

How to Get Along with your Roommate

Going into college most students will typically spend their first year in a dorm/residence hall. While it may be crowded, it's a great place to easily make new friends. After the first year you can then decide whether you would like to live on-campus or off-campus. In either living situation, odds are you will be dealing with a college roommate.

Roommate conflicts can make or break your college experience. Schools do their best to pair incoming students as roommates by finding some common ground through surveys and interests, but sometimes who people appear to be on paper may not be the case in person and conflicts may arise.

At first living with someone you don't know may seem a little awkward, but as soon as you start getting to know each other and doing activities together, you will both grow into your comfort zones. This is why you will see so many dorm activities going on throughout the semester; these social gatherings help break the ice and get people comfortable to their new living situation and to those around them. This is a new beginning for everybody and a great place to make new friends. Be outgoing and ready and willing to meet new people. They are in the same boat as you.

Make an Effort

Go out of your way to be welcoming to your roommate and others in the dorm. Smile and be genuinely interested (don't be fake). Meet your roommate's family when they are helping move in (and offer a lending hand). You'll see where they're coming from and they'll feel less like a stranger.

Similarities and Differences

You will have them. Learn to cope, adjust and accept your roommate's interests. When you first meet and are slowly starting to get to know each other, find out any pet-peeves the other person may have. Also ask questions that gauge your roommate's lifestyle, such as what their typical sleep schedule is and how they spend their evenings. When it comes to differences between you and your roommate, don't sweat the small stuff. Sometimes you may just have to step outside and calm yourself down and ask yourself, "Does this really matter?"

Learn to Share

Every relationship needs space and every roommate needs their own personal time and space. Set some agreed-upon ground rules especially when it comes to inviting friends over and late night noises and activity. Learn to share things like TV time, storage space, fridge space, and dorm space but also make sure you are giving yourself some personal space as well.

Learn to Communicate

Communication goes a long way in any relationship. It is best to release any issues bothering you rather than keeping them bottled up, as you don't want any awkwardness between you two. When issues do arise, keep your cool, stay calm and talk things out.

Voice your concerns, but be civil. Express your concerns starting on a positive note.

Example:

I like how you (insert compliment here) but one thing you may work on is (voice your concerns here).

If progress isn't being made, talk to an RA, as they can probably help.

All in all, college can be a stressful experience. Don't take it out on your roommate or others that are close to you. If it really comes down to it and you can't stand your roommate, simply request a new one. But overall, you should expect to deal with all kinds of people. There is a greater diversity of people in college than there are in high school.