

Expert-Backed Advice for Couples Moving in Together: 14 Tips for a Smooth Transition

April 20, 2022 by Julia Weaver

Couples moving in together are taking an exciting step in their relationship. However, a lot will change about your relationship when you're living with your significant other. It's important to have the hard conversations beforehand and continuously check in with each other throughout your relationship.

Your significant other might have routines, habits, preferences, and opinions you're unaware of. There are other important questions to ask as well: Does your partner prefer waking up early on the weekends? Do they prefer to order in instead of cook at home? How will household bills and other expenses be handled? Who's responsible for what chores? Why are you moving in together in the first place?

These questions can be overwhelming but like any aspect of a relationship, communication is key. We asked the top relationship experts all across the country to share their best piece of advice for couples moving in together. So whether you and your significant other are planning to move into an [apartment in Atlanta, GA](#), or a [rental unit in Portland, OR](#), the experience will be as smooth as possible.

1) Address the details ahead of time and set ground rules

- Decide if marriage is the end game. If one person thinks this is a trial run leading up to an engagement, they will be disappointed if they find their significant other only to share expenses.
- Decide on how the finances will be handled and who is responsible for certain financial items. If one person is constantly footing the bill,

resentment builds. Decide whether or not you will have an emergency fund and what it can be used for.

- You both need to agree on how to divide up the chores, such as lawn mowing, house cleaning, and maintenance.
- Decide how neat you both expect the place to be. Agree on what is common area, what's personal space, and the level of tidiness you both expect.
- Make sure you have ground rules on visitors. Can you have a group of friends over until late in the night without disturbing your significant other?
- Decide the level of improvements ahead of time, how you will cover the cost, and when it will be finished. – Susan Trombetti, matchmaker and CEO of [Exclusive Matchmaking](#)

2) Be vulnerable with each other

You need to ask yourself if your partner has let you in emotionally.

Emotional intimacy starts with vulnerability, and it's important that your partner has shown a desire to be vulnerable with you. There will be times that are tough when you live together, so make sure you work well to navigate good times and challenging times. If you ask the hard questions and your partner is willing to work with you, even if that means visiting a counselor or therapist, that's a step in the right direction. If your partner is serious about growing with you, you'll be strengthening both types of attachment.

Before couples move in together, you need to discuss long-term plans. If your goal is getting engaged and married, talk about when an engagement would happen, and goals around having children (if applicable). Make sure your lifestyles match. The right partner will have these serious talks with you and hash out a plan and a timeline.

Be sure to address finances as well. Have a clear understanding of both your and your partner's relationship with money, and certainly your financial goals. You need to discuss how you will pay your rent or mortgage and make sure you both have enough savings to make the move-in together possible. Be transparent and honest with one another. It's wise to set up a joint bank account to contribute money towards your home

payments so there are no surprises down the road. – Amy Anderson, Founder & CEO of [Linx Dating](#) | @ms.linxdating | [LinkedIn](#)

3) Communicate budgets, priorities, deal-breakers, commutes, and space requirements

It's important to communicate budgets, priorities, deal-breakers, commutes, and space requirements. Moving in together can reveal unknown habits, grooming styles, etiquette, and cleanliness deal-breakers that may not have been known before. Budget, chores, furniture, and living styles should also be given significant weight. What items will be kept from each person, what items need to be purchased, and how will you divide move-in costs, monthly expenses, and utility services? Do you have enough money to cover bills in case one or both of you happen to lose your job? Credit scores can be negatively impacted.

Location and space are a big factor. Will both of you be working from home indefinitely? Do you need extra privacy, quiet space, or proximity to your office or place of business? Not all items can be addressed before move-in. Still, good communication can alleviate many misunderstandings and help you know your partner more intimately than before. – [Eddie Hernandez](#), Dating Consultant

4) Create individual spaces to recharge

Couples should review their compatibility factors and what makes them good as a couple. Design the personal spaces to support each individual's needs, such as a little privacy with one person's closet or bathroom in the guest room versus an equal share of the primary room. This allows the individuals to blend their lives while respecting their differences in daily routines and habits. Define ways each person brings value to their new space. Consider each partner equal. Therefore, every responsibility can be on the list to share, alternate, or take the lead. With more couples working from home, individuals need to define their workspace and separate it from their nights, weekends, and leisure spaces. Design the space so one can turn work off and enjoy the rest of their home as a reprieve from the

daily work grind. – Tammy Shaklee, [H4M Matchmaking](#) President / Certified Matchmaker

5) Make even the small decisions together

Don't take a "whatever you want" at face value. Instead, make decisions together so it doesn't backfire on anyone. Mark your territory together. Have fun making it your own. Go shopping and pick out meaningful items for you as a couple. This can be as simple as some candles, a piece of wall art, or some wireless speakers to blast your shared playlists. Most importantly, plan to celebrate your future together, making happy home memories. – Lori Zaslow, NYC Matchmaker and co-founder of [Project Soulmate](#)

6) Don't forget to have fun

When preparing to move in with a significant other, it's important to be honest about your expectations, needs, and preferences. For example, spend time discussing how you will handle your individual needs for space and how you will divide household tasks fairly. Do your best to work together as a team to make picking furniture, paint colors, home decor, etc., as fun as possible while honoring your unique styles. Moving can be very stressful, but being on the same page and viewing living together as an exciting relationship milestone will help offset the expected stress. – [Rachel Dack](#), MS, LCPC, NCC, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and Dating/Relationship Coach

7) Create a "nest list"

A "nest list" is a list with three columns – home wants, habits, and hangups. Home wants are things you really want to have in your new place, such as a man cave, individual bathroom, walk-in closet, right side of the bed, etc. Habits are things like snoring, watching TV late, and always forgetting to plan meals. Hangups are your pet peeves, like empty toilet paper rolls, leaving the toilet seat up, expired produce, unlocked doors, dirty bathrooms, and others. Once you have your lists, adjust, add, or delete together, compromising where you can until you both agree on a final version. You now have an architecture beyond just your home to protect

your amazing relationship. Be sure to keep this list in a place you'll remember so you know where to look if you end up needing it. – Love experts Destin Pfaff and Rachel Federoff from LoveAndMatchmaking.com

8) Balance is a huge key to success

Moving in together is considered the very first step in merging a couple's lives. This life event is not something to jump into without first being crystal clear on financial responsibilities. Does the person who makes more money pay more rent? If so, what could be a reasonable responsibility that the other person could take on to balance the scale? Perhaps incur the cost of internet or groceries for the home. – Annie Garmendia, Matchmaker at Cinge Matchmaking

9) Communicate your needs

The things that we squabble about often come down to our core needs. It's useful to work out your core needs to feel safe, content, at ease, and even loved in your home. What routines are important for you in order to feel well, e.g., morning meditation. How much time for connection or space do you need? What are your needs for cleanliness? Tidiness? What would make you feel loved? Put structures in place to take care of your needs to be free to love. Lemarc Thomas, CEO and Founder of Lemarc Thomas AB

10) Boundaries are key for couples moving in together

Communicating your expectations and preferences before you move in with someone will make that transition easier. Talk about things like chores, schedules, and lifestyle. Moving in with someone is a big step. Even if you know your significant other very well, you'll learn new things about them as you take your relationship to the next level.

It's also a good idea to talk about what happens if things don't work out – if you're buying a place, how will you sell it? If you're renting, who will stay or will you both stay for the rest of the lease? The last piece of advice is to set boundaries around your time so that you still can have your alone time and independence while living together. – Abby Rosenblum, Founder and Matchmaker The Social: Modern Matchmaking

11) Don't base your compatibility on a fun vacation

A common belief is that if a couple can vacation well together, they'll be able to live well together. But all this really means is that they vacation well together. If they don't, however, that is a sign they probably won't live together very well. The differences are finances, responsibilities, and great communication. If you do choose to live together and there is something that bothers you about the other person, you may think that once you're married, something will change. There's a high chance that it will just bother you more. Communication, negotiation, and compromise are the keys in everything with a relationship. – Michele "the Matchmaker" Fields, owner of [Bon Jour Matchmaking Service](#). (Works with residents in Colorado)

12) Designate time to spend together and apart

Moving in with anyone, let alone a significant other or partner, can be a very exciting and emotionally-charged time. As you transition to living together, here are some things to consider:

- Communicate your needs and desires with kindness and understanding.
- Let the small stuff go. Something very important for your partner may not be as important to you (we don't all like ten pillows on the bed?). Living together means you can bring your own unique expression to the space.
- Designate time to spend together both inside and outside your home. Give each other the freedom to enjoy time alone, with friends, or with family, with and without one another. Small gestures or quality time together every week go a long way.

Enjoy this new and incredible experience! Prepare yourself mentally for a challenging period of transition and change, but remember that time will evolve and allow an opportunity to get closer and feel more connected. – Jenny Apple Jacobs from [Jenny Apple Matchmaking](#)

13) Establish a fresh space without reminders of the past

Living together is a big and exciting next step in a healthy relationship. But, to keep growing as a couple, it's very important to develop a fresh space. Whether you're moving into their home, they're moving into your home, or you're getting started in a place new to the both of you, it needs to feel like it's not a reflection of past relationships and memories. Remove items you bought with an ex-partner and donate or put them in storage. Move the decor around so it looks like a new place when you walk in the door. Creating a safe place to be vulnerable and grow together is important to build a strong foundation as you make emotional and physical room for one another. – Jacqueline Nichols, Founder of [Discover Love Matches](#)

14) As much as you prepare, there will be obstacles

Moving in together is a big step, and it's important to set house rules, inventories, and boundaries. Have a conversation about what upsets you – big and small – and what you need from your partner. Maybe you need time alone every day, or maybe you can't stand dishes in the sink. Just like relationships, not everything is going to be perfect. The most important thing is to relax together wherever you are – that's the real root of a relationship. – Brigid Hayward, Founder of [Catalyst Matchmaking](#) (previously Dinner Dating in Norfolk and Suffolk)