

Hubby no. 3? Katie
with her latest
lover, Leandro

Dear Jordan,

Being
SINGLE
isn't scary!

As she moves on to the next man, we explain why taking time off from relationships can be the best thing for you...

The ink is barely dry on her divorce papers to Alex Reid, yet Katie Price has spent the past month snogging, hugging and gazing lovingly at her latest man, Argentinian model Leandro Penna.

We've seen this behaviour from Katie before – she hooked up with Alex within just months of separating from Peter Andre, and was soon seen in a series of steamy clinches with him.

What is she doing? She seems so desperate to be in a relationship, but after two divorces in two years, surely she needs a break? We asked relationship experts James Preece and Denise Knowles why some women find being single so terrifying...

DESPERATE FOR SECURITY

If you've been in a long-term relationship that's ended suddenly, it's natural to feel lost, sad and frightened about the future. If you've been part of a couple for a long time and you suddenly have to rediscover your identity as a single girl, it can be confusing and unsettling. So it's not surprising that some women want to cling on to the security they feel they get from being in a relationship.

'The break-up of any relationship is traumatic, and you need to give yourself time to grieve the loss of that person from your life,' explains Denise Knowles. 'Some people can't deal with this painful process, so they avoid it by finding another boyfriend as soon as possible.'

But Denise warns against doing this: 'This quick-fix is simply never the solution. If you constantly jump from one relationship to the next, you can lose a sense of your own identity. Instead of enjoying being yourself and doing what makes you happy, you're always trying to please a man. It's much healthier to take a break between relationships, to heal and rediscover who you really are.'

THE ULTIMATE REVENGE

When a relationship ends, it's natural to want to prove a point to your ex, especially if you're the injured party – the one who has been dumped. And sometimes the easiest way to do that is to show him how quickly you've moved on.

'When you split up with someone, you're confused and hurt, so finding someone else papers over these cracks,' explains James Preece. 'It's possible that Katie is doing this to make Alex jealous, and to show him she's still desirable and successful. However, it's an emotionally immature way of dealing with a difficult situation.'

This approach won't just hurt your ex – you're also inevitably hurting yourself when your new love fizzles out.

'Relationship-hoppers are often addicted to the honeymoon period,' explains Denise. 'When love is new, they feel secure and their self-esteem rockets, but this feeling can never last. They soon get bored and the bloke gets dumped.'

MAKING THE BREAK

If you've always been a hopeless romantic, it can be difficult to wean yourself off the idea that being with a man is the key to happiness. 'Feeling a need to be in a relationship is something that affects women who have a very unrealistic and childlike view of love and romance,' says Denise. 'It's also common in those who don't have solid friendships that they can fall back on in times of heartbreak, which is one of the reasons why creating a relationship is common among celebrities.'

'The only way to break the cycle is to chill out and be by yourself for a while. Work out why you're unhappy and why things didn't work out in your last relationship. If you don't address those issues, you're never going to be in a position to find a love that lasts.'

So if you've neglected your friendships in favour of your boyfriend in the past, learn your lesson this time and remember there is more to life than being in a relationship. 'There's nothing worse than being with someone who doesn't fulfil you, or makes you feel insecure,' says James. 'But if you have good friends, they should be able to tell you if they think a bloke is right for you. You'll also be able to enjoy the single life more if you don't depend on a man to be your social life. If you've just come out of a relationship, there's nothing more cathartic than letting your hair down with your mates and enjoying your new-found freedom.'

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SHE'S ONLY JUST LEFT ALEX

Katie started dating cage fighter Alex in 2009

AND IT ALL STARTED WITH PETER

Katie's five-year relationship with Peter Andre began in early 2004