

How to live in a flat share during a lockdown?

Many people are currently in this same situation, all you need to do is look on the internet and there are lots of stories good and bad about being in lockdown with people you do not know.

Before this strange lockdown time you might have only said hello to each other, or just had a quick general chat about nothing important. There might have been a few discussions about cleaning or keeping the noise down. But, for the most part you were possibly all more like ships in the night, you are going about your life and they are going about theirs.

What now?

Lockdown is hard enough when you are all family or friends but even harder if you are strangers, or if your lucky acquaintances sharing a property. It is not that your flatmates aren't nice people but if you had to choose someone you had to be stuck inside the house with 24/7, for a few months, it would very probably not be any of them! **So how do you make it work?**

Firstly, we need to remember a few things:

1. You and they do not have a choice; you, they and us, we are all in lockdown
2. None of us know how long it will last
3. You and they are stuck with each other, 24/7 for 1 or 2 months or more, though let's hope not!
4. There is simply no choice but to be understanding & be patient with each other

Yes, ok I hear you say but how do we do that?

The main point seems to be rules, so make up some house rules together.

Right away I hear you think 'Ohhh Nooo' and Why!?

Well the answer is both difficult and easy, which is why they are needed. Everyone has different things they like and do not like, some of us like noise, some of us do not. Some like everything to be clean always especially now and some of us do not, even now. Some of us are very sociable others not so much, some of us work days and others work nights, or we might be different ages.

So, you see there is a lot more behind this simple step than your 1st thought!

So, we have come up with a list of rules, as per current government & health guidance to help you navigate the lockdown together and in harmony, we hope it helps:

Friends:

1. You should not be socialising with friends unless you live in the same house/flat.
2. You should not invite or allow any social visitors such as partners, friends, family or business colleagues you spent time with during your work.
3. No friends, family or partners who do not live there should be staying over.

General rules:

1. You should all only be leaving the as little as possible, for shopping or daily exercise
2. Go out for no more than 1hr of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle. (remember sitting in the park on the bench or grass is not exercise and you may be fined)
3. To travel to work if you cannot work from home
4. Air the property regularly.
5. Do not play music too loudly, have consideration for others
6. Do not cook too early or too late – follow a kitchen rota.
7. Remember some of your flatmates may be working from home or still going out to work.
8. Make up a schedule/ a rota system to make sure you keep out of each other's way as much as possible, we have tried to give you a few pointers on how to do this and why below.

Taking out the Rubbish

1. Do not keep the rubbish in the house/flat, get rid of it regularly.
2. Especially if you have been out wearing a mask and/or gloves that you have put in the bin.
3. Get a rota together for taking out the rubbish every few days, Monday, Wednesday, Saturday.
4. Do not leave the rubbish around for days in the kitchen.
5. Do not leave it by the door of the flat inside or outside.

The areas where you and your flatmates are the most likely to bump into each other.

But firstly, it might be a good idea to find out who is an early bird and who is a night owl.

Kitchen:

1. Make a breakfast/ lunch/dinner timetable – this could be a 30minute slot each
2. Lunch and Dinner can be in 1hr slots.
3. That way no one gets in each other's way
4. Each person must wash up and clean up after their meals.
5. Disinfect everything you have used: the pot handles, kettle handle, knives, forks, spoons, cups, glasses etc anything that you know someone else might touch.
6. Do not share kitchen tea towels.
7. Make sure the rubbish is in a rubbish bag and the bin closed.
8. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag, tied and thrown in the outside bin area.

Bathroom:

1. Make a morning and evening rota for baths and/or showers.
2. Clean a shared bathroom each time you use it.
3. Each person must clean the bathroom after themselves, wiping away all moisture.
4. If you have used the bath disinfect the whole tub (or simply do not take baths right now!)
5. Disinfect the taps on the bath, on the basin and do not forget the button/dial on the shower.
6. Disinfect the toilet handle or chain and of course the toilet seat and lid.
7. Do not share towels, including hand towels.
8. Do not share products, take them out the bathroom and keep them in your room, that way no one else has touched them expect you.
9. Use usual household products, detergents, eco-bleach, as these are highly effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces in kitchens and bathrooms.

Let's make it work together, together!!