

Living with roommates

Easy · 1 hour to set up · Free

Most roommate fights are about the same few things: sleep, noise, guests, cleaning, food, borrowing and money. Talk about them in the first week, write down what you agree on, and bring up problems early and in person, within 48 to 72 hours. You don't have to be best friends. You do have to talk.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ Your roommates, at a time when nobody's rushed
- ☐ A written roommate agreement or a free template
- ☐ The question list below

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **Before you sit down, think about your own routines and what you need to be comfortable, so you can say it clearly.**
- 2 **Learn each other's schedules.** An early class and a late work shift matter more than whether you like the same music.
- 3 **Go through the big topics and write down what you agree on: quiet hours and bedtimes, cleaning and trash, shared food, using each other's things, guests and overnight visitors, and what happens if something breaks.**
- 4 **Put numbers on it where you can: quiet hours from when to when, how many nights a guest can stay without asking again, and how many people counts as a party that needs everyone's OK.**
- 5 **Ask before you borrow anything, including food, clothes and toiletries.** Give a heads-up about guests or a weekend away.
- 6 **Bring up problems early, ideally within 48 to 72 hours, before things get heated.** Do it face to face. A texted "Don't forget to take out the trash" can land very differently than you meant.
- 7 **Use "I" statements, listen without interrupting, then repeat back what you heard, including how they feel.**
- 8 **Look for a trade.** Most fixes involve each person giving something and getting something. Then go back to the agreement and update it if it isn't working.

Watch out Don't try to settle it while either of you is angry. It's OK to take a break and agree to talk again in 24 hours. Pick a private, neutral place to talk.

DAD NOTE Say the small thing on Tuesday so you don't have to say the big thing on Saturday.

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/your-place/moving-out/living-with-roommates/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: University of Colorado Boulder; George Mason University; Rutgers University; Ohio State University Student Legal Services.