

How To Resolve Those Difficult Apartment Issues

Living with strangers, or even friends, can be challenging – especially if it's your first time living away from home. Learn how to divide the bills and chores in a winning style.

Divvying up the Bedrooms

It's rare that apartments have rooms of equal size. As a result, some people might feel they've got the short end of the stick when they don't end up with the master bedroom. However, there is a happy solution for helping roommates opt for smaller or less attractive rooms – make them cheaper.

You know what you're collectively expected to pay for monthly rent, but how you divide this cost is up to you. People with larger bedrooms pay more; people with smaller bedrooms pay less. Usually this works out because there is always somebody who has more possessions to accommodate in the apartment and somebody else who is trying to save money.

Taking Care of Bills

This is the most important, and divisive, issue in every apartment – who pays for what and when. There are several strategies to handle the apartment bills. All roommates could take responsibility by having a bill in their name so each person receives a bill, rather than all bills being directed to just one person. This avoids the risk of one roommate being left to pay out of their own pocket if others miss payments or leave the apartment.

Setting up automatic payments for each individual's monthly expenses takes the hassle out of remembering or encouraging your roommates to pay on time. Another solution is to open an apartment bank account, which everybody automatically pays into each week to cover bills and expenses, including food.

Set up a day every month, perhaps the last Sunday, to reconcile your bills and issues so you can feel confident that the rent and bills will be paid on time.

Establishing an Apartment Duties Roster

Nobody likes doing the dishes or taking out the garbage, but it needs to be done. Have a duties roster with clearly assigned roles for each day. Your roommates will learn to get into the groove of doing chores and will understand that everyone must pull their weight. Dishes can be a subject of contention. Make it clear whether people are responsible for just their own dishes, or if they are all assigned particular dish days.

Improving Relationships in the Apartment

Maybe one roommate likes listening to heavy metal, one is a TV addict and another likes to smoke. It's important to find the balance between enjoying your interests and hobbies and respecting others' rights not to share in these. Smokers should smoke outside, especially if your apartment is smoke-free. Your music should not interfere with your roommates, unless by agreement. Don't let any one person dominate the TV. If the TV is a concern for you, buy or borrow an additional TV for your room.

Respecting each other's privacy and comfort, and taking the time to get to know each other, will go a long way towards creating a harmonious apartment environment.

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