

Who does what?

The following words describe some of the tasks that couples divide between them in their day-to-day lives. Not all of them will apply to you and there are some blank boxes for you to add your own.

Print and cut out the words and spread them out in front of you both. Print out the other page with the line on it (or draw your own) – fill in your names at each end of the line.

- 1) Choose a topic together and decide who's going to go first
- 2) First partner: choose a word that's important to you and place it on the line depending on who you think most often takes responsibility for the task. If the word is placed at one end, it means you think that person does that task all of the time, If it's in the middle, it means you think it is shared 50:50, if it's somewhere in between the middle and one side it means that one person tends to take more responsibility for that task.
- 3) First person: tell your partner why the word is important to you and why you think the word belongs there (approx. 1 minute). Second person: pay attention to what your partner is saying but don't dispute it.
- 4) Second person: when first partner has finished, and still discussing the same word, tell your partner what the word means to you and move the word (if necessary) to a different part of the line and tell your partner why you think it belongs there (approx. 1 minute). First person: pay attention to what your partner is saying but don't dispute it.
- 5) Together: discuss where you think ideally the word should go and what you'd need to do to get it there
- 6) Swap roles and repeat for a new word i.e. second person now chooses a word from the same topic
- 7) It is probably best not to try to discuss more than three words each on each occasion you do this exercise

Remember even though you might think your opinion is the right one, and that you have the evidence to prove it, this exercise is about letting your partner know what is important to you and why. These topics are often sources of great frustration and resentment so, rather than picking the most controversial topic first, start with something less explosive. Try to keep things reasonably light-hearted without being dismissive or sarcastic. Once you can talk more easily about less heated topics try to look at something that could prove more difficult. Remember not every difference of opinion can be resolved and every relationship needs some give-and-take.

If things start to get too heated take some time out and then come back and have a conversation about what happened that led to such strong feelings. Was this really about your partner or something from your own past? Take responsibility for your feelings and try not to blame or accuse. Use 'I' statements and state your feelings clearly. Try to see your partner's point of view and let them know you understand it, even if you don't agree with it. Remember to let your partner know in word and deed that you care about them.

<u>Money/socialising</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Intimacy, affection and leisure</u>	<u>Childcare/family</u>
Earning money	Vacuuming	Hugging/cuddling	Disciplining children
Paying bills	DIY	Holding hands	Bathing children
Balancing household budget	Changing beds	Kissing	Putting children to bed
Managing savings	Doing laundry	Initiating sex	Feeding children
Managing debt	Washing up	Choosing sexual activities	Taking children to/from school
Deciding on major purchases	Cooking	Contraception/ safe sex	Rewarding children
Deciding on minor purchases	Looking after pets	Planning holidays	Helping children to be independent
Going out with friends	Shopping	Booking holidays	Supervising homework
Having friends round	Putting toothpaste away	Packing for holiday	Playing with children
Making new friends	Ironing	Romance e.g. date nights	Visiting family
Replying to invitations	Gardening	Driving	Having family to visit
Sending greetings cards	Emptying bins	Organising travel	Phoning family

