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EVEN MORE COLLEGE ROOMMATE TIPS

By dan the roommate man

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Living with a roommate will probably be unlike anything you have done in your life until now. To help you adjust to your living situation, we offer the following advice:

Be realistic.

Don't expect your roommate to be your best friend and constant companion. Continuous close contact can strain even the best of friendships.

Keep the lines of communication open.

Discuss the potential areas of conflict. Be open to compromise. If necessary, make a list of ground rules concerning such issues as music, smoking, and visitors. This will lessen the chance of arguments over simple misunderstandings. If your roommate is doing something you don't like, express your feelings. It's usually better to air concerns immediately. Don't store up a lot of petty grievances -- they will grow into a major problem.

Remember your RA is there to help.

Although most RAs prefer that students try and work out disagreements on their own first, they are always available to help mediate serious conflicts.

Know your rights

As a resident you have the right to:

Sleep and relax in your room.

Read and study in your room, free of interference.

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Have control over your personal possessions.

Have free access to your room.

Have a clean, safe environment in which to live.

Entertain guests without infringing upon the rights of your roommate or community.

Appropriately challenge another's behavior when it infringes on your rights.

Seek the aid of staff in resolving conflicts after your own unsuccessful attempts at resolution.

dan the roommate man www.roommateexpress.com

COLLEGE ROOMMATES 101

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"Don't expect to be best friends with your roommate, just settle for not killing each other..."

"You would not believe how weird my roommate is..."

"My roommate from hell did it again..."

Yes, I heard all the roommate stories before I started college. The majority of them were about how awful roommates were and how it was impossible to get along. I had a major case of roommate phobia before I started college and I was convinced that I would get a psychopath for a roommate and everything would go downhill from there. To my surprise, my roommate and I became best friends and we decided to live together again this year.

I know it is definitely rare that my roommate and I ended up best friends, but the truth is, everyone can learn to get along with their roommates. It doesn't require that the two of you become best friends, or even friends at all. You just need to practice common courtesy. Here are a few helpful tips and guidelines:

Dan's Roommate Survival Guide

1. The first thing you and your roommate should do is to sit down and write a living contract together. List rules for the room that the both of you agree to follow. For example, quiet hours, telephone calls, borrowing each other's things, having friends sleep over, etc. Writing the contract together ensures that both of you understand what is agreed upon. Also, when one of you breaks one of the rules, there is written proof that the contract was violated, as opposed to the two of you arguing day in and day out

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about what the rules were in the first place.

2. After the contract is written, try your best to follow it. When you break one of the rules, apologize and acknowledge that you broke a rule. Don't pretend it didn't happen or hope that your roommate didn't notice. They probably did, and they will get upset with you if you pretend it didn't happen. Also, when your roommate breaks one of the rules, be forgiving, especially if you've broken a few rules yourself. Don't hold grudges and keep tabs of when your roommate broke the rules and bring it up every time the two of you have a fight. This is extremely annoying and your roommate will end up doing the same. Then the two of you will have hour-long fights as both of you bring up everything that the other person did wrong since the beginning.

3. Be considerate. If you spilled something, clean it up. Wash the dishes after you use them, especially if the dishes aren't yours. Don't take things without permission. If you see your roommate studying, even if it isn't quiet hours, turn down the volume. Being considerate is contagious and your roommate will do the same for you.

4. And the most important tip of all, communicate with your roommate. If something is bothering you,

don't expect your roommate to figure it out. Just tell him or her what it is and try to work out something so that it isn't bothering you anymore. It is so easy to just stop speaking to each other when something goes wrong, but it won't get resolved that way. Communication is the key!

I know that there are some really bad roommates out there and these guidelines won't help everyone. For those people, I recommend that you talk to your Resident Advisor as soon as possible and tell him/her your situation. Your RA's are paid to help you, so don't hesitate to go to them for support. They will let you know if it is possible to change rooms and/or roommates and what the proper procedure is.

Roommates are really nothing to be afraid of. They are people just like you. Chances are, even if you and your roommate are extremely different, you can still end up being friends. They are going to be a big part of your school experience, so make an effort to get along. And who knows? Maybe you will get lucky and you and your roommate will have a best friend for life—bridesmaid/ best man at your wedding—name your children after each other kind of relationship. Good luck!

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