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# Marriage and divorce statistics



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What are the odds you'll get married? And what are the odds of a divorce? As it turns out, statistics on these two questions are something the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) and the [US Census Bureau](#) have spent a lot of time collecting. For decades, they've gathered information on almost every factor that can affect marriage and divorce. Here are some of the more interesting statistics about marriage and divorce:

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### Quick stats

- Number of marriages in a year: 2,118,000
- National marriage rate: 6.8 per 1,000 people
- Number of divorces and annulments in a year: 877,000
- National divorce rate: 3.6 per 1,000 people
- Highest total number of divorces: Florida
- Lowest total number of divorces: North Dakota

### Your chance for marriage by age and gender

- Married by 20 - Women: 13%, Men: 7%
- Married by 25 - Women: 44%, Men: 31%
- Married by 30 - Women: 68%, Men: 56%
- Married by 35 - Women: 78%, Men: 71%
- Married by 40 - Women: 84%, Men: 78%

### How do marriage odds today compare to the past?

#### Compared to women in 2002:

- Married by age 20 -- 4% less likely today
- Married by age 25 -- 8% less likely today
- Married by age 30 -- 5% less likely today
- Married by age 35 -- 3% less likely today
- Married by age 40 -- 2% less likely today

#### Compared to women in 1995:

- Married by age 20 -- 12% less likely today
- Married by age 25 -- 15% less likely today
- Married by age 30 -- 8% less likely today
- Married by age 35 -- 6% less likely today
- Married by age 40 -- 2% less likely today

### Why are people marrying later in life?

**More people are cohabiting (living together).** Compared to 1995:

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- Women are 14% more likely to cohabit before marriage.
- Cohabitations last 9 months longer on average.

**More people are attending college.** Compared to 1995:

- Women are 8.3% more likely to complete 4 years of college.
- Men are 3.8% more likely to complete 4 years of college.

## What are the chances your first marriage will end in separation or divorce?

You may have heard that "50% of marriages end in divorce." This isn't actually true - but if you also count marriages that end in separation, it's not that far off either.

- 20% end within 5 years.
- 32% end within 10 years.
- 40% end within 15 years.
- 48% end within 20 years.

After 3 years of separation, Caucasian women are much more likely (87%) to divorce than are Hispanic women (64%) and African American women (60%).

## What are the chances your second marriage will end in separation or divorce?

Second marriages have a much lower rate of success than first marriages.

- 10% end within 1 year.
- 31% end within 5 years.
- 46% end within 10 years.

## Is there a better chance for success when living together?

Many people used to think that living together before marriage greatly increased the odds of divorce. However, recent research suggests that cohabitation does not have as large of an effect on marriage failure if the cohabitators are engaged. Among women aged 15-44:

- 29% of marriages that begin without cohabitation fail within 10 years
- 33% of marriages that begin with cohabitation and engagement fail within 10 years
- 39% of marriages that begin with cohabitation but without engagement fail within 10 years

## What is the most common trait in successful marriages?

The most common trait in successful marriages is a college education. On average, these are the chances a person will still be married in 20 years, based on education level:

- Less than High School - Women: 39%, Men: 54%
- High School - Women: 41%, Men: 47%
- Some College - Women: 49%, Men: 54%
- Bachelor's Degree - Women: 78%, Men: 65%

People who attend college also tend to marry later in life and have higher incomes, which further increases the odds of a successful marriage.

## Top states for marriage (by marriage rate)

With Nevada's drive-through wedding chapels and history of some of the most lenient marriage laws around, learning the state has the highest marriage rate probably isn't a surprise.

Hawaii is a very distant second, its tropical climate and near-total lack of marriage requirements not quite enough to topple Nevada from its position.

- 1st: Nevada - 36.9

- 2nd: Hawaii - 17.6
- 3rd: Arkansas - 10.4
- 4th: Tennessee - 9.0
- 5th, 6th: Idaho and Utah - 8.6
- 7th: Alabama - 8.4
- 8th: Vermont - 8.3
- 9th: New Mexico - 8.0
- 10th, 11th, 12th: Alaska, Montana, and Wyoming - 7.8

## Top states for divorce (by divorce rate)

Nevada has the highest marriage rate, but that's not the only thing it's known for. Maybe it's because of all the casinos, or maybe it's because the desert is depressing, but Nevada holds the honor of also being the state with the highest divorce rate.

- 1st: Nevada - 5.6
- 2nd: Arkansas - 5.3
- 3rd, 4th: Oklahoma and West Virginia - 5.2
- 5th: Idaho - 4.9
- 6th, 7th: Alaska and Wyoming - 4.8
- 8th: Florida - 4.5
- 9th, 10th: Colorado and Kentucky - 4.4

Note: California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, and Minnesota do not track their divorce rates.

## Interesting facts

1.

**There are two divorces every minute** in the United States. In the time it took you to read to this point, several people got divorced.

2.

**The younger a person marries, the more likely it is they will get divorced.** As it turns out, age plays a big role in determining a marriage's fate. Those who marry under the age of 20 have the highest rate of divorce. These couples are nearly 1.5 times as likely to get divorced as those who get married between the ages of 20 to 24 years old. Those who marry after the age of 25 are even less likely to get divorced.

3.

**The divorce rate for a third marriage is 73%.** When it comes to marriage, practice doesn't make perfect. In fact, it only seems to make you worse. That's why the divorce rate continues to get higher for each additional marriage. Nearly 3 out of every 4 adults who are on their third marriage end up divorced again.

4.

**Iowa has the lowest divorce rate in the US.** Iowa's divorce rate is only 2.4 per 1000 population. Iowa divorce rate has been on a steady decline for decades. In fact, Iowa's divorce rate is now the lowest it's been since the 1960s.

5.

**Adults who didn't attend college and have a low household income are more likely to be divorced.** After 20 years, non-college educated couples are 27.5% more likely to have gotten a divorce compared to those with a college degree. Lower-income marriages also tend to be more unstable.

6.

**Protestant Christian couples have the same divorce rate as the national average.**

While this might sound like Protestant Christian couples are just as likely to get divorced as their secular counterparts, agnostics and atheists have a much lower divorce rate.

However, couples who don't follow any religion are also less likely to get married at all.

7.

**Arkansas has the highest rate of individuals married 3 or more times: 7.48%.** Men and women in Arkansas are twice as likely to be married 3 or more times compared to the national average.

### Additional Resources

[CDC - National Marriage and Divorce Rate Trends](#)

[CDC - National Health Statistics Reports #49](#)

[CDC - National Health Statistics Reports #64](#)

[CDC - Marriage Rates by State](#)

[CDC - Divorce Rates by State](#)

[US Census - Educational Attainment Tables](#)

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