

The Slob

Maybe you lucked out and your roommate is totally awesome. You guys both love to play basketball at the intramural building and (BONUS) her older brother is a senior with super hot friends.

The only problem? She's a complete slob. As in, she has more clothes on the floor than in her closet. And those sweaty sneakers she played basketball in yesterday? They were on your pillowcase this morning.

Catie Eckman, a resident assistant and senior at Penn State, recommends communicating early in the year to decide what belongs to who and who is responsible for cleaning what.

"If you have somebody that is really messy living with someone who is really organized and OCD about things, I would definitely suggest designating what space belongs to who," Eckman said. "Have the conversation that says, 'This is your closet, your stuff stays in your closet. This is my closet. This side of the room is mine.' I don't think you need to go as far as having tape on the floor, but it can be really beneficial to make sure you lay out the borders."

When you have that conversation, write up a cleaning schedule and decide how often you'll clean the room and who is going to clean what.

Eckman also said to inform your roommate when a busy week.

"At the beginning of a week that's going to be super stressful, let your roommate know," she said. "Stress can lead to being messy sometimes you don't have energy to clean after studying."

The Studier

Maybe you've gotten a little caught up in the college scene and haven't focused as much on your studies (sorry mom).

Your roommate on the other hand, is up until 2 a.m. every night studying for his biology class. Oh, and we forgot to mention that he keeps the lights on all night and listens to music while he studies. All while you try to catch up on sleep from the weekend.

Millersville University senior Rebekah Laswell, a former resident assistant and student worker at the housing office, stresses the importance of communicating and compromising.

"I have some friends who have an agreement between them," Laswell said. "They are house rules that you don't interfere with."

Even if you don't want to write a formal housing agreement (most housing offices make you fill one out regardless), set times for lights out each night and designated quiet time.

Your roommate can't give up his music and late night study habits? Ask him to wear headphones when he jams out and to use a desk lamp instead of keeping all lights on.

Still can't sleep? Eye masks and wax earplugs work wonders.

The Stealer

You're running late for class (again) and can't find your favorite t-shirt, and as of last night it was the only one that was clean. After tearing apart every storage bin under your bed, you succumb to the shirt that smells the cleanest. That's when you see your roommate walk out the door wearing that shirt you spent hours looking for.

Cue steam blowing out your nose.

Eckman said to talk to each other about borrowing each other's stuff or taking something that isn't yours. Determine what the rules are for touching each other's stuff. Some people come from families where it's okay to borrow without asking- they might not know it's bothering you.

If necessary, write your name on items that you don't want your roommate to take (especially food). Seeing your name in bold Sharpie is a gentle reminder that it's yours.

Still missing belongings? Buy a lock for dresser drawers, bring a small safe into the room and hide all your valuables. If it becomes a major problem, talk to your resident assistant who can implement strict rules

The Socialite

It's been over a week since your roommate's significant other (who doesn't even go to your school) showed up. And they haven't left. Not once.

Between the giggling, the late night talks and CONSTANT making out, you can't sleep. Not to mention you can't change clothes in your own room because your roommate's boyfriend WON'T LEAVE. Someone needs to go, and it's not going to be you.

Most schools have a guest policy for the dorms, at Penn State you can only have a guest stay for three nights in a row before they have to leave. At Millersville, you may only have a guest eight nights a month.

Eckman encourages communicating with your roommate before inviting someone over, whether it's just a friend or a significant other.

"Certain people find it easier to know a week before the guest arrives, some just want to know the morning of just so they can make sure they know if they want to be there, especially if it's a significant other they might want some alone time," she said.

Set up a schedule for when you can have friends over, whether they're spending the night or not. If you make last minute plans, at least have the courtesy to shoot your roommate a text to let them know who's coming over and when.

If conflicts with guests continue to arise, Laswell suggests using three key points to talk about the problem.

"Personally, I would just sit down and try to bring it up. Say, 'This is what I'm feeling, we need to work together to get something figured out,'" she said.

Use these talking points to get your message across:

- Here's what happened
- Here's how I feel about it
- Let's figure out a compromise and figure out an agreement between us

Figure out the answers to these questions before the year begins to avoid conflict:

- Is there a certain time you don't want people to be in the room?
- Do you do your homework around this time?
- Do you want quiet time where it's just you and me?

The Stinker

You walk into your room after a long day of classes, exams and extracurricular activities and crash in your twin-sized bed that you barely fit in. Just as you begin to relax, something stings your nostrils.

What is that awful smell?

You sniff around your room, picking up dirty laundry and examining the trashcan, until you realize the smell isn't coming from something, but from someone. Your roommate obviously hasn't showered in quite some time.

"If my residents have that issue, I encourage them to come to me. Sometimes bringing in an outside force makes it less awkward," Eckman said. "I strongly encourage them not to be blunt. That can cause retaliation and they can feel extremely disrespected. If you are going to talk about it, go about it in a respectful way where you're not being rude."

Sometimes problems arise when someone rooms with a person from a different culture or ethnicity. Eckman said it can be challenging because they don't have the same norms, in some countries it isn't normal to shower every day.

"I've had to have a program on different norms in America because I had a girl that was complaining that her roommate didn't shower," she said. "We did a thing that made it kind of fun where we talked about, 'Did you know Americans normally shower twice as often as people from this country?' or 'Americans go through this much more soap.'"

Eckman said to suggest showering and doing laundry as a way to hang out rather than a chore. Blast some music in the bathroom, catch up on your day or study together while washing your clothes - make it a bonding experience.

What's a Roommate to Do?

Type of Roommate	Characteristics	Solutions

