

THINGS TO TALK TO YOUR ROOMMATE ABOUT,BEFORE YOU MOVE IN

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By dan the roommate man

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1. Who is going to bring what things to the room? Who is going to bring the television, VCR, refrigerator, etc.? How many of each of these do we need?
2. When will you be moving in? Will these be different times? Who is going to help you move in? Do we need to alternate times?
3. How will the room be decorated? How many things do we need to have to have our room be 'home like?' Will this only be one person's decorations?

When you move in, take time to talk to your roommate about:

1. Your sleep habits. Are you a heavy or light sleeper? Do you enjoy early or late nights? How about naps?
2. Your study habits. When do you study? What kind of noise can be in the room while you study? Do you need advance warning?
3. How clean are we going to keep our room? When will we clean? Which areas can one another clean?
4. Use of possessions. Can everything be shared? Which items can guests use?
5. What about friends coming over? How often can people spend the night? How many friends can be over at once? Do you need advance warning?
6. Security. When will the room be locked? Who will take responsibility for these times?

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7. Communication. How will we communicate to each other when there is a problem? What about phone messages? Who can use the phone, computer,etc?

8. How quiet and respectful of each other are we going to be when one of us is sleeping or studying?

Talk to one another about:

What do you do for fun.

Where you are from.

How you grew up.

What your favorite things are.

What your major is.

What your career goals are.

What some of your likes and dislikes are.

What things you each can do to make the living environment great for both of you.

Rules for good discussion:

Focus on the behavior– not your roommate.

"Own" your feelings. No one can make you feel something– you choose to feel that way.

Try and listen to your roommate's perspective. Let him/her speak without interruption.

Make sure you understand what is being said. Never assume anything.

Remember that this is not a win lose situation. The goal is to find some kind of compromise with which you can all live. Try to be as objective and rational as possible.

If emotions are running too high, take a break and talk again later.

Try to get to the heart of the problem right away. Don't waste time on the little details of the concern.

Try to remain calm.

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CAN MY CURRENT ROOMMATE JUST THROW ME OUT?

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QUESTION:

I feel that I am being wrongly evicted from our apartment by another roommate who claims to be the only one on the lease. I'm pretty sure I signed it, too, but I can't remember.

ANSWER:

The first thing to do is to get a copy of that lease. Start with the landlord, who probably has a copy (and state law may require him to give you a copy if you request it). If you're on the lease, your roommate cannot get you out — only landlords can evict tenants.

Now, suppose you're not on the lease. All is not lost. If the landlord has treated you as a tenant — by accepting rent directly, for example, or putting your name on the mailbox or doorbell — you may have attained the status of a tenant. Surely, if you and the roommate rented the place together and it was clear that you were on equal footing, you should be given the status of a tenant.

Once you are a tenant, a co-tenant such as your roommate cannot evict you. Only the landlord can do that.

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