

Setting Up My First Apartment

The idea that you will be moving into your apartment is no longer a dream, but soon will become a reality. You finally have saved up enough money and can move into your first apartment. You may have waited a long time for low income housing to open up or you finally received your Section 8 voucher or maybe you landed your first job. Wow! What a great feeling.

Now comes the hard part. Once you have signed the lease, paid first and last months' rent and a security deposit, you are ready to move. If you haven't started accumulating stuff to use, you have a lot of shopping to do. **Where** can you find the free or cheap furniture, kitchen tools, pots and pans, dishes, bedding and towels, etc., and the list goes on.

KITCHEN:

First, decide what kind of cooking you will be doing before you start buying stuff for the kitchen. There are some basics you might need:

- Dishes, silverware (along with a drawer organizer)
- Dish towels, dish cloths, oven mitt
- Pots and Pans (a variety if you intend to do much cooking)
- Microwave (and microwave safe dishes)
- Kitchen tools (spatula, pancake turner, whisk, ladle, bottle opener etc.)
- Knives
- Can opener
- Hand mixer, blender, coffeemaker, as needed
- Toaster or countertop oven
- Food storage containers
- Plastic wrap or foil
- Zip-top bags
- Ice trays
- Mixing bowls, baking pans, cookie sheet
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Cutting board or plastic sheets
- Trash and recycling bins
- Dishwashing Soap
- Small area rug
- If no dishwasher, dish drainer

LIVING ROOM:

Couch or love seat (depending on apartment size)
Chair
Lamp(s) and Table(s)
TV and stand
Pictures for the walls
Foot stool or coffee table

DINING AREA:

Table and Chairs
Placemats or Table cloth and napkins

BEDROOM:

Bed
Night stand
Lamp
Dresser
Mirror
Sheets, pillowcases, blankets, mattress pad
Hangers
Curtains
Alarm Clock

BATHROOM:

Personal toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, lotion, etc.)
First aid supplies (bandaids, antibiotic cream, etc.)
Shower curtain
Towels (bath, hand, and wash cloth) (don't forget the guest towels)
Rug
Soap (hand soap, bath soap, shampoo)
Toilet brush
Toilet plunger
Trash can

NEW TOILET SEAT (This is a recommendation from someone who has lived in apartments since she was young.

CLEANING SUUPPLIES:

Broom and dust pan
Vacuum Cleaner
Trash bags

MISCELLANEOUS:

Bulbs
Extension cord
Tool Kit (screwdriver, hammer, duct tape, pliers, nails & screws)
Emergency Kit
Flashlight and batteries
Storage bins (as appropriate)

OTHER IDEAS:

Rug for front door

HELPFUL HINTS:

Places like Ross or Marshalls have sets of glass mixing bowls and pans that are cheaper than buying them individually.

Using gently used goods can save a lot of money. Ask family or friends for things they are not using, check in a Goodwill or Salvation Army. Try consignment shops for used furniture. Check online at www.craigslist.org.

Don't buy anything you aren't sure you will use. You can always pick it up later.

Look carefully at the storage space in the new apartment, especially the kitchen. It will fill up more quickly than you think.

When buying appliances such as microwave, small oven, blender or mixer, check out the number of plugs in the kitchen dining area.

When you purchase a knife (knives), **be cautious** about the type, making sure you are comfortable using the size.

References: www.MyFirstApartment.com

Finding stuff:

Ask family and friends for things they are not using. Feel free to say no if you don't really like it, or it doesn't fit into the space you have. Kristie didn't have to buy any furniture as friends gave her enough to get her through her first two years.

PREPARATION FOR MOVING OUT:

- 1) Start collecting some of the things you know will be used. Bedroom furniture, kitchen dishes, pots and pans and silverware, for example.
- 2) If you plan to use current bedroom furniture, buy sheets, pillowcase and blankets that can be moved. If you need to, purchase new ones before move out time comes.
- 3) If you learn to cook prior to moving out, you will know what kind of kitchen tools and appliances you will want to purchase. Buying a few of these things at a time is a more cost effective manner to get what you want.

NOTE TO PARENTS:

Start buying things for birthdays, graduation, or when you see things on sale at places like Home Goods, Ross, Walmart or Amazon. When you are out shopping, stop by the housewares or linens section.

Help them decide their style. Give them choices so they know what they like and don't like. Obviously some things don't have a style, but you use them in your home and you have seen them use them as they learned to cook or clean.

Where possible, identify what colors they like and possibly coordinate their apartment with these colors. If furniture is donated from friends, it may not match. Sheets, towels, pillows, dishes can be color coordinated.