

# Hunting for housemates

Getting along with roommates can be tricky; finding the perfect person or people to share living space with is essential

BY ION ITKIN  
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

You can't choose your family, but you can choose your housemates. Sharing an apartment, duplex or house during college can be a great way to save money and make friends — or enemies. Finding the right people to live with is as crucial as finding the right classes to take, but because they don't make course catalogs listing people, it's not that easy.

Noah Jack, a 21-year-old landscape architecture student, has shared houses for two years with 10 housemates. In his experience, respect is the most important element in a good roommate dynamic.

"If roommates respect each other, then they will understand each other's imperfections and not take things personally," Jack said. "If they don't, then little issues can get blown up really easily."

Jack currently shares a house with four students. Some of his housemates are old friends and some are former strangers who answered ads. Jack said good communication is the main reason they get along.

"My roommates and I don't have regular gripe sessions or chore charts, but when we need to, we sit and talk about any issues we have, and stuff gets taken care of," Jack said.

Many University students choose to live with good friends. But some shared-housing veterans say lifestyle issues can get in the way of even the strongest friendships.

Environmental studies major Evan Smith, 21, had an experience when good friends turned out to be bad housemates.

"I moved into a place sophomore year with my best friends," Smith said. "It was great at first, but after a while the partying started to pile up, people weren't paying bills on time and everything was always a mess. I wound up getting stuck with a lot of the bills, and it strained my friendships with my housemates."

Smith recommends giving a lot of consideration to potential housemates' living habits.

"I wish I had thought more about the responsibilities of sharing a place," he said. "If I could go back again, I would have tried to live with responsible people rather than just getting a place with my buddies."

Other students find housemates via classified ads in local newspapers, on Web sites such as craigslist.org and roommates.com, or on signs posted on

campus and around town.

International studies major Jude Kirstein, 21, stresses the importance of interviewing potential housemates.

"The first thing I always ask is why a person is leaving their current housing situation," she said. "That way I know if people got kicked out of a house for being lazy or sloppy."

Kirstein shares a house where the landlord reduces the rent in exchange for work trade. Her housemates found the place by answering a newspaper ad.

"I made sure to find people who are comfortable doing chores and taking care of things around the house, and it worked out great," she said.

In the past, Kirstein wasn't so lucky. A transfer student from the Chicago area, she recalled a previous living situation that was far from ideal.

"I lived in an apartment with a couple that seemed cool at first, but they would fight with each other and leave piles of dishes," she said. "It became unbearable."

Kirstein recommends avoiding living with a couple, no matter how stable they seem.

"Every couple fights, and their housemates have to deal with their drama," Kirstein said. "If a couple is ready to move in with each other, they should get their own place anyway."

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- www.rent.com
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