

Tips for Happy Roommates
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Families are used to the ebb and flow of relationships, and have their love for one another to rely on in more difficult times. However, no one really discusses how this works with roommates. For young adults, our roommates may be our friends or they may be strangers. How do we get along with someone who we are not as familiar with or “required” to love? If you are looking for ways to make repairs in your relationship, here are some tips for getting along with your roommate(s).

1. Choose your roommate well. Evaluate whether you would want to be friends with your roommate. Do your personalities and values mesh? Do you have shared interests?
2. Treat your roommate as you want to be treated. Treat each other with respect.
3. Respect each other’s space. Even if you think your roommate won’t mind that you borrow a CD, make sure you ask before going into someone’s room. You probably don’t want your roommate rummaging through the drawer next to your bed either.
4. Work out an agreement for household chores and stick to it. Know your needs and stick up for them and expect your roommate will do the same.
5. Plan to spend some time together doing something fun. This helps unite you as partners in your living space.
6. Plan to spend some time apart. Nothing is worse than a clingy roommate who does not have their own friends.
7. Know how to resolve conflict and solve problems as they arise. Avoiding confrontation about the dishes in the sink will just lead to resentment. Talk about your concerns and be willing to negotiate and make compromises.
8. Develop an understanding around guests. How often are you comfortable having visitors and where will they stay? This can range from rowdy hook-ups in the middle of the night to long visits from family.

If you find these tips are not quite enough, it may help to use a mediator to solve problems that arise with your roommate. It is best to select a neutral party such as a neighbor, resident advisor, or therapist.