

Tips on How to Get Along with Your Roommate

Are you new at this “roommate thing”? Here are some helpful pointers that will aid you in your efforts to have the best relationship with your roommate(s)!

Introduction Even if you know about your roommate, sharing basic information about yourself is important. You may want to discuss some of the following things:

1. **Your hometown:** How big is it? Are you from an urban, suburban, or rural area?
2. **Family:** Do you come from a large or small family? Do you have any brothers or sisters? Do you have any pets?
3. **Previous school:** How big was your previous school? Were you involved in any sports/organizations?
4. **Your major:** What is your major? Why did you choose your major? What career /further education do you want to have after you graduate?
5. **Friends back home:** Are any of them attending USI? Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend back home?
6. **Interests:** What are your hobbies? Are there any activities that you want to do at USI? Do you play any sports?

Lifestyle These are the typical things that can cause roommates to disagree – so it is very important to discuss them! Often, little things can get in the way of a great roommate relationship.

1. **Sleep habits:** What time do you normally go to sleep? Do you need a lot of sleep (8+ hours) or a little sleep (6- hours)? Can you sleep with music playing or the lights on? Inevitably, you or your roommate will have early morning classes while the other can sleep until noon. Discuss some alternatives:
 - Do late night studying in the library.
 - If you have to return late at night, be quiet and don't turn on the lights.
 - If you have early morning classes, be quiet and dress in the bathroom. Do not use the hair dryer in the morning.
2. **Temperature:** Do you like the room to keep the room cool or warm? What kind of a compromise can you and your roommate agree on?
3. **Noise:** Are you a loud person or a quiet person?
4. **Music/TV:** How often/loud do you play your music and/or watch TV? Is it okay if I use your stereo, TV, DVD player when you are not around?
5. **Money:** How do you feel about lending money? What about sharing expense for any food, cleaning supplies, entertainment, or decorations for the room?
6. **Visitors:** How do you feel about guests in the room? What about overnight guests? What about guests of the opposite sex? How would you feel about friends from home coming up for the weekend and staying in our room? Are there certain times or dates when you do not want guests over? If your roommate is studying when you bring in a friend, what should you do? If you go home for the weekend, can your roommate invite a friend over? Can they use your bed? Think how you would feel if you came home to find a stranger sleeping on your floor – or worse – in your bed! Always consult your roommate about guests. When you have guests over, you are responsible for the actions of your guests. **If something is stolen, misplaced, or damaged by one of your guests, you are responsible!** It is important that you explain to guests the importance of respecting your roommate's belongings and privacy!

7. **Habits:** Do you have any pet peeves?
8. **Health:** Sometimes illnesses are very personal; however, if you have a recurring illness or a consistent health issue such as diabetes, you may want to inform your roommate.
9. **Arranging the room and keeping the room clean:** Make sure you both like the arrangement. If you feel like changing the room, talk to your roommate BEFORE switching the room. You would not want to come back and find your bed disassembled, drawers upside down, and your roommate in the middle of the room putting together a new bookshelf? Ask your roommate first and do it together. You and your roommate should decide who will clean what and when? Are you a very organized person who has a specific place for everything? Do you make your bed every morning? From the beginning, find out if neatness is important to one or both of you. Set up a cleaning schedule.
10. **Privacy:** How do you feel about your privacy? How often and when do you need time alone?
11. **Borrowing/ Sharing:** How do you feel about sharing things such as clothes, music, food, etc.? You don't have to share everything, but think and discuss the following:
 - When is it okay to borrow your clothes, DVDs, computer, etc?
 - What can you borrow...what needs to stay where it is?
 - Will you both have equal access to the microwave, TV, fridge, stereo, etc? (despite who brought them)Just because you brought the TV, refrigerator, etc. doesn't mean you should have control over it all the time. If you do not want to share your things, like a refrigerator, suggest your roommate bring their own. Suggesting you both bring a TV for the bedroom is excessive. Be reasonable.
12. **Safety issues: ALWAYS LOCK THE DOOR!** While campus is generally a safe place, no one should take any chances. You and your roommate spent money on the things in your apartment. Be respectful and look out for the safety of your ENTIRE room. **DO NOT GIVE OUT YOUR KEY!**
13. **Study Habits:** When do you study? Who do you study with? Where do you study? How long/often do you study?

What Helps?

1. **Flexibility:** Make sure that you are reasonable in all situations.
2. **Compromise:** Don't expect things to go your way, or no way at all.
3. **Assertiveness:** While you may need to cool off after being upset, it is best to address situations sooner than later. Adopt a "24 Hour Rule".
4. **Respect:** Keep personal boundaries, beliefs and values in mind.
5. **Optimism:** In most cases, there is a reasonable solution. Persistence is key!

What Doesn't Help?

1. **Assumptions/Pre-judgments:** Always ask questions before you make up your mind about something or someone.
2. **Gossip:** Go directly to the source! Slandering your roommates will not help the situation.
3. **Passiveness:** You can't expect a roommate issue to resolve itself without speaking about it.
4. **Minimizing:** Just as you may expect your roommate(s) to take you seriously, you should do the same for them.
5. **Negative Language:** Threatening and escalating the situation blows everything out of proportion!

I Tried Talking to My Roommate....What Now??

Your RA is a valuable resource for you, when dealing with roommate issues. All RAs are trained and equipped with the skills necessary to help you achieve harmony in your room. RAs are by no means experts, but are helpful in situations where you need help communicating with your roommate(s).

Below are some situations in which you may want to consult with your RA:

- . You are intimidated by your roommate(s).
- . You are angry and not able to communicate effectively.
- . When your roommate(s) don't acknowledge that there is an issue.
- . When you are concerned about your health and safety.
- . When your roommate agreement has been broken.

When you talk with your RA, they will do their best to help you deal with all of the issues in your room. However, there are times where a room change may be the best outcome. If you have tried to talk with your roommate and you have consulted your RA to help and still experience issues, then your Area Coordinator and/or Graduate Assistant may consider moving you to a new room/apartment. Room

change requests can be made from the Housing and Residence Life link on the University website [insert web address].

Once your room change form has been received by the Area Coordinator, you will meet with him/her or the Graduate Assistant of the area you live in. It is the philosophy of Housing and Residence Life for students to actively work to resolve issues in their rooms before a room change is granted. If it is evident that you have done all that you can to resolve your issues, then a room change may be granted based on the availability of spaces.