

# Reader's Digest

## This Is Why January Is the Biggest Month for Divorce



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## **It's not exactly the most cheerful way to ring in the new year.**

For years, January has unofficially been dubbed Divorce Month. Many legal experts believe that the reason for this trend boils down to one idea: the holidays. People don't want to get divorced during the holidays. If couples, especially those with children, have started to consider divorce before the holidays, they make a point of staying married through the end of the year so their family can have one last holiday season together before they split. Watch out for these [signs that your marriage is headed for divorce](#).

As [Russell I. Marnell](#), principal lawyer at the Marnell Law Group told *Reader's Digest*, the holidays lead to an increase in January divorces in a combination of ways. "Stress levels during the holidays are exacerbated by the stress of the marriage and they don't want to deal with both of these situations," he said. "A couple that is struggling to maintain a marriage may often be prompted to consider divorce as part of one or both of the partners' self-evaluation that comes with the new year. Many people make New Year's resolutions to put their personal lives in order, even if that includes ending an unhealthy marriage."

Others may get so swept up in the alternate reality of pretty lights, joyous music, and surplus merriment that they believe they can really try to make their relationship work. But once the clock strikes midnight on January 1, real-life problems start piling up again like snow on the county courthouse.

"Another reason why people divorce in January is tax issues," Marnell said. "You may have filed a joint tax return in the past and you don't want to deal with that going forward. You may want to get any tax issues resolved before the year's end." Taxes

certainly aren't the only excuse couples are giving these days. These are the [top 10 benefits of being divorced](#).

This trend is not just an urban myth, lawyers definitely notice the January difference. Marnell adds, "The University of Washington did a [study](#) showing most divorces filed in the state happen in March. That may be due to the time lag of several months from the first meeting with a lawyer in January to then preparing and filing with the court the legal documents necessary to start the divorce action."

Family law attorneys [Kelly Frawley](#) and [Emily Pollock](#) from [Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP](#) shared this with *Reader's Digest*: "We don't necessarily see an influx of new clients in January, but it is common that clients who have been on the fence about whether to file a divorce action or even start the discussion about divorce with their spouse, may use January as a starting point to move forward with the process."