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# Helps for Starting YOUR FIRST HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Agricultural Extension Service • University of Minnesota

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# **YOUR FIRST HOME AWAY FROM HOME**

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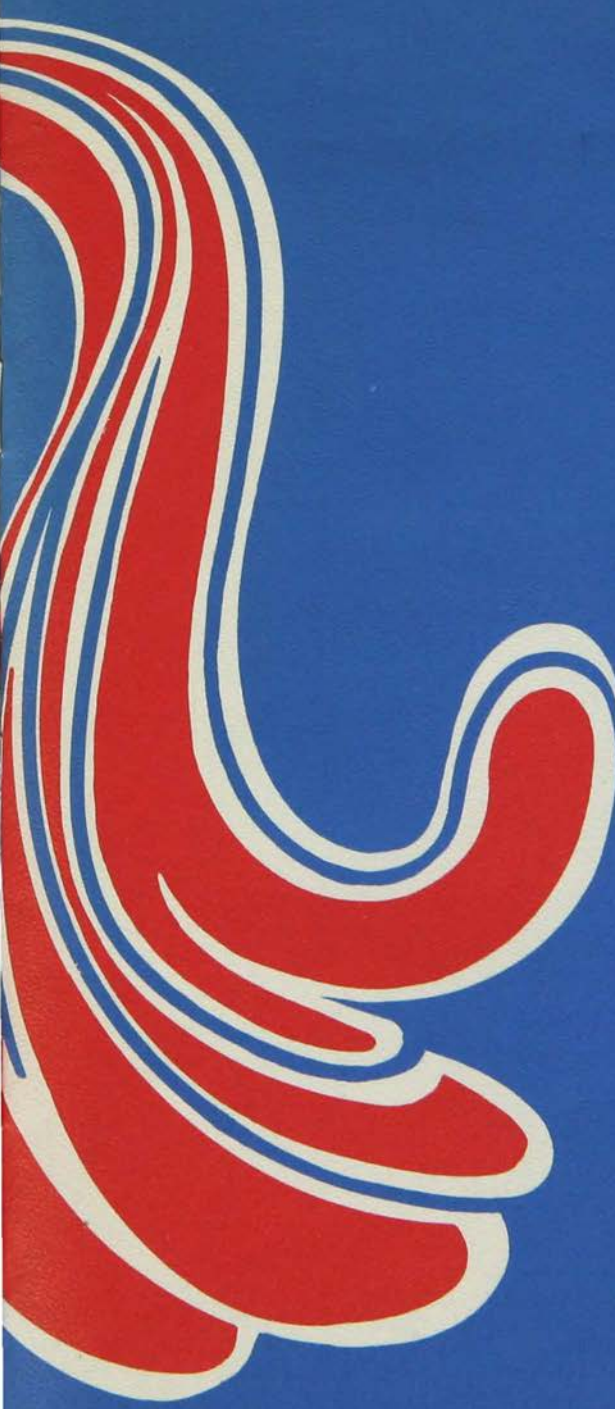
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Your **BIG MOVE** will come when you take your first job or go away to school and establish an apartment or home of your own.

Girls or fellows starting out cut costs by sharing living situations. Some people rent rooms and eat their meals out until they can find someone to share an apartment with. Girls or fellows may share a house or an apartment. Renting a house involves mowing lawns, shoveling walks, and possibly making repairs, which might be easier for boys than for girls. Caring for a whole house requires much more work and can be more expensive than an apartment.

You may live in a furnished apartment, which usually is more expensive than an unfurnished one. Also, the furnishings may be well worn. If you rent an unfurnished apartment, you must provide most everything, although most of today's apartments have ranges and refrigerators.

Before renting an apartment, be sure the location is the best for your purposes in terms of distance from work or school, shopping area, public transportation, degree of privacy, and the ages and interests of the other residents in the neighborhood.

What activities do you need to plan for in your home? Consider eating, sleeping, resting, studying, entertaining, reading, watching TV and listening to records, preparing meals, doing laundry, and caring for your home. You may have hobbies and sports or musical interests that need consideration too.

Young adults generally are interested in items that are attractive and will make living easy, comfortable, and convenient.

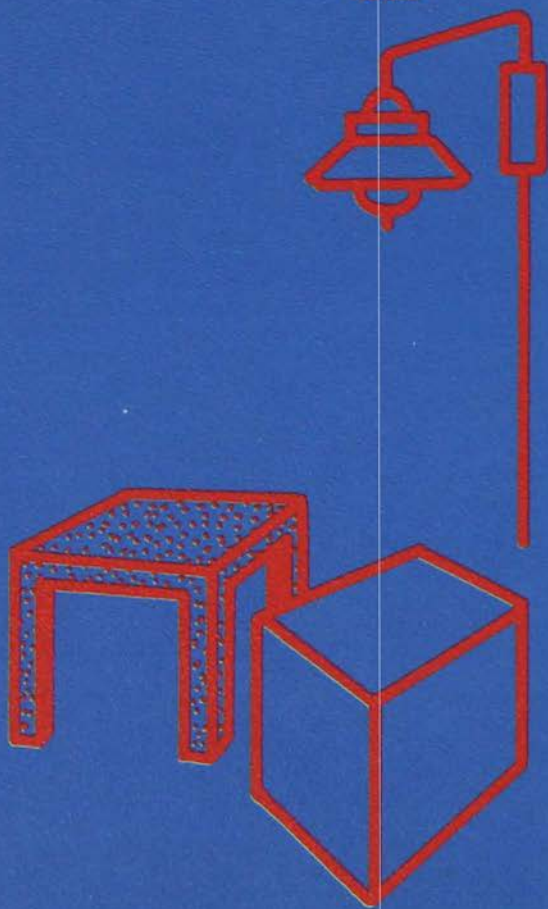
In this bulletin, you'll find suggestions to make your **BIG MOVE** go smoothly. Since most young people are low on funds and their living situations are likely to be temporary, our suggestions are based on minimum needs and costs.

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Chairs  
Sofa  
Table  
Lamp  
Desk  
Draperies  
Rugs  
Radio



## Living Area Needs

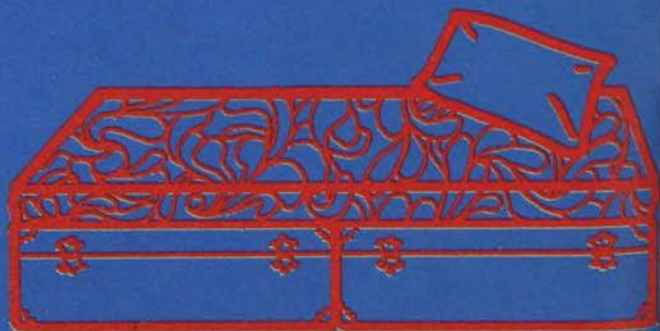
You'll need seating space for yourself and everyone who lives with you. Choose from upholstered and straight chairs, inflatable plastic furniture, bag-like pieces filled with particles of foam that can be shaped as desired, and big pillows for sitting on the floor.

Since most living rooms don't have ceiling lights, plan for table, desk, or hanging lamps. If you choose table lamps, you'll need tables or something to set them on. You might make your own tables or use plywood to make cubes and paint or cover them with colorful adhesive paper. You can hinge the tops and use such boxes for storage and as moving boxes. Cubes can serve as table bases, and you can add tops held in place with angle braces that can be removed at moving time. You also can use TV trays as tables for lightweight articles.

Though not an absolute essential, a sofa can double as a seating and sleeping area. Remember that bed-sofas are usually much heavier than regular sofas and are very difficult to move.

For casual living at low costs, make your own sofa. Use a thick slab of foam or a mattress covered with fabric. Place it directly on the floor or use a slab door or a piece of plywood as a support. Use building blocks or footlockers for the base.

If you can find a remnant, a piece of shag carpet would make a good cover. Inexpensive carpet is easier to cut and sew. Make the cover as you would make a



toaster cover. Use a curved upholstery needle for sewing and a pair of pliers to pull it through the pieces of carpet. Any strong string or fishline will hold.

If you're a student or are living with students, you may need a desk for each person. You'll also need good study lamps to provide good quality light that will prevent eyestrain. Nothing takes the place of a good lamp. You can use one of your dining chairs as a desk chair.

Some apartments furnish draperies, others don't. If you must provide your own curtains, you can make simple, inexpensive ones from such fabrics as unbleached muslin, bed sheeting, or burlap. If you need privacy, make sure you use an opaque fabric. Or make lower sash curtains, such as cafes, and draw them when you need privacy. Inexpensive window shades work well too.

Attractive but fairly expensive window and door treatments include vertically hung strings of beads, ball fringe, or chains. You can use them as room dividers too. Look through a mail order catalog for ideas.

Rugs and carpets are not essential, but they do help absorb noise. Inexpensive and colorful throw rugs may be the answer. Some factorymade braided rugs are quite inexpensive and give good service. If your apartment is carpeted, you may want to use a throw rug at the entrance to keep the carpet clean. It's much easier to wash a throw rug than to shampoo a carpet.

Don't forget a radio. Besides providing entertainment, it will help you keep track of the time, news, and weather conditions.

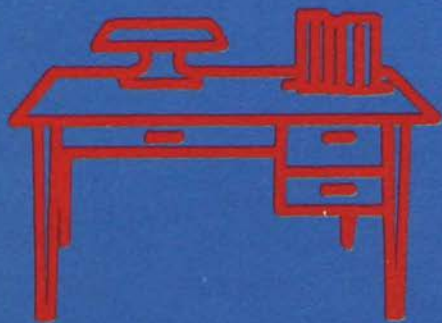


Table  
Chairs  
Storage  
Tableware  
Linens

## Dining Needs

Dining areas often are part of either the living area or the kitchen.

You'll need some kind of table and enough chairs to seat everyone who eats with you regularly. You can use a card table and folding chairs, a breakfast set, or possibly a dropleaf table and chairs.

One way to make your own table is to buy a slab door and attach legs to it. You may be able to find a second or an old door. If it isn't flat, add a fiberboard or plywood top. Such board is available in 4 by 8 sheets for about \$3 for 1/4 inch thickness. You also can use such doors for coffee tables. Add short legs, bricks, or building blocks for support. Still another use is for making your own desk and work area. Use low filing cabinets for support. Buildings or houses being torn down are good sources of low cost doors.

You can use extra dining chairs in the living room, bedrooms, or with a desk.

You'll need enough dishes, silverware, and glassware for everyone, so consider how formally you'll eat and how much entertaining you'll do. Many young people bring a supply of tableware from home: a knife, fork, teaspoon, soup spoon, table spoon, dinner plate, salad plate, sauce dish, cereal bowl, cup, saucer, and a glass or two for juice and beverages. Besides these things, you'll need casseroles, bowls, and platters for serving food.

The kind and condition of your table top will determine whether you use linens. A laminated plastic top is durable and not harmed by moisture. But you should protect less durable finishes with pads and mats.



Bed  
Linens  
Pillow  
Blanket  
Spread  
Curtains

## Sleeping Needs

Each person needs a comfortable place to sleep. You can choose from cots, rollaway beds, dual-purpose sleepers, twin or double beds, sleeping bags, and thick foam pads. Maybe you'll be able to take your bed from home. Remember that a regular size bed costs about half as much as a king size and is easier to take with you when you move. You will probably have a variety of beds, depending on how many people you live with. If you have a double bed, a single rollaway, and a sofa bed in the living room, you would have sleeping space for five.

You'll also need sheets, a pillow and pillowcases, two blankets, and a mattress cover. If you have access to laundry facilities where you live, you can easily get along with a pair of sheets for each bed. A spread is nice, but not absolutely necessary. An inexpensive and easily washed and dried spread does protect blankets and is easier to keep clean than a blanket. A colorful printed sheet can double as a bedspread.

If curtains aren't furnished, you might make them from the same fabric as those in the living and dining areas. Curtains all alike are more usable in another living situation, especially if you move to larger quarters with more windows.

## Kitchen Area Needs

The utensils you'll need will depend on the kinds of foods you prepare and the number of people who eat together. For example, cooking spaghetti for many people requires a large kettle, but making soup and sandwiches for one requires only a small saucepan.

Nearly everyone needs a frying pan. If you have only one, choose a large one with a cover. You can use it for frying eggs, french toast, pancakes, meats, and vegetables; for preparing stews, sloppy joes, soups, spaghetti and meatballs, noodle hot dishes, and an assortment of prepared one dish meals; for heating TV dinners; and for popping corn. If the handle can stand high temperatures, the frying pan can double as a baking dish. If it is electric, you can use it for baking such items as cake, bar cookies, custards, and potatoes.

You'll probably need both a large and small saucepan. Saucepans also can double as mixing bowls.

If you drink coffee, you may need a coffeemaker or perhaps just a saucepan to heat water for instant coffee.

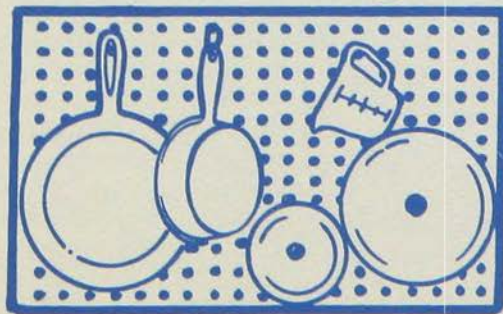
A toaster may be necessary, or you can use the oven or broiler.

Secondhand equipment may fill your needs. Maybe you can get some from home or from garage sales.

Select used pots and pans of appropriate sizes and materials. For example, heavyweight aluminum is a good choice for a frying pan. Select pots and pans with flat bottoms and lids that fit.

Buying secondhand electrical equipment may be risky. If possible, buy a used appliance only when you have confidence in the seller or are familiar with the item and can plug it in to check that it works. Secondhand stores generally sell repaired items, and a few places sell them "as is". Some have 5-day guarantees on their appliances. Some stores sell damaged or returned items with the regular stock or in a bargain basement. Appliances sold this way generally cost considerably less and often carry the regular guarantee.

Frying pan  
Saucepans  
Coffee pot





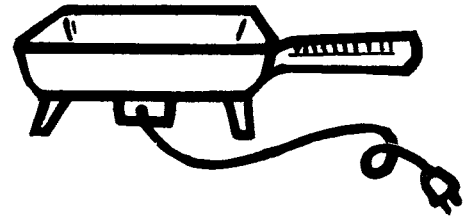
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You probably will need these items:

- Can opener, bottle opener
- Knives (paring knife, butcher knife, and a slicer)
- Cutting board
- Pancake turner or wide spatula
- Mixing bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Measuring spoons and measuring cup
- Rubber scraper (spatula)
- Beater (rotary beater or a hand electric mixer)
- Cake pan
- Cookie sheet

The supplies you'll need to stock your shelves also will depend on the meals you intend to prepare and whether or not you bake. You may need these basic items:

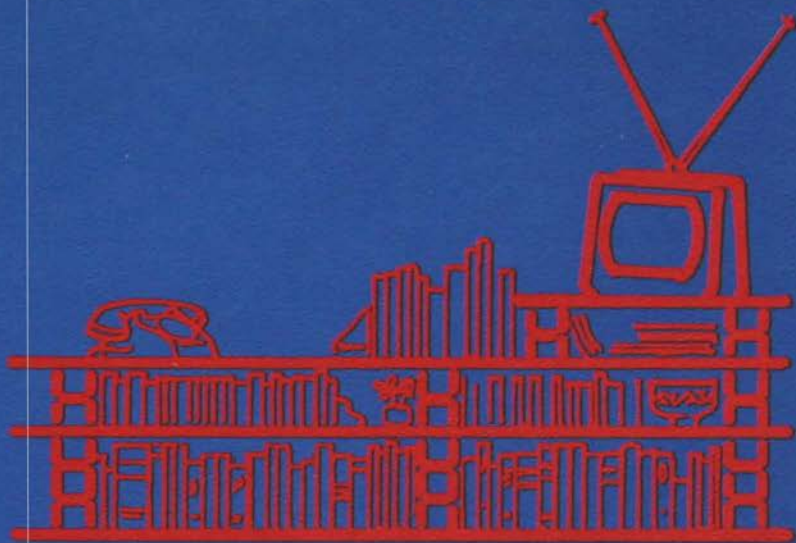
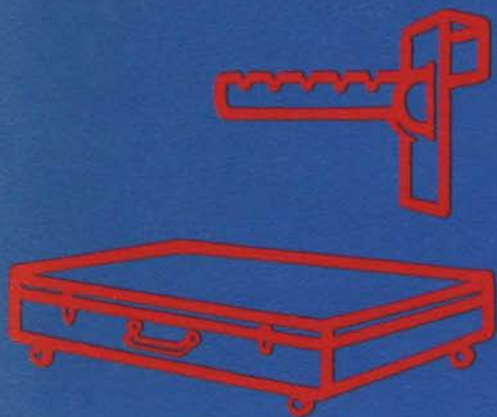
- Flour, in a covered container (large fruit and salad dressing jars cost nothing)
- Sugar, in a covered container
- Salt, pepper
- Shortening
- Catsup and mustard
- Jelly, jam, or peanut butter
- Coffee, tea, cocoa



## Storage Needs

**Kitchen Storage.** Kitchen cupboards, drawers, and possibly a drawer in the range may be all you'll need for storing dishes, pots and pans, glassware, silver, kitchen utensils, soaps, cleaning agents, food supplies, cleaning tools, and small electrical appliances. If you need more storage space, you might hang pegboard on the wall to hold shelves for frequently used articles and hooks for measuring cups and spoons, saucepans, and mixing bowls.

**Dining Area Storage.** A small chest of drawers could serve as a buffet to store table linens, place mats, hot dish mats, silver, and glassware. Many apartments have built-in dining room storage.



**Clothing Storage.** You'll need storage space for clothing you're currently wearing and for off-season clothes. Unfortunately, some apartments have too little closet space for a group of people. You might use shallow storage boxes for under-the-bed storage of infrequently used articles. Over-the-door hangers add somewhat to closet space. Remember to allow space for raincoats, boots, and umbrellas.

**Bedding Storage.** A linen closet is nice, but many apartments don't have one. Somehow you'll need to find shelf space for extra linens, blankets, towels, bathroom supplies, toilet articles, and medicines. Sleeping bags and mats need daytime storage space.

**Sports Equipment Storage.** Though sports are fun, storing equipment for them can be a problem. You'll

find that suits for snowmobiling, skis and boots, fishing tackle and rods, bowling balls and shoes, tennis rackets, guns, and bows and arrows quickly fill your closets. Don't forget that you'll all need space for your luggage. You may need to find ways of adding more shelving.

**Living Area Storage.** You can store and display your books and magazines on a bookshelf. The easiest one to make is from bricks and boards. You can use regular building bricks, glass blocks, or painted concrete blocks. Use naturally finished wood or pieces of plywood painted any color you like. White blocks with black boards make a striking combination. A folding table and chairs may find a hiding place in the coat closet. Store your writing materials inside a desk.

## Decorative Objects

Posters, maps, area rugs, or interesting fabrics used as wall hangings will add color and a finished touch to your apartment. They are inexpensive and easy to pack when you move. Students often can rent excellent pictures from their college or university for a small fee. In rented quarters, you generally must hang items with adhesive hangers, NOT NAILS. Check the building policies or ask your caretaker.

## Incidental Needs

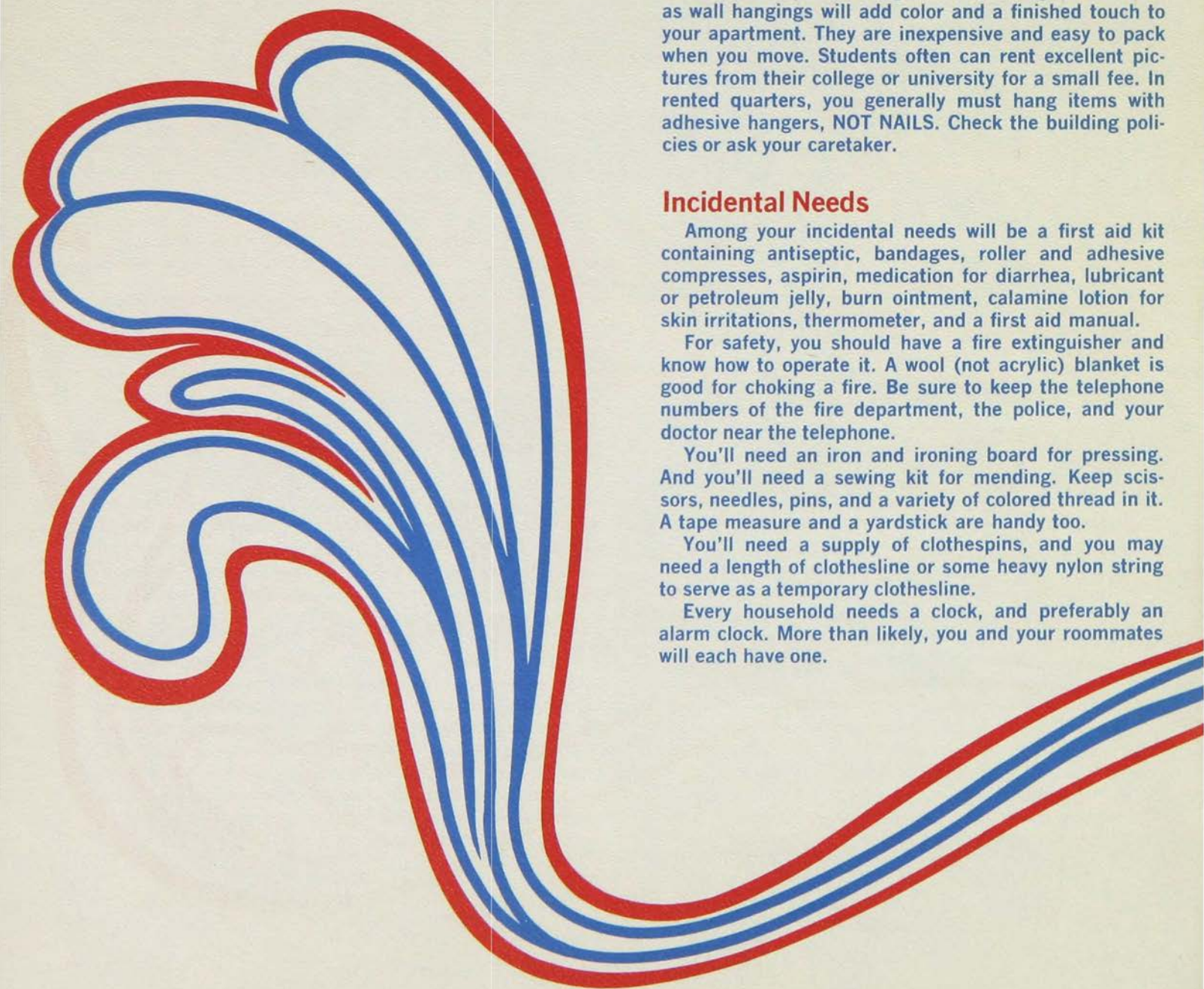
Among your incidental needs will be a first aid kit containing antiseptic, bandages, roller and adhesive compresses, aspirin, medication for diarrhea, lubricant or petroleum jelly, burn ointment, calamine lotion for skin irritations, thermometer, and a first aid manual.

For safety, you should have a fire extinguisher and know how to operate it. A wool (not acrylic) blanket is good for choking a fire. Be sure to keep the telephone numbers of the fire department, the police, and your doctor near the telephone.

You'll need an iron and ironing board for pressing. And you'll need a sewing kit for mending. Keep scissors, needles, pins, and a variety of colored thread in it. A tape measure and a yardstick are handy too.

You'll need a supply of clothespins, and you may need a length of clothesline or some heavy nylon string to serve as a temporary clothesline.

Every household needs a clock, and preferably an alarm clock. More than likely, you and your roommates will each have one.



If you have valuable papers such as an army discharge, insurance policies, and wills, you may want to rent a safety deposit box at a bank. Minimum yearly rental is about \$6.

### Where to Look For Things You Need

You may bring a few things from home. Your mother may loan you her extras. You can always buy from stores. But, if you're short of money, there are other places where you can buy items inexpensively.

The classified section of your newspaper carries a daily column of used household items for sale. Remember that you must pay cash and provide transportation for whatever you buy.

In the spring and summer, you'll find ads for many garage, porch, estate, and auction sales. By shopping around, you may be able to find such things as dinette sets, beds, chests of drawers, lamps, tables, elec-

trical appliances, ironing boards, curtains, throw rugs, dishes, pots and pans, card tables, folding chairs, and kitchen utensils. You may find exactly what you want or need very inexpensively. Some things may need refinishing or a coat of paint, but you can restore most items with a small amount of fixing.

Large cities have charitable agencies that handle and restore used furnishings. Among these are the Salvation Army and Goodwill Industries. Churches and organizations often have rummage sales where you might find a good ironing board, extra pots and pans, or decorative objects from their white elephant tables.

Some cities have dealers who handle nothing but unclaimed and damaged freight. Among their merchandise, you might find slightly marred or scratched furniture that can be renewed easily.

Large mail order stores have outlets for overstocked items and catalog returns. They sell such items at very reasonable prices.



## Tips For The Wise Shopper

Before you buy anything, decide what items you want and shop around. Then buy what best meets your needs for the money you can afford to spend.

Don't buy big things that you must sell at a loss a short time later. You are a smart shopper if you can buy a used ironing board for \$2 and then sell it for the same price in a year or two.

Think twice before you buy cumbersome items such as a sofa-bed or a king size bed. Such items are difficult to get in and out of small apartments, and can be costly to move to your next home or apartment.

Wait until you are established and certain you won't be transferred to Hawaii, Alaska, or some other far-off place before you purchase anything of a permanent nature. Moving often puts dents, mars, and scratches on furnishings.



## Buy Built-In Versatility

Some furnishings are usable in almost any living situation and can be moved about easily. Listed below are some of the items that are the most versatile and useful over the longest period.

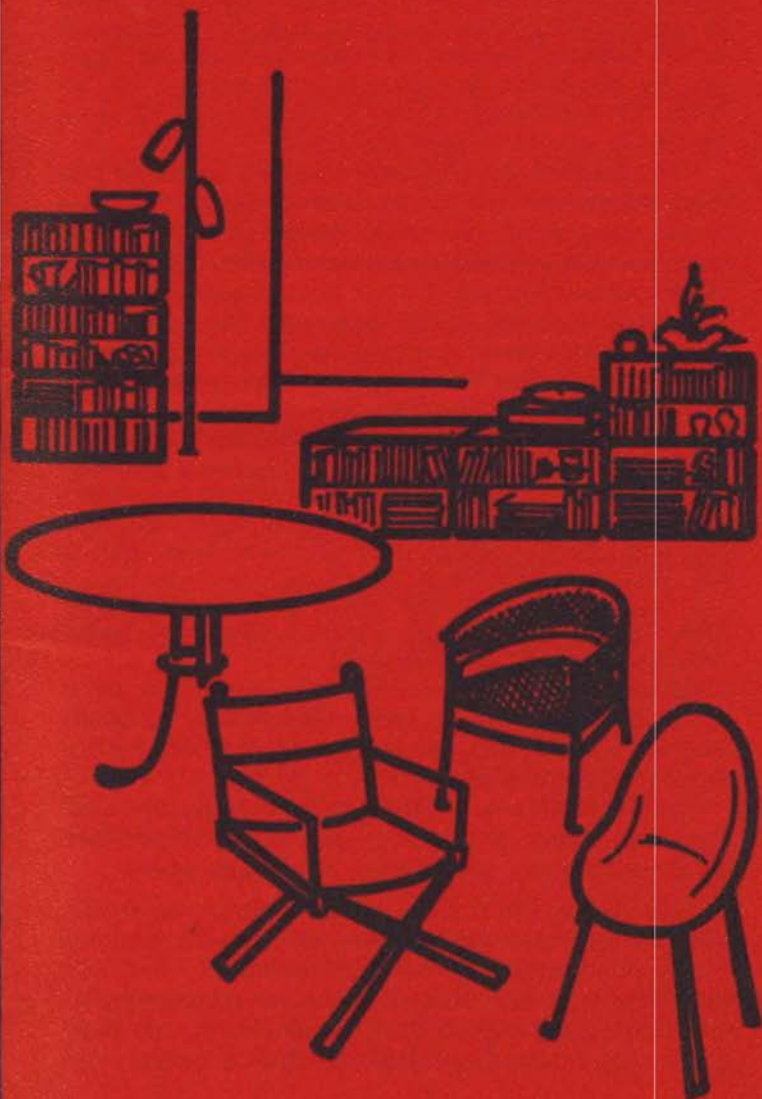
A dropleaf table expands and contracts with your needs and takes very little space when its leaves are down and it is placed against a wall. A medium size table can be used in a dinette area in a kitchen, in a dining room, or in a living room to serve as a desk.

A medium size chest of drawers can serve several purposes. It can be used for bedroom storage, it could double as a buffet, or it could be used in an entrance hall. A pair of identical chests is more versatile than either a double or triple dresser.

Four identical open bookcases with two shelves can be used together, used separately, used in pairs in a row or stacked on top of each other, grouped with two stacked and a third next to them, or stacked together for a room divider to separate living areas. Stackable cubes with one open side can be used in the same manner.

The old fashioned round pedestal table still is a useful item. It opens in the center and expands with extra leaves to seat a large number of people. Unopened, a round table takes up less space and seats more people than a rectangular one. A round table is less formal because no one seat is more important than another. Also, it is easier to squeeze in an extra place or two at a round table than at a rectangular one.

Wicker and rattan pieces are comparatively inexpensive and can be moved easily. Rattan pieces are not durable, but they are good for temporary use. Camp stools and director's chairs are inexpensive and easy to move.



## Getting Along In a Group

Living with others requires effort on everyone's part. Making some important decisions at the beginning may make life easier for all.

**LEASING.** You may be required to sign a lease when you rent an apartment. Before you sign one, be sure you understand its conditions. Your lease may stipulate:

1. Length or duration of the lease.
2. Amount of rent, date due, and arrangements for paying.
3. Responsibilities such as shoveling walks, cleaning hallways, disposing of garbage.
4. Deposits required. These may be a set amount or equal to 1 month's rent.
5. Amount of time needed to terminate lease.
6. Cost of breaking a lease.
7. Possibility of subletting.
8. Limitations on number of persons living together at set rate.
9. Conditions under which landlord may terminate the lease. Some of these might be undue amount of noise from hi-fi, TV, or musical instruments and property damage or failure to pay rent.

Other things you should consider include:

- Keys and arrangements for locking the apartment.
- Parking facilities. Is it on or off street parking for how many cars?
- Use of facilities common to all residents: laundry equipment, vacuum cleaner, and, in some cases, the bathroom.
- Procedures to follow for garbage disposal, cleaning carpets, window washing, and reporting electrical, plumbing, and heating failures.
- Operation of range, refrigerator, and exhaust fans.

**ORDERING TELEPHONE SERVICE.** Having a telephone is a convenience and may well be a necessity. But before you order phone service, investigate the costs and regulations involved in the city where you plan to live.

The following charges and regulations apply to the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Besides monthly charges, there is a basic installation fee of \$8, which covers installing the phone and any extension phones installed at the same time, and listing one name per telephone number in the directory. Additional listings cost 50 cents per person per month. Another \$8 installation fee is charged each time you move. Special phones such as the princess, trimline, and touchtone cost \$5 above the \$8 installation fee. Extra monthly charges run 75 cents for a princess, \$1 for a trimline, \$1.50 for a touchtone, and \$1 for each extension.

The telephone company may require a deposit of \$50 from anyone who has not established a good telephone credit rating in his own name. Prompt payment of bills for 6 months establishes your credit, and the deposit will be returned to you. A letter assuming responsibility signed by someone in the area who has established good telephone credit may take the place of the deposit.

The person most likely to remain the longest should apply for the telephone, because another installation fee is charged each time the first listing is changed. Girls should use their initials rather than first names to help eliminate undesirable calls.

Remember that monthly charges for party lines are less than for private lines.

**HANDLING MONEY.** How will you share expenses for food, supplies, rent, heat, utilities, telephone, household laundry, and transportation?

All persons can contribute to a common fund out of which all common expenses would be paid. Designate one person to handle the fund, keep records, and account to the others periodically.

Another method of handling finances is for each person to pay some of the same bills regularly and have an accounting and balancing of costs each month.

**SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES.** What jobs and responsibilities are there and who will take care of them? You would be wise to sit down together at the beginning, list all the jobs, and divide them to everyone's satisfaction. Some groups divide the jobs and always keep those same ones. Others rotate jobs weekly or monthly.

Dividing the work may depend on who gets home from class or work first. Those who get home early usually get the meals, while those who come late do the cleaning up.

**MAINTAINING QUARTERS.** You and your roommates need to agree on the level of order and cleanliness you wish to maintain. You may not wish to spend much time or effort on housewifely chores. You have a number of alternatives:

- Do very little and risk having to move out when things become intolerable.
- Keep things in order, but let the cleaning slide.
- Keep things in order and hire a cleaning woman at possibly \$2.50 per hour.
- Keep things in order and clean regularly, all sharing the tasks.
- Maintain high standards of order and cleanliness.

**GENERAL CLEANING.** Standards of cleanliness required to maintain good health include such things as properly washing dishes to prevent spread of infectious diseases, proper care of perishable foods, and cleaning the shower to prevent spread of athlete's foot.

If you plan to do much living on the floor, you'll need to take extra measures to keep floors clean. This may mean removing shoes and boots worn outdoors and wearing sandals or going barefoot while inside. Frequent vacuuming or sweeping will be necessary.

**HANDLING EMERGENCIES.** You are adults, so no one is going to keep close check on you. But you should inform your roommates of your whereabouts or leave information near the telephone. Maintain a list of parents' and close relatives' names and addresses in case of emergencies.

**KEEPING RECORDS.** Keep an accurate record of the cost of items you furnish. Your group eventually will break up by someone getting married, moving to a new job, or finishing school. When this happens, it is easier to buy or sell an item or your share of it if you have kept good records. Disbanding will go smoothly if you plan for it when you first move in.

## Selected References

The following books, pamphlets, and bulletins will provide further help on specific topics. University of Minnesota bulletins and leaflets are available from your county extension office. You may be able to get single copies of USDA publications from county extension offices, or write to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

### UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PUBLICATIONS

Entomology Fact Sheet 13, "Pantry Pests"

Entomology Fact Sheet 18, "Carpet Beetles and Clothes Moths"

Entomology Fact Sheet 33, "Silverfish and Firebrats and Their Control"

Extension Pamphlet 216, "How to Arrange Furniture"

Extension Pamphlet 217, "Shopping Notes—Curtains and Draperies"

Extension Bulletin 301, "Buying and Caring for Blankets"

Extension Bulletin 323, "Selecting Pictures"

Extension Bulletin 325, "Hanging Pictures"

Extension Bulletin 326, "How to Upholster Overstuffed and Occasional Chairs"

Extension Bulletin 330, "Buying Mattresses for Comfort"

Extension Bulletin 332, "Finishing and Refinishing Wood Furniture"

HE-1, "Materials and Finishes for Household Equipment"

HE-2, "Cooking Utensils to Meet Your Needs"

HE-3, "Buy, Use, and Care For Small Electric Appliances"

HF-8, "Buying Carpet"

HF-40, "Buying Guide—Sheets and Pillow Cases"

HF-60, "Antiquing Furniture"

HF-72, "Window Treatments"

HM-8, "Financial Planning"

HM-55, "Is Your Housekeeping Adequate?"





### USDA PUBLICATIONS

- Home and Garden Bulletin 1, "Family Fare—Food Management and Recipes"
- Home and Garden Bulletin 62, "Removing Stains From Fabrics—Home Method"
- Home and Garden Bulletin 68, "How to Prevent and Remove Mildew—Home Method"
- Home and Garden Bulletin 85, "Food for the Young Couple"
- Home and Garden Bulletin 113, "Protecting Woolens Against Moths and Carpet Beetles"
- Home and Garden Bulletin 162, "Keeping Food Safe to Eat"

### PAPERBACKS

- "American Home's How to Buy Home Furnishings Guide." Curtis Publishing Company. Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa. 1968. 85 pp. 75 cents.
- "Armstrong—Decorating Ideas for the Active Rooms." The Armstrong Cork Company. 1967. 167 pp.
- "Home Nursing Textbook." Contains information for common illnesses and for first aid. To obtain a copy, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Ludwig, Amber. "The Bissell Guide to Housekeeping for Young Homemakers." P3609-9. Bantam Books, Inc., 271 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016. 416 pp. \$1.
- "The Maytag Encyclopedia of Home Laundry." Popular Library Edition. The Maytag Company, Newton, Iowa. 1969. 222 pp. 50 cents.

### OTHER LEAFLETS AND BULLETINS

- Heuer, Leone Ann. "Money Management for Young Moderns." Household Finance Corporation. Prudential Plaza, Chicago, Illinois 60601. 25 cents.
- "Money in Your Life." Women's Division, Institute of Life Insurance. 277 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Free.