



What's the most annoying habit your loved one has? Visit [torontosun.com/petpeeves](http://torontosun.com/petpeeves) to take our poll.

# Will you stop doing that?

## Annoying pet peeves that could kill the romance



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Dr. Bonnie Eaker Weil, a New York-based couples therapist at [Doctorbonnie.com](http://Doctorbonnie.com)

Stubble in the sink. Wet towels on the floor. Forgot to call — again! Sound familiar?

Quirks that irk. Pet peeves that have grown prickly and ever so annoying, sure to kill the romance.

“Anyone in a love relationship can probably list three to five irritating behaviours of his or her partner without skipping a beat,” says Christina Steinorth, relationship expert, psychotherapist and author of *Cue Cards for Life: Thoughtful Tips for Better Relationships*.

“Research shows that such minor but annoying behaviours become more irksome over time in love relationships ... they have the potential to drive a wedge between two people if not discussed openly,” says Steinorth.

Quirks can sap the sizzle in and out of the bedroom, says Dr. Bonnie Eaker Weil, a New York-based couples

therapist at [Doctorbonnie.com](http://Doctorbonnie.com). “They’re romance wreckers eroding closeness and intimacy.”

Pet peeves can include personality traits too, initial attractants that become irritants: His meticulous grooming is now viewed as vain. Intensely organized is now interpreted as being anal. Her gift of the gab is no gift at all.

“What you once loved, you end up hating,” says Eaker Weil. “It’s common.”

At the beginning of a relationship, our vision is clouded by lust and we typically turn a blind eye to bad habits, says Eaker Weil, author of *Make Up, Don’t Break Up*. “When the hormones die down, the warts appear as if out of nowhere.”

And left to fester, annoyance and resentment grow, and emotional divorce turns into real divorce, says

Eaker Weil.

According to Laurie Puhn, a couples mediator, “When a marriage is in trouble, the people in it are nit-pickers ... When a marriage is happy, the people in it are overlookers.”

Inequalities and flaws get uglier and more irritating as partners feel disconnected and neglected over time, says Puhn. “You really wouldn’t care so much about the laundry on the floor if your mate went out of his way every day to make you feel special and important.”

Avoid the scorecard mentality which can destroy your marriage. “Have monthly conversations about whether you and your mate feel appreciated by the other. When you openly share, you can repair,” advises Puhn, author of *Fight Less, Love More*.

We all have quirks and foibles, agree the experts. Focus on what’s right in the relationship, not always on what’s wrong.



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## What they mean when they say ‘warts and all’

According to psychotherapist Christina Steinorth, these bad habits are some of the more common irritants in a relationship:

### Men

- Burping
- Leaving wet towels on the floor
- Scratching backs with a fork? It happens.
- Passing gas
- Putting their feet up on the table



### Women

- Interrupting their partners when they’re speaking
- Nagging
- Being bossy
- Criticizing their partner in public
- Cutesy nicknames