Maybe this blog should’ve been more at the beginning of my series, but there are so many things to touch base on at the beginning of the semester! Roommate living is a situation that you have to deal with all semester. Sometimes you get lucky and live with people you end up liking, or you live with close friends. Other times, you might not care much for who you’re sharing a space with, but there are ways to live in harmony with your roommate, whether you’re in the dorms or off campus.

1. Communication

No, you and your roommate are not in a serious committed relationship (or you could be and if you are, that’s cool), but communication is key to any kind of relationship. Talk to each other about EVERYTHING. Whether you have a problem or just need help with something, talk it out. This will in turn help you create a more secure, trusted relationship, and it will be easier to live with each other.

2. Determine chores/cleaning

This tip is more helpful if you’re living in an apartment but, nonetheless, it’s important to figure out who’s doing what and when. One person shouldn’t always be taking out the trash or sweeping. A cool idea would be to make a chore calendar, and switch off weekly. Pinterest has lots of great ideas to check out.

3. Create a safe space

It is imperative that you respect each other’s privacy and make each other feel safe in your own home. It’s hard living with someone you’re not familiar with. Sometimes it can even be harder to live with close friends. Take it from me — I’m living with my best friend in an apartment and it's definitely been a learning experience. We had to learn more about each other’s needs. We learned that we both really love each other, but
need alone time!

4. Respect each other

Enough said. No roommate relationship will last if you don’t at least have mutual respect for one another.

5. Bond

Even though you and your roommate may be very different, it’s still great to bond with each other! It’s hard to find friends right away, but you already have a potential one in your roommate. You’ll feel more comfortable living with them when you learn about each other, and maybe create a life-lasting friendship.

Blog Column:
A UMass Amherst Survival Guide

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