled or excited²⁰⁾ during intercourse with their current sexual partner. Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to report feeling wanted and needed during intercourse (92 percent).²¹⁾ (See Fifth [Chart Above](#)) These feelings are less prevalent in non-intact family structures and among singles. Correspondingly, a smaller fraction of individuals in intact marriages than always-single, divorced or separated, or divorced and remarried persons report feeling guilty,²²⁾ sad,²³⁾ (See First [Chart Below](#)) or scared or afraid²⁴⁾ (See Second [Chart Below](#)) during intercourse with their current sexual partner. Those in always-intact marriages were the least likely to feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner (6.8 percent). Feeling anxious or worried during intercourse is more prevalent among those in non-intact structures and among singles: 12.1 percent of those who were divorced and remarried, 20.6 percent of those who were divorced or separated, 25.9 percent of those who were always single feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner.²⁵⁾ (See Third [Chart Below](#))



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