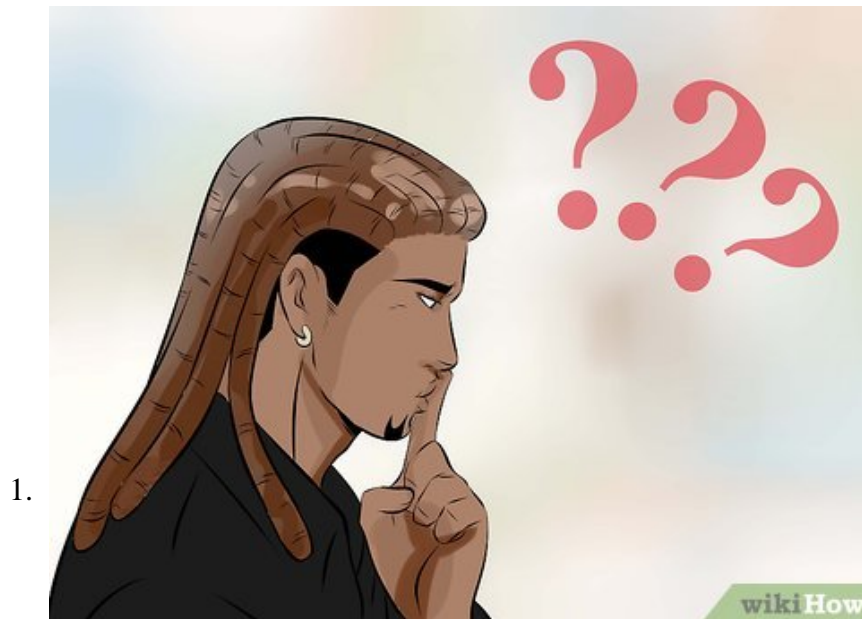


How to Slow Down a Relationship

Sometimes, you might feel like a relationship is moving too quickly – whether that means physically or emotionally. It's important to remember that a relationship is an agreement between two people. You don't need to go along with...

Part 1 of 3:

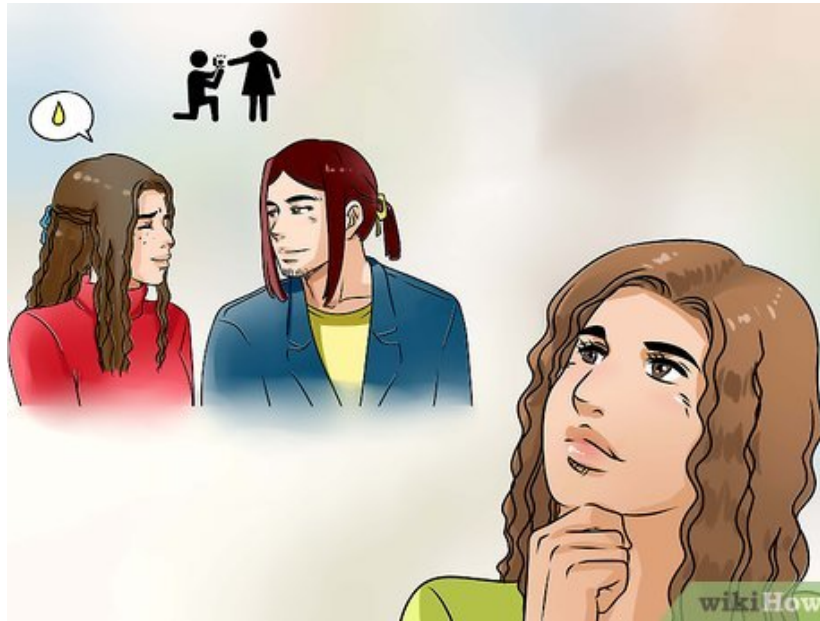
Understanding the Relationship



1.

Assess the situation. First, consider which parts of the relationship are moving too quickly. Identify what makes you uncomfortable, or what makes your partner uncomfortable. If you want to slow a relationship down, you'll need to understand why it's going too fast.

1. You might feel the need to keep your partner in check. Perhaps your partner wants to escalate the physical side of the relationship, but you aren't comfortable doing so. Maybe he or she is demanding commitments that you know you can't keep. Perhaps he or she is falling head over heels for you, but you want to let your feelings blossom more gradually.
2. On the other hand, you might need to slow down your own feelings. It's easy to feel "freaked out" if you sense they you're falling too quickly for your partner. Perhaps your significant other has specifically asked you to slow things down, for their sake. In this case, consider how you can respect what your partner needs out of the relationship.



2.

Figure out which situations "trigger" you. Notice the specific actions or situations that make you feel uncomfortable. Look for patterns. Try to understand exactly which circumstances make you feel like things are going too fast.^[1]

1. Maybe you've just started seeing a guy, but he's inviting you to go on trips with him or asking you to be his date to a wedding. If this level of implied commitment bothers you, then that's what you need to address.
2. Perhaps you've been dating a girl for a while, and she keeps dropping hints about marriage and children. If you aren't ready to think about these things, it might be putting a lot of strain on your relationship.



3.

Identify your goals. Evaluate your goals for the relationship, your goals for personal growth, and your goals for the future. Consider whether this relationship is pushing you against your goals, and ask yourself whether the imbalance is something that you'll be able to resolve. Understand that you may just not be

compatible.

1. If your partner wants something different than you, it doesn't mean they're a bad person. It may just mean that you don't have the same goals. Consider whether it's worth building a relationship despite this.

Part 2 of 3:

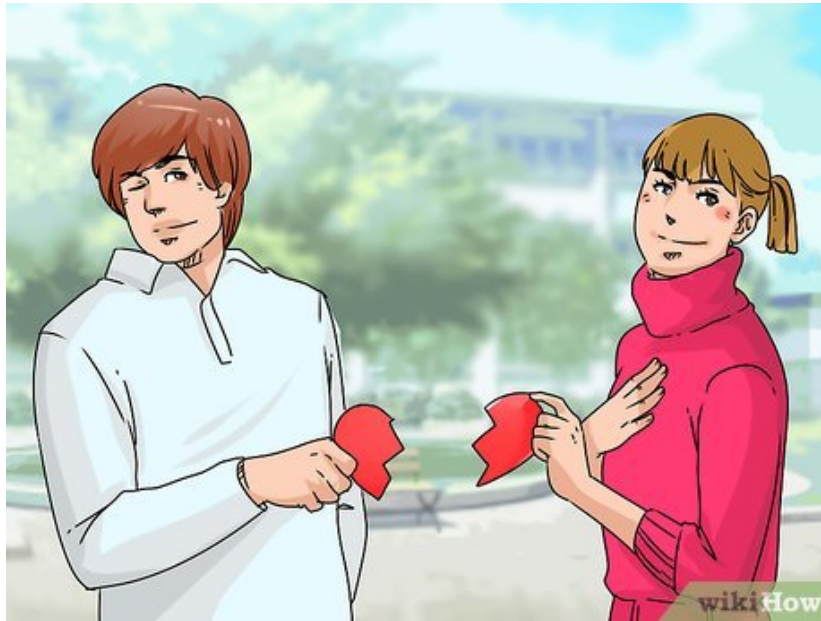
Speaking with Your Partner



Talk about it. Speak honestly with your partner about what you're feeling. Tell him or her what makes you so uncomfortable, and try to get to the bottom of your feelings. Make sure that he/she knows that you're still interested – but that you want to take things down a notch. If your partner understands where you're coming from, it will be easier for them to change their behavior and make you feel more comfortable.^[2]

1. You may find that open communication makes your relationship much less complicated. You can't expect your partner to act a certain way unless you ask.^[3]

2.



Try to get onto the same page. Two people don't necessarily come into a relationship with the same expectations. Your partner might not even realize that she's making you feel uncomfortable. You may find that you have been living in two separate realities, each making moves and choices that are incomprehensible to the other. The quickest way to fix this is to establish a mutual understanding of where the relationship is going.

3.



Don't force it. If you can't see eye to eye, it may be time to leave. It isn't fair to force your partner into something they don't want – and it isn't fair for you to live in fear of losing yourself. Sometimes, you need to step back and focus on yourself before you can dive into a serious relationship.

1. Consider whether the situation merits a breakup. Breaking up with your partner will not only slow things down – it will bring them to a grinding halt. If you feel that this is the only choice, then don't be afraid to make it happen.



Try changing the way that you talk about your relationship. If you find yourself leaping to long-term plans and words of commitment—e.g. "I love you."—consider whether you're really comfortable with those things. Try to shift the dialogue to the short-term. Before you decide where your relationship is going to be years down the line, figure out where it will be in a few months' time.^[4]

Part 3 of 3:

Taking it Slow



Address the problem areas. Think about the specific things that make you uncomfortable, and find a way to either manage or avoid those things. It may be easy to slow down your relationship if you change the way that you respond to a very specific set of situations.

1. If you obsess about your boyfriend or girlfriend when you don't see them for a few days: find a way to see them more often, or ask to communicate a bit more while they are away.
2. If your boyfriend tries to start something physical every time that you're in a bedroom together: stay away from the bedroom. Don't lie down on a bed with him, and consider limiting your alone time until you're confident that he won't push your boundaries.



Make only plans that you can keep. Stay in tune with yourself, and be strong in your convictions. Don't agree to be somewhere in six months' time if you aren't sure what you're doing next week! Some people are more comfortable with setting far-off plans, and some people prefer to figure out their plans as they go along – and that's perfectly okay. If you're in a relationship with someone who's more plan-happy than you are, you'll need to strike a balance between their comfort zone and yours.



Make time for yourself. It's easy to feel overwhelmed if you aren't giving yourself the space that you need. This doesn't mean that you need to take a formal break from the relationship; just set aside a bit of

time each day to think about your own life and take your mind off of your partner. You might find that the simple act of valuing your "me" time makes you feel much more in control of your relationship.^[5]

1. Spend time with your friends and don't bring your significant other. Make sure that you keep the core of your friendships strong, even if you're all dating people. You don't need your significant other to be around all the time.



Spend a weekend away together. Getting out of town for a few days might give you both the chance to cool your jets and reevaluate what's important. Go camping, or visit a new city, or just take a long road trip. Climb a mountain; jump in the ocean. Find the space you need to clear your head.^[6]



Avoid sleeping over. Try not to spend the night at this person's place, and don't invite him/her back to yours. Sleeping in the same bed can make seem things much more serious – especially when it starts to become a regular thing. The more intimate you become with a person, the more deeply intertwined your lives will be.^[7]

1. The same goes for living together. A cohabitation situation—especially one that you haven't explicitly agreed upon—can make things feel as though they are spiraling into a more serious place.
[8] Consider whether you need to scale your living situation back a notch.

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