

# Awesome Roommate Relations Made Easy



ELON UNIVERSITY

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**Residence Life**

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**Have you ever shared a room with someone?**

**For some of you, living with a roommate will be a totally new experience.**

- **Learning how to share a room and get along with a total stranger will be really good for you in the long run!**
- **Being a good roommate means that you are respectful towards one another and willing to work to make your room comfortable for both of you.**
- **This means that both of you will have to compromise at some point. This isn't Burger King and you won't be able to "have it your way" ALL of the time.**

**Cramping your style...**

We want you to love where you live and getting your expectations in check **BEFORE** you move in will make that a whole lot easier.

If you set your expectations too high, you'll be shocked and disappointed when you move in, creating a whole lot of unnecessary stress for yourself. You can avoid this by adapting your expectations.

**Check yourself before you wreck yourself**

“This doesn’t mean you have to lower all of your standards, but you may have to adjust a few.” (Fee, 2009)

- For example, it’s unrealistic to think that your roommate will be just like you or that they’ll never have a bad day.
- It’s also unrealistic to think that there will never be conflict. Expecting to have disagreements is a lot different than assuming you’ll never have a fight.
- Let’s face it, Maynard is not Trump Plaza. You’re sharing a small space and this will be an adjustment for both of you.
- If you want to have a good roommate, think about what you can do to BE a good roommate!

**Say what?**

- **Personal Safety** - You have the right to feel safe in your room and suite at all times.
- **Respectful communication** - No shouting, name-calling, vicious emails, mean tweets, or nasty Facebook posts.
- **Respect for your personal property** - No using each other's stuff without permission
- **Rules that are made together** - one person doesn't get to decide all of them. (Fee, 2009)
- **Besides, rules that are made by both people** have a much better chance of working out.

**Okay... so what CAN I expect?**

- Location is not everything. There are lots of good spaces on campus. Don't tie your happiness to one spot.
- Most students say that it's the people, not the building, that make their living experience enjoyable.
- Your roommate doesn't have to be (and may not be) your new best friend. Also, understand that what you value in a roommate may be different from what your roommate is looking for.
- The key is peaceful coexistence. If a strong friendship develops, that's great!

**Buds before buildings**

- Talk early and often. Call your roommate when you receive your assignment so that you can start getting to know each other.
- Don't decide after a few conversations that it won't be a good match. Difference is a good thing!
- Avoid judging your roommate based on first impressions. Would you want someone to do that to you? You need to give your roommate a chance in person, don't write them off based on what you see on Facebook.
- Being accepting doesn't mean that you have to agree with everything about that person, it means that you are open to the fact that it's okay that others are different than you.

**From Myspace to Our Space**

- Before you move in, use the individual preferences survey on our website to help you think about your living preferences.
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - How can someone tell when I'm having a bad day?
  - What are some of my habits that a roommate might need to know about?
  - What kind of sense of humor do I have?
  - What am I obsessive about?
  - What am I willing to share?
- The idea behind the survey is that you will be better able to express your preferences, needs, and values when you are aware of them.
- Don't be afraid to talk to your roommate! Opening up about your Miley Cyrus obsession early on will make it easier to express a concern or frustration later on.

**What's your status?**

- Make rules **BEFORE** you need rules. That way, you can avoid unnecessary conflicts and save yourself a lot of trouble later.
- Talk about whatever is bothering you as soon after it occurs as possible. But make sure that it's an appropriate time. Don't bring it up while your roommate is trying to study for a big test or running out the door.
- Don't assume your roommate can read your mind.
- Talk **TO** your roommate, not **ABOUT** them to everyone else on the hall.
- Think about what you'd like to have happen. Reverse the roles and think about how you would want to be approached if you were in your roommate's shoes.
- Give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that your roommate does not wish to cause you harm or make your life miserable.

**Walk the walk and talk the talk**

- When talking to your roommate, use I-statements and identify specific actions. Focus on behaviors, not personality.
- Instead of saying, “I think you’re the rudest,” try saying, “When Susie and Sally are here at 3am every night when we said no one here past 1am, then I can’t get my homework done or get any sleep.”
- Be a good listener and respect your roommate’s point of view. By listening non-defensively, you will have a better chance of meeting in the middle and ending things happily.

**Walk the walk and talk the talk**

- We want you to love where you live!
- Utilize your RA and the AD.
  - Undergraduate students serve as resident assistants (RA). These students work to make your campus experience great and serve as campus and community resources for students.
  - They not only help keep students safe, they also bring fun and excitement to your community by planning various events and activities for students to participate in. More often than not our student leaders become the big brothers and sisters to their residents, serving not only as their friend and confidante but also a guiding hand in terms of rules and regulations.

**Tap into your resources!**

- **The AD (one for each residential area):**
  - The assistant director of residence life is a professional staff member with a master's degree and is responsible for community development and the overall administration of a residential area. He/she lives in an on-campus apartment.
  - ADs supervise the area student staff, facilitate room changes, conduct judicial hearings, and provide basic counseling for all residents (including roommate mediation). Assistant directors support residents within their community.

**Tap into your resources!**

- It's time to wrap this up. Before we sign off, we'd like to say welcome to Elon! We look forward to having you on campus.
- We'll see you in August!



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Works cited:

Fee, M. (2009). *My Roommate is driving me crazy!*. Bothell, WA: Book Publishers Network.

**Long live Elon!**