

Is the '7-year itch' real? The science behind why some relationships seem to struggle as time goes on

You would think that the longer a couple has stayed together, the closer they would feel towards each other. And if there is such a thing as the seven-year itch, that would mean that couples reach bottom in their relationship at about this time. But does research provide any evidence that this is actually the case?

In the Sexual Habits Survey 2020, we explored people's emotional experience of being close to their partner in relation to how many years they had been together.

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Both men and women feel most close to their partner at the beginning of their relationship. This feeling of closeness then declines steadily, especially for women. Women who have lived with their husbands for more than 30 years feel the least close to their partner. This suggests that the longer a woman's life has been shared with her husband, the less likely she is to feel close to him.

A man's experience of emotional closeness to his wife reaches a low point after being together for 21-30 years. Then things improve, and the experience of closeness increases with men who have been with their partner for more than 30 years.

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If we are to believe recent sexual habit research, the seven-year itch is a myth. Still – it's important to remember that statistics are created by variation. For some partners, it's probably the seven-year itch that ends the relationship.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)