



Physical Contact – Guidelines

1. It is prohibited for a man and a woman to make physical contact with each other even if there is a garment (e.g., clothes, gloves, etc.) between them. (*Beis Shmuel* EH 20; *Ezer Mekudash* EH 20; *Igros Moshe* YD 3, 54:1)
2. If physical contact is necessary for health reasons, or to save one from danger – and there is no alternative, it is permitted. (Even in such circumstances, it is preferable to wear gloves.) (*Shach* YD 157:10 and 195)
3. Engaging in physical contact with the intent to foster closeness is a particularly severe prohibition. This falls under the category of *abizrayhu d'giluy arayos*, for which one must give up their life rather than transgress. (See *Shulchan Aruch* EH 20; *Shach* YD 157:10; *Beis Shmuel* EH 20)

(In the upcoming emails, we will *iy"h* elaborate upon the *halachos* of physical contact for health reasons, where there is no danger involved. One who has a practical *shaylah* of this nature should consult a *posek*.)

