

Couples with kids spend only 9.8 days of quality time together a year

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According to research by Holiday Inn, the average mum and dad manage to squeeze in just 15 minutes a day enjoying each other's company amid their hectic family life - and that's nearly always in bed.

Most parents are able to relax and chat for just five minutes together before the kids wake up, and 10 minutes at night before going to sleep. And, on one precious night of the year, they will call in other family members to look after the children to allow them an overnight stay in a hotel together.

Chris Hale, spokesman for Holiday Inn, which commissioned the study, said: "It's quite shocking how little time couples have together when their children are young. I'm sure most parents wouldn't change having their kids for the world, but it's pretty tough on a relationship. Getting away is clearly a really important treat for parents - I bet most of them must really look forward to that one night a year in a great, big, comfy hotel bed."

Busy modern day lifestyles will see couples call on a babysitter once a month to give them a much-deserved opportunity of four hours in a pub, club or restaurant.

The poll of 4,500 people also revealed that parents only get 235.25 hours a year together without the children. And during the average month couples can expect to enjoy only two cosy nights in front of the television together, at around three hours a time.

But those loved up couples who DON'T have kids don't have to get out of bed until 7:30am and are able to eat dinner together and have a leisurely evening together before retiring to the bedroom. They also have the luxury of being able to go out for drinks, dinner and short breaks together whenever they like.

It also emerged that, after taking the luxury of a five minute cuddle in the morning, both parents get out of bed and tend to the children.

Most folk wash first, then have breakfast, and, once the kids are sorted, get ready for work. A full day's work is then followed by a 27 minute meal with the children, 34 minutes of helping with homework or playing and a 26 minute bedtime routine. Once the children are in bed, men and women have very different ways of spending their evenings. The household chores are shared for approximately 37 minutes, but after that men can be found working on their computers, whilst women put their feet up in front of their favourite soap opera. The average couple then goes to bed for 11pm, and spends 10 minutes having a deep and meaningful conversation about the day's events, issues and worries before going to sleep.

Chris Hale, for Holiday Inn, added: "Once the kids have left home a huge number of our guests are escaping for four or more weekend breaks across the UK - that should offer some kind of hope for parents with younger children."

Other facts revealed by the Holiday Inn survey include:

- 63% of couples feel sad they never get to spend quality time alone with their partner.
- 44% genuinely believe the only time they ever get to enjoy each other's company and communicate properly is on those rare snatched nights away from home.
- 67% want to make more of an effort to romance their other half, taking more breaks and using babysitting services more often.

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