Holding Up Your End of the Bargain

When you hold up your end of the rental agreement—by paying your rent on time, complying with the rules your landlord has set for the apartment (smoking, pets, etc.), and staying in good favor with your neighbors—you deprive your landlord of any reason not to hold up his end of the bargain. It's also important to treat your landlord with respect, even if you don't think he deserves it. Acting like a jerk, either over the phone or in person, will only make him less willing to help you—and more apt to give you less than stellar service.

The Considerate Tenant

Here are a few tips for getting on your landlord's good side:

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Pay your rent on time. Being prompt with your rent payments—having your check in his mailbox on the first of the month, if that's what the lease calls for—shows your landlord not only that you're living up to your agreement, but that you take this responsibility seriously.

- **Respond to your landlord's calls right away.** This is a good thing to remember when dealing with anyone—but when it comes to your landlord, you want to return any calls as promptly as possible. It'll help get the job done more quickly, plus your landlord can't then justify his delays with the excuse that you've been difficult to reach.

- **Be on time for meetings.** Anytime you're scheduled to meet with your landlord, either to let him into your apartment or to discuss repairs, it's essential to be on time. If you're on time, things will get done, and he has nothing to complain about. If you're running late and don't let him know, on the other hand, you risk a cancelled meeting and a ticked-off landlord.

- **Clean up before your landlord drops by.** If your landlord comes over and your apartment is a disaster, she's not going to see you in the best of lights. Straightening up before she or any maintenance workers arrive does two things: First, it shows that you are responsible about caring for your living space, and second, it's simply a considerate thing to do. I wouldn't want to be Mr. Fix-It and have to climb over some tenant's dirty underwear or work around a pile of week-old dirty dishes.