

Cheat-proof your marriage

Up to 70% of all married men fool around. But you can protect your marriage with our common-sense tips

Joan's first marriage ended bitterly when her husband left her for another woman.

"It took me a long time to learn to trust again," she says. "But when I met Tom, I knew he was the man who could help me heal."

After Joan and Tom married, she knew from the hard lessons she'd learned that she *could* act to keep another woman from ever coming between her and her husband again.

And so can you—by taking *preventive* action to keep your husband from straying.

1 Communicate. Sure, you talk about the kids and the bills, but make sure you also still confide in each other, laugh together, and make plans for the future.

"Your husband should be your best friend and your lover," says Gisela Hoffman, a New York-based psychotherapist.

"Make sure you're fulfilling his emotional and intellectual needs and

Approach the other woman directly with disturbing information—true or false

you won't have to worry about another woman stepping in to fill the gap."

2 Keep each other happy in bed. If your physical relationship has fizzled, rekindle those fires.

Call him at the office and tell him you want him. Let the kids sleep over at a friend's house and surprise him with a bubble bath, his favorite dinner and a night of passion.

3 Keep your self-respect. If you look and feel good, you'll

feel better about yourself—and that's attractive. Your husband will respect you and be proud to be seen with you.

4 Do things together as a family. When a family is close, it's more difficult, emotionally and logistically, for a man to stray.

Celebrate holidays, anniversaries and birthdays. Gather the family close in times of stress, illness or bereavement. A strong family unit can strengthen your marriage.

5 Don't push trust too far. Don't rely on your husband to reject persistent overtures.

Amy didn't. She worked in an office while Jim ran a computer consulting business out of their home. When her single friend Karen started calling Jim with questions about her computer and asking him to stop by, Amy made it clear she didn't like it.

When Karen's calls continued, Amy ended their friendship and told Karen she no longer had any excuse for calling Jim.

"I'll never know what her motivation was," says Amy. "But I know that no matter how trustworthy a man is, it's not good to constantly test that trust with temptation."

But what if you discover your husband is cheating? It doesn't have to mean the marriage is over if you don't want it to be. You can take back your man . . .

6 Take the offensive. Approach the other woman directly with some disturbing information—true or false.

Paula had been happily married to Bill for 20



years when she discovered he was having an affair with his co-worker Susan, whom she knew slightly.

Paula was stunned. She loved Bill and she was pretty sure he still loved her. And she had no intention of just letting him go.

So she devised a plan of attack. She called Susan at work and told the young woman straight out that she knew about her romance with Bill.

"I hope you're using protection and not taking your relationship too seriously," Paula told Susan. "Bill has cheated on every woman he's ever been with, and there have been plenty!"

"I've only stayed with him for our children's sake. But I felt I had to warn you since I know

you personally." Shortly after that phone call, Bill started arriving home earlier from work and no longer seemed to be urgently needed at the office on weekends.

7 Keep him busy. Sabotage his plans by creating family crises

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and social obligations. Make sure he can't keep his rendezvous with—and promises to—the other woman.

Tell him the kids need chauffeuring to school events. Invite his family for dinner. Encourage close friends to drop by on the weekends. This way it

won't be easy for him to tear himself away.

8 Don't ignore warning signs. Does your husband work late all the time? Does he disappear for hours on weekends?

According to Margaret Kent, author of *Not With My Husband, You Don't*, most men often leave a trail of clues behind.

Is your husband too tired to make love to you as often as before? Is he seeking more privacy when he makes phone calls at home?

In that case, Kent advises, "Discover the facts, analyze the consequences, evaluate your options—and take action." ✪

by Cheryl Waixel