You're moving into a room smaller than your closet at home—and you have to share it with someone you've never met. Welcome to college!

Tips on getting along in 144 square feet or less.

Communicate

Other than a spouse, there is probably no other person in the world you will get to know as well as your roommate. Even if you bond instantly, there may be moments when your roomie's little quirks get on your nerves. Letting things fester (in that tiny little space) can turn an annoyance into a misery. Communication—both talking and listening will be the key to a great relationship.

Stuff: Less is more

By the time you've managed to fit in 2 beds, the mini fridge, mini microwave, computer, CD-changer and TV—will there be any room for clothes (not to mention a few books??) There is no way you are going to duplicate all the comforts of home. The less you bring, the less you have to keep track of and maintain.

Borrowing **Rule #1** Don't.

Rule #2 If you absolutely must borrow something, always ask permission first. Return it in the pron

Nothing causes more strife between roommates and friends than borrowing— money, food, clothes, CDs, sports equipment.

Neatness

If the law of averages works, one of you will be extremely neat and the other extremely messy. Here is where you learn the great art of communication and compromise. Mom doesn't live here, but you do. The neatnik will have to learn to tolerate life's imperfections. The slob, well, it's time to start picking up after yourself.

Lights Out

It's inevitable. One of you will have an 8 AM class and the other will want to study until 2 AM. Work out routines for late night studying (is there a lounge?) late night returns (tiptoe and use a flashlight?), early morning classes (tiptoe out and dress in the bathroom?). Everyone needs their zzz's.

Quiet Time

Most dorms have quiet hours. Loud music, parties, or socializing in the hall will not be appreciated by your fellow dorm-mates and are a one-way ticket to unpopularity.

Irreconcilable Differences

When the course of rooming does not run smooth, seek counsel. Your hall or dorm will have an RA (Resident Advisor) who is usually an older student or grad student—young enough to remember what it was like to be a freshman, but old enough to give good advice. Chances are you and your roomie are together for better or worse until June.