FREE COUPLES RESOURCE

How to Repair After a Fight

Every couple argues. What matters most is how you come back together afterward.

1. **Pause before it escalates.** If either of you feels flooded (racing heart, raised voice, wanting to shut down), call a break. Agree on a time to come back, at least 20 minutes and no more than 24 hours.
2. **Calm your body, not your case.** During the break, walk, breathe slowly or listen to music. Avoid rehearsing your argument.
3. **Take turns telling your experience.** One speaks, one listens. Speak about your own feelings and needs; the listener summarizes before sharing their side. You don't have to agree to understand.
4. **Own your part.** Name one thing you would do differently. Keep it specific: "I raised my voice," not "I'm sorry if you were upset."
5. **Agree on one small change.** Pick one thing you will each try next time the same topic comes up.
6. **Reconnect.** A hug, a walk, a cup of tea together. Repair is complete when you both feel back on the same team.

Phrases that help

- "Can we start over?"
- "I can see why that hurt."
- "I need a short break, and I'll come back."
- "Help me understand what you meant."
- "You're right about that part."
- "I'm on your side."
- "Let me try saying that again."
- "What do you need from me right now?"

Our break plan

Our signal for a break: _____ We'll come back after: _____

Safety first. If you feel afraid of your partner, or there is any physical harm, threats or control, this guide is not the right tool. Call 911 in an emergency, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (text START to 88788).