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## **The Daily Egyptian Housing Guide, April, 2013**

Daily Egyptian Staff

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DAILY EGYPTIAN

# HOUSING

SPRING

Guide

2013

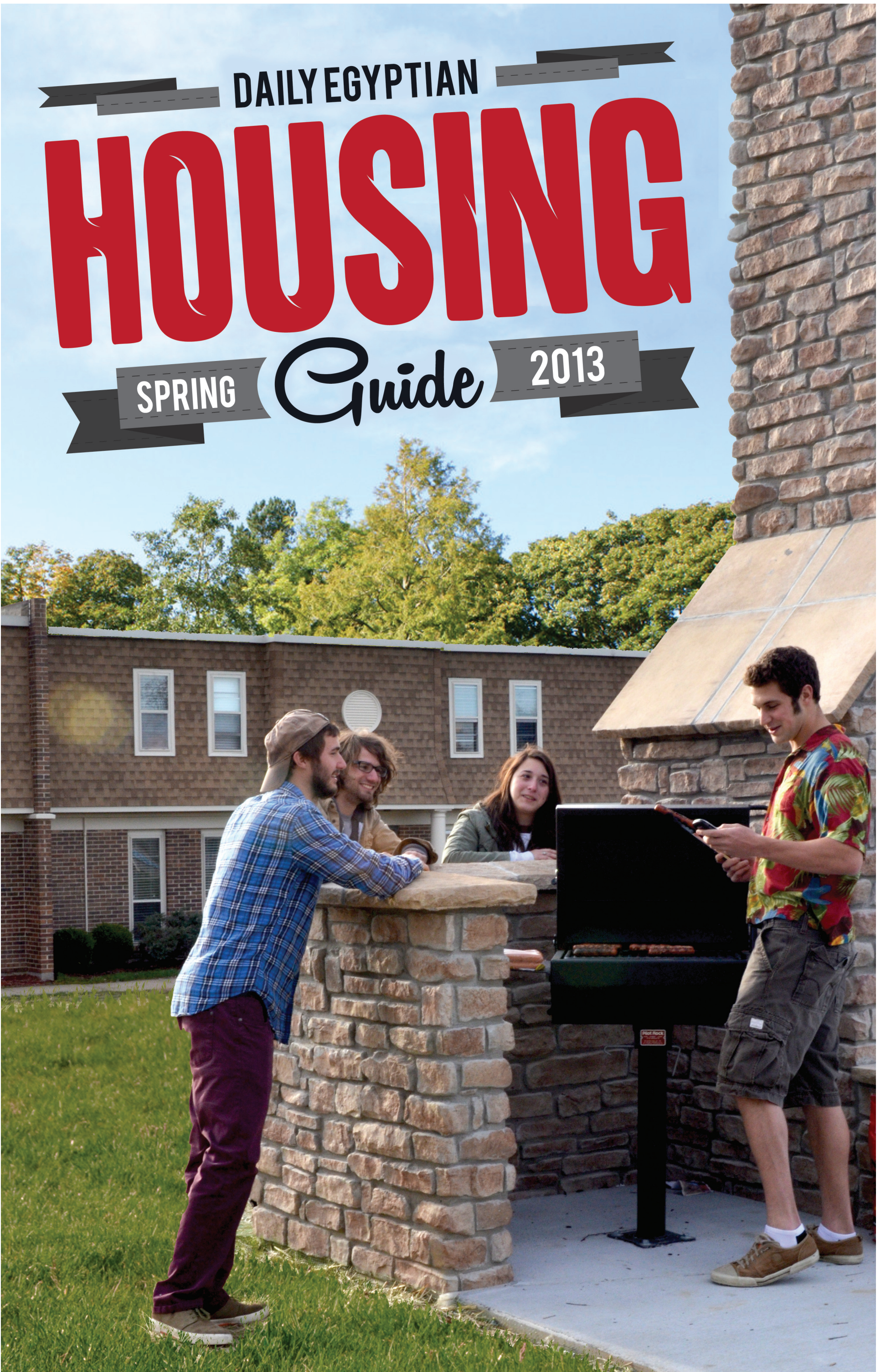




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# Roommates: the good, the bad, and the lazy

**ELIZABETH ZINCHUK**  
Daily Egyptian

There is a good chance that any student you talk to on campus will have a roommate tale to share.

Students consider price, utilities and location among several other factors when they choose a new place to live. However, the difference between living in a happy residence or a messy nightmare is just as important when choosing a potential roommate.

The choice can be difficult enough that some students simply choose to live on their own.

Some attempt to live with their best friend as a roommate. Students should not be afraid to cross out close friends when seeking out a roommate. Friends may be the best people to go to when students need someone to talk to or go out with.

However, they may not be the most reliable for chores or responsibilities.

Roommates should establish amicable rules right away, create a chore chart that divides cleanup equally and be honest with their

**“The key thing is to have limits and to make them clear to who else you are living with.”**

— Elizabeth Estrada  
sophomore studying social science education

problems to establish a good relationship. Staying candid about one's cleanliness, sleeping habits, and guest preferences are important to settle as soon as possible.

Friends and roommates Elizabeth Estrada, a sophomore from Grayslake studying elementary education, and Mercedes Alvear, a sophomore from Chicago studying social science education, knew each other before they moved in together.

Alvear said one's experience with a good friend could either be good or bad.

“It depends on the people,” she said. “For us, it worked.”

However, Alvear said she has had bad experiences with a roommate.

“She was rude, never respected my things

and ate all of my food,” she said.

Estrada said having a roommate who leaves dirty dishes in the sink is her No. 1 pet peeve. She also named maintaining personal space and respect for others' belongings as an essential roommate quality.

“The key thing is to have limits and to make them clear to who else you are living with,” she said.

Students can also live alone, but many choose to share the rent because it is more affordable.

Chris Davies, a senior from Wheaton studying geography, said he chose to live alone because he had experience with roommates who did not pay their share of rent.

“Normally, if you are trying to pay utilities

and all the rent by yourself, it is not going to happen,” he said. “I was able to afford a bigger place on my own.”

While roommates can make living much more affordable, not having dependable roommates can make life difficult. Sometimes living alone can be a way to avoid friction between differing personalities or gross or obnoxious roommates.

Bryan Brown, a senior from Murphysboro studying history, said he is among the fortunate who are able to afford his own place.

“I got lucky (and) could afford it, so I thought ‘Why not,’” he said.

Higher rent is one downside of living alone, but those who choose to would save sanity they might lose living with a bad roommate. Brown said living alone cuts any conflict that could occur from living with other people.

“If there is something that needs to get done, I know I am going to do it and there is no worries,” he said.

*Elizabeth Zinchuk can be reached at  
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# How to Choose an apartment complex

**Cox News Service**

If you're looking to rent an apartment, there are many options available. But first, you must answer two key questions: Where do you want to live? And what is your price range?

Location comes first: The very first question is the beginning of your search. In which geographical area do you want to live? After you've figure out the locale, then you need to decide if you want to live in the city or a suburb?

If you are looking in an area that is not within driving distance, you may want to begin by using a computer and looking online. There are several excellent resources on the Internet, including [www.apartmentfinder.com](http://www.apartmentfinder.com), [www.forrent.com](http://www.forrent.com), and [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com).

These Web sites allow you to look at apartments based on the area that you are interested in. Keep you eyes open for special offers. Sometimes these sites have incentives, such as \$100 if you lease through them.

What can you afford? After you have decided on an area, the amount you want to spend on monthly rent is the next important step. Based on what you can afford, links to apartment rentals will appear if you're searching online.

If you aren't able to look online, there are other resources available to help you with the rental search. Print publications, such as newspapers, typically have a classified section containing apartment rentals for your perusal.

Other helpful resources are The Apartment Guide Magazine and The Apartment Finder Magazine. Just about every metropolitan

area has these magazines, where you can see apartment floorplans and view rental property photos. You can typically find these magazines at the supermarket.

You can also contact a real estate company and ask if they deal with apartment rentals. If not, the real estate agent might at least be able to steer you in the right direction.

**Pet policies:** Sometimes the apartment complex's policies are critical in your decision making process. For example, if you have a pet, make sure that the complex will allow it. Some places have weight limits, so be certain that your furry or slithery friend meets their requirements.

**Furnished or not?:** Another make-or-break deal while looking for the right rental is getting a furnished or unfurnished unit. If you don't have anything but the clothes on your back, you might want to consider getting a furnished place. If you have at least the basics, then an unfurnished unit is what you'll need. You will pay more for a furnished unit than an unfurnished unit.

**Apartment features:** There are other things to consider, such as the apartment's features. Does it have a dishwasher? Some people will only consider renting an apartment with a dishwasher, but some people don't mind handwashing dishes. Is there a washer and dryer in the unit or a common laundry room? Again, some people insist on having their own washing machine, whereas others don't mind using a shared laundry room. An alarm system may be another option that you can or can not live without.

**Community features:** The community features may be equally as important to you. Does it have a clubhouse, fitness center, and



RYAN BLAKEY / Cox News Service

**Finding the right apartment will depend on what is important to you and your personal budget. Amenities, such as tennis courts and a swimming pool, should be among your last considerations.**

swimming pool? Some people can't live without these amenities, while others aren't as picky. It's up to you to decide what is important.

Perhaps the location is what's most important to you before deciding on an apartment complex. Some folks need to be within walking distance of public transportation. Others may need easy access to major highways.

**Apartment size:** Number of bedrooms should also be a consideration. Apartment units are often available from the smallest

size, an efficiency, which is one big room, up to three bedrooms. If cost is a factor, the smaller the unit, the lower the monthly rent will be.

**Lease options:** Length of your lease may be important to you. All complexes will rent units for 12 months. But if you're looking for something shorter, you can find or negotiate a short-term lease.

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### Apartments

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 806 1/2 N. Bridge St.  
 (Triplex) #3, #4, #5  
 805 W. Main St. #1, #6  
 905 W. Sycamore #2  
 423 W. Monroe #1  
 (W/D on Site)  
 210 S. Springer #1, #2  
 (W/D on Site)

#### 1 BEDROOM (w/ Office)

805 W. Main St.  
 #2, #3, #4, #5  
 423 W. Monroe #2  
 5 & #6 (W/D on Site)

#### 2 BEDROOM

905 W. Sycamore #3,4  
 210 S. Springer #3

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 804 1/2 N. Bridge St.  
 502 N. Davis\*  
 317 S. Oakland  
 1307 Old W. Main  
 (plus den)  
 909A W. Sycamore  
 (with office, behind  
 911 W. Sycamore)

#### 3 BEDROOM

803 W. Schwartz (2 bath, w/ huge deck)\*  
 607 W. Cherry\*  
 (multi zoned)  
 315 S. Oakland\*  
 503 N. Oakland\*  
 109 S. Dixon\*  
 310 S. Forest\* (mult zoned)  
 401 S. Forest (2 bath w/ deck)\*  
 424 W. Sycamore\*  
 513 N. Davis

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 906 W. Cherry (2 bath w/ garage)  
 910 W. Mill (2 bath, multi zoned)\*  
 403 S. Oakland (2 bath)\*  
 1701 W. Sycamore\*  
 421 W. Monroe (multi-zoned, 2 1/2 baths)\*  
 505 W. Forest  
 (multi-zoned, 2 baths w/ deck)\*  
 804 W. Schwartz  
 (multi-zoned, 1 1/2 bath w/ huge deck)\*

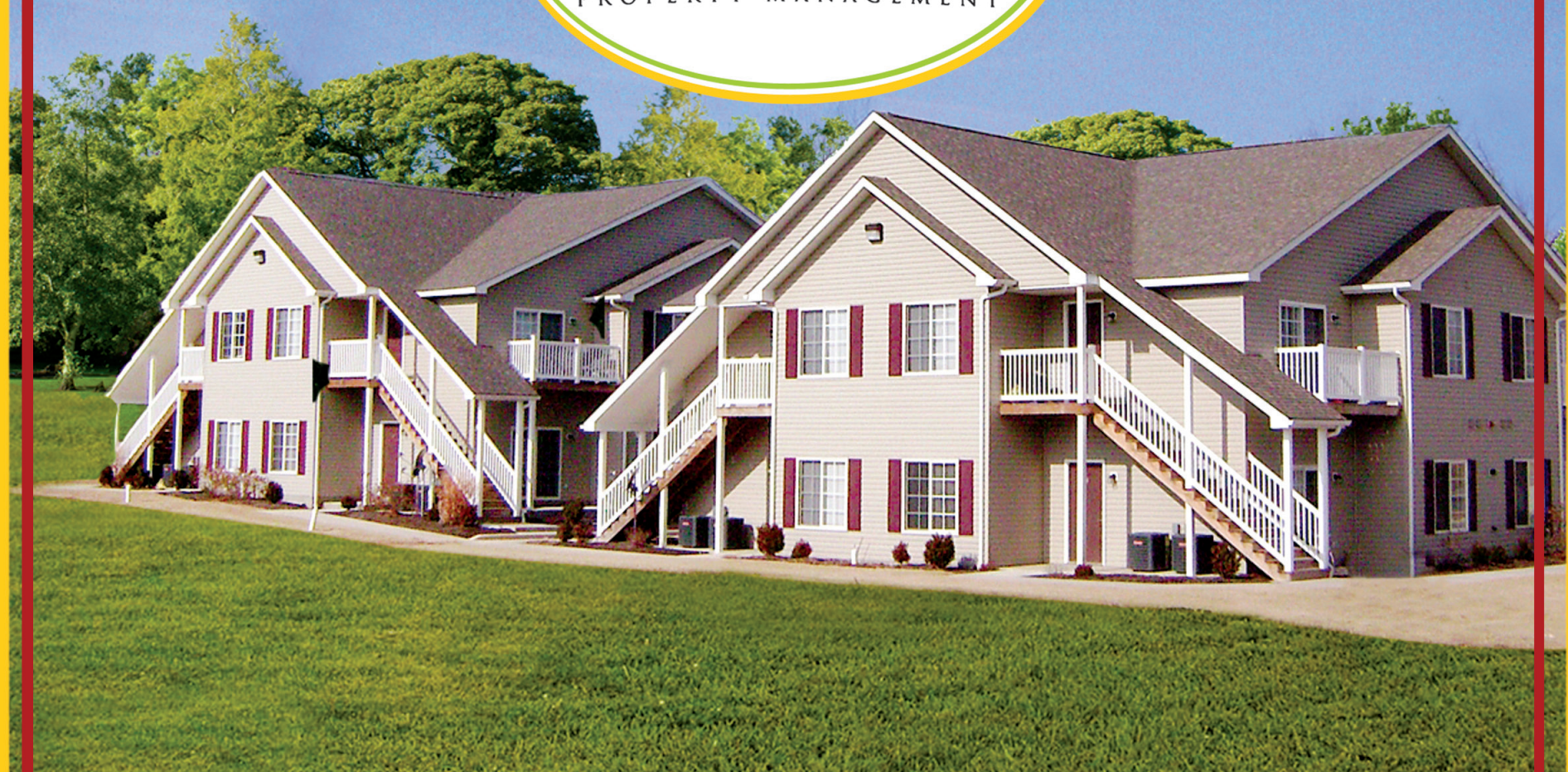
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# How to Choose a high-speed Internet provider

Cox News Service

As Web sites get more elaborate, filled with animation and music, dial-up connections just don't cut it. New technologies, known as broadband, allow users to surf the Internet without having to wait minutes or hours for a page or file to download.

Broadband is all about speed. Not only will Web surfing be faster in general, allowing you to hop from Web page to Web page almost as fast as you can click your mouse, but the speed of broadband opens up other opportunities, such as videoconferencing and watching streaming video.

The second advantage of broadband is that it generally avoids the hassles associated with dial-up connections. With most forms of broadband, you can surf the 'Net freely, without worrying about tying up your phone line or using up a precious allotment of hours.

The monthly fee for most residential broadband services hovers around \$50, which isn't much more than the cost of dial-up service and a second phone line. The main "hidden cost" of broadband comes from the initial set-up. Buying the necessary hardware and paying someone to get it working can sometimes add up to several hundred dollars. However, competition is forcing many broadband providers to offer attractive discounts and promotions.

There are currently five major types of broadband service. Each one has its own advantages and disadvantages, and some are notably better overall than others.

**Cable modem:** Currently the most popular form of broadband, cable modem service uses the same cables that carry cable TV signals. You can get cable modem service as a stand-alone service or as an add-on to your current cable TV service. You can watch cable TV and use your cable broadband connection at the same time with no loss of quality.

The main disadvantage of cable is that the speed of the system depends upon the number of people

who are online at the same time; if many people in your neighborhood are using their cable modems at once, your connection speed may drop considerably. Cable modem performance can undergo significant fluctuations; at its best, it's the fastest of all consumer level broadband services, but at its worst, it's almost as slow as a dial-up service.

Cable modem service is a good choice if there aren't too many other cable modem users in your area, and you want a system that's easy to set up and maintain.

**DSL:** DSL stands for Digital Subscriber Line. It's fast and reliable, and uses standard copper phone lines to carry data. You don't need a second phone line to use most consumer DSL services, and you can talk on your phone while you're using your DSL connection to access the Internet.

The main disadvantage of DSL is that its speed is dependent on your physical distance from the phone company's nearest central switch; the farther you are from the switch, the slower your average connection speed will be.

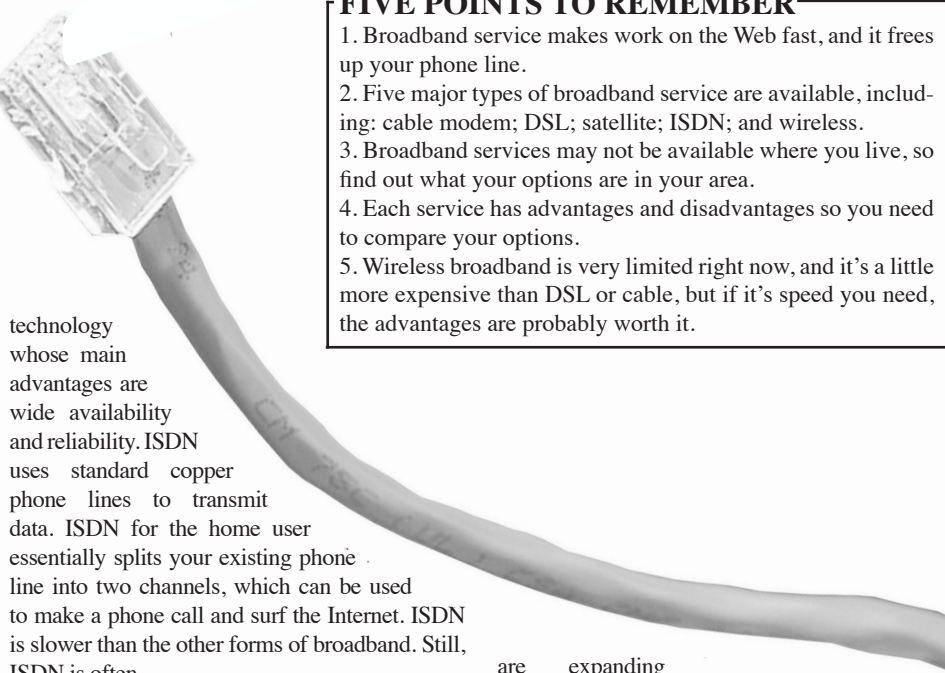
DSL is a good choice if you are close to the phone company's central switch. While it's not yet as widely available as cable modem service, DSL is often a viable alternative to cable modem.

**Satellite:** Satellite broadband uses a dish on your house or building to send and receive data from satellites orbiting the Earth. The same dish may be used for satellite TV, depending on the service provider's offering. The main advantage of satellite Internet access over the other forms of broadband technology is its immediate availability; a clear view of the southern sky is all that's needed.

There are downsides, though. Bad weather, local interference, or a misaligned dish can degrade the performance of a satellite broadband connection.

Satellite isn't as fast or reliable as DSL or cable, but if it's your only choice, it's definitely better than dialup.

**ISDN:** ISDN, which stands for Integrated Services Digital Network, is relatively old



technology whose main advantages are wide availability and reliability. ISDN uses standard copper phone lines to transmit data. ISDN for the home user essentially splits your existing phone line into two channels, which can be used to make a phone call and surf the Internet. ISDN is slower than the other forms of broadband. Still, ISDN is often

the only choice for many users whose cable and phone companies haven't yet implemented local cable or DSL service. ISDN also offers some advantages: speed doesn't fluctuate as a result of bad weather, location, or cable modem activity in nearby buildings.

If neither cable nor DSL are available in your area, ISDN is a viable, but expensive way to get a broadband connection.

**Wireless:** Wireless broadband uses an antenna placed on or in your house or building to send and receive data. The data is transmitted to and from your building via your city's wireless network, which consists of antenna towers placed three to five miles apart. If you don't live in a city with wireless service, you won't be able to get fixed wireless broadband.

Currently, fixed wireless broadband service is very limited; however, the service areas

## FIVE POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. Broadband service makes work on the Web fast, and it frees up your phone line.
2. Five major types of broadband service are available, including: cable modem; DSL; satellite; ISDN; and wireless.
3. Broadband services may not be available where you live, so find out what your options are in your area.
4. Each service has advantages and disadvantages so you need to compare your options.
5. Wireless broadband is very limited right now, and it's a little more expensive than DSL or cable, but if it's speed you need, the advantages are probably worth it.

are expanding quickly. If you can get wireless, you're getting an excellent broadband connection. The connection speed is not limited by your distance from the wireless antenna or by the number of wireless users in your area. Wireless is also an always-on connection that doesn't tie up your phone line. Wireless is a little more expensive than DSL or cable, but the advantages are probably worth it.

Some broadband services aren't yet widely available. Since many broadband systems use new technology, some providers haven't gotten around to implementing service in small towns and rural areas. If you live in a large metropolis, you have a good chance of having several choices for broadband service. In lesspopulated areas, you may be more limited, but even if you're alone out in the middle of a desert, you can still get a broadband connection via satellite.



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# Frugal Living Freshen the air in your home

Sara Noel

Air fresheners smell great, but they only mask odors. To really rid the air of smells in your home, open the windows and let the fresh air in. Bring in houseplants, keep things clean, remove smelly shoes and empty trash daily. If you enjoy scents, you can combine a few drops of essential oil and water in a spray bottle and use as a room mist. Simmer natural items such as apple and citrus peels, cinnamon or fresh mint leaves and water in a slow cooker or on the stovetop, or soak a cotton ball with vanilla or essential oil.

## The following suggestions can help freshen the air, too:

**Clean and deodorize the microwave:** Microwaves get dirty and smelly. They can be a pain to keep clean if you don't clean them immediately after splatters or spills. To clean your microwave with ease, simply combine a couple of tablespoons of lemon juice and 1 cup water (or 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar and 1/2 cup water) in a microwave-safe bowl. Add a wooden spoon to the bowl to prevent super-heating. Cook on high for three to five minutes or until steam condenses. Wipe down the interior of the microwave with a cloth. If any smell remains, repeat the lemon and water procedure, but add a couple of cloves to the mixture.

**Castile soap:** Dilute and spray on counters or floors. Peppermint scent makes the kitchen smell fresh.

**Fireplace scent:** Use dried citrus peels or dried herb bundles for added scent. Make the bundles using dry herbs and

natural materials, such as rosemary, lavender, bay leaves, cinnamon sticks and eucalyptus. You can add raspberry canes and pine cones to various dried herbs, too. Cut them to about 10 inches and bundle them together (with the stems facing the center of the bundle) using raffia. Place them in the fireplace as fire starter, or add them to a smoldering fire for fragrance.

**Garbage disposal:** Pour baking soda and vinegar into your garbage disposal. Cover the drain and let it sit for five minutes. Flush it with boiling water. Afterward, grind ice cubes, salt and citrus peels to give it a fresh scent.

**Try coffee grounds:** Set coffee grounds (either unused or used and dried) in a bowl or Dixie cup in an inconspicuous area to add scent and absorb bad smells. Putting them in a sachet works best, but you can use a section of nylon pantyhose, too. If you don't want to use coffee grounds, you can use baking soda and a few drops of essential oil instead. Place in a mason jar and cover the mouth of the jar with tulle, using the jar ring to hold it on.

**Closets:** Hang a cedar block. Use crumpled newspaper or baking soda inside shoes, or pour kitty litter into a spare sock and place it in the shoes. Put the shoes outside periodically to air out.

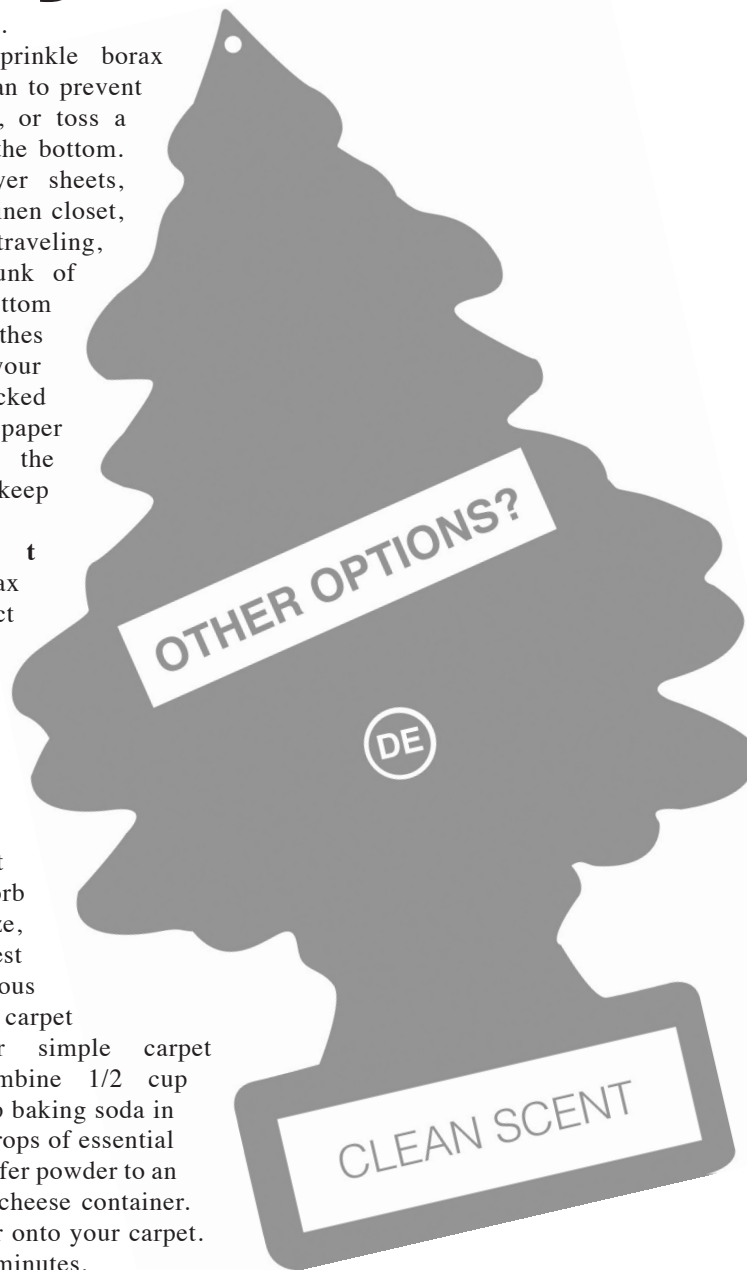
**Use soap bars:** Open up a few cakes of bath soap and put them in your drawers to add scent. Dryer sheets or free perfume samples from magazines will work, as well. Both can help your bathroom smell nice, too.

**In your vacuum:** If you have a central vacuum system, put several drops of essential oil on a cotton ball and put it in the vacuum receptacle to fill a room with

essential oil scent.

**Trash cans:** Sprinkle borax into your trash can to prevent it from smelling, or toss a dryer sheet into the bottom. Speaking of dryer sheets, put a sheet in a linen closet, a suitcase when traveling, sneakers, the trunk of your car, at the bottom of your clothes hamper, in your vacuum bag, tucked inside a toilet paper roll or around the holder, etc., to keep odors at bay.

**Carpet deodorizer:** Borax is a good product to use on pet "accidents" and spilled milk on carpets. Blot the spill with a cloth. Pour borax onto it and let it absorb and deodorize, then vacuum. Test an inconspicuous area of your carpet beforehand. For simple carpet deodorizing, combine 1/2 cup borax and 1/2 cup baking soda in a bowl. Add 20 drops of essential oil and stir. Transfer powder to an empty Parmesan cheese container. Shake the powder onto your carpet. Vacuum after 15 minutes.



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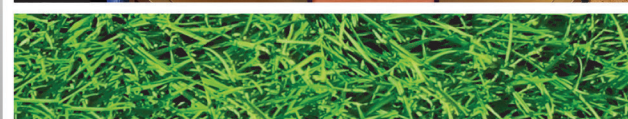


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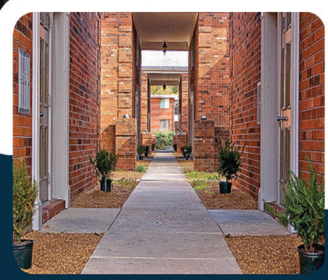
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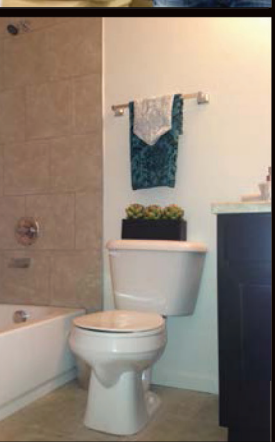

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# How to Shop for furniture

**Cox News Service**

Have you been furniture shopping lately? The experience may leave your mind swirling with the many choices you can make such as solid wood and leather. Your style and lifestyle need to be considered when making your furniture choices.

When it comes to decorating your home or apartment, furniture can be a major expense with long-standing impact. It pays to think about what you need, what you want and what your budget will allow.

**Getting started:** Start with a list of your needs room by room. Perhaps you already have some pieces to coordinate with, or maybe you are starting from scratch. Or, are you replacing outdated, worn-out furniture?

Evaluate what your needs truly are. Basic seating? A place to sleep? A large table for the family to gather? Or do you have stacks of books and nowhere to place them? Then, look at your space and your budget. Take an honest look at what your needs are and make a list. It is much easier to prioritize from that written list than to wonder aimlessly into a furniture store and have no earthly idea what you are looking for.

After you've itemized your needs, browse through decorating magazines, catalogs and Web sites. Hone in on the style or styles you like. Again, advance consideration of the styles that appeal to you will greatly narrow your choices and aid you in finding the right styles for your home.

**Furniture style and fabric choices:**

Most furniture falls into one of two style categories, formal and informal or casual. Formal furniture includes such styles as Louis XIV, Chippendale and Queen Anne, originally created for royalty and the wealthy.

Informal styles originated in the rural

countryside, and were designed by local cabinetmakers. These would include provincial, early American and French country. Each of these styles can be further refined into traditional or contemporary.

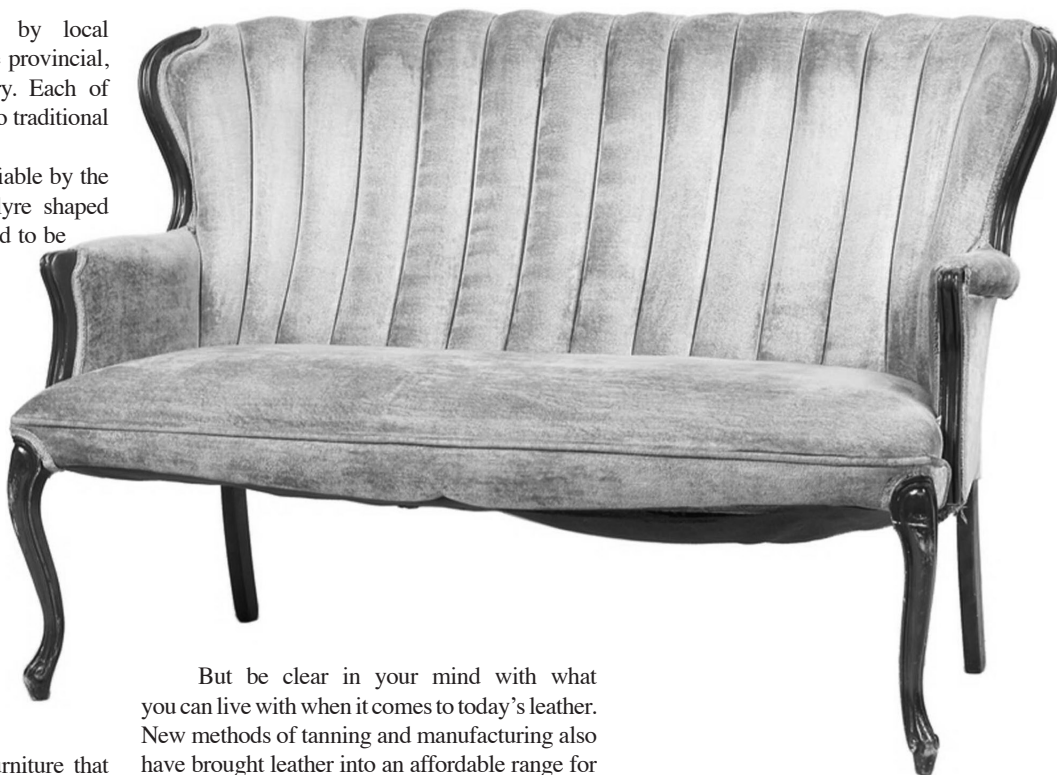
Traditional styles are most identifiable by the cabriole legs, claw and ball feet, lyre shaped backs and carved details. Woods tend to be walnut, cherry or teak, and fabrics usually include brocades, damask and silk. Oversized sofas and chairs with deep, fluffy cushions, and durable easy-to-maintain fabrics exemplify casual.

Contemporary styles include Scandinavian, modern and Oriental, with wood or laminate. They are identifiable by their sleek overall design elements. Style also is defined by shape, color and texture and is reflected in accessories and floor and window coverings.

Home furnishings should make a statement about your attitude and lifestyle. No one style is perfect for every room or everyone, so buy furniture that you like, whatever your style.

Recliners are better than ever. There was a time when they were ugly, but not anymore. Today more than ever upholstered furniture is available in a wide range of styles and fabrics. To be a good buy for you, upholstery must be priced right, colored right and comfortable for the room and your family.

There also is leather to be considered. Leather is a natural product. Good leather will rarely wear out, but it will change in appearance from week to week. Many people love the natural coverings that change with wear and tear.



But be clear in your mind with what you can live with when it comes to today's leather. New methods of tanning and manufacturing also have brought leather into an affordable range for many pocketbooks.

**Shopping for furniture:** After you decide what piece or pieces you want and have pinpointed some basic styles that feel right, it is time to target a budget and begin to furniture shop. Prices vary widely, and often are tied to the quality of the piece.

Finding good furniture that works for you involves understanding how pieces are made and then deciding if the quality of the piece will bear up in day-to-day use. Whatever your style, furniture should be comfortable, practical and reflect your tastes.

**Furniture sources:** The most obvious place to look is in your local furniture stores. However, don't forget estate sales, auctions and consignment stores. Some furniture stores in your area offer complimentary in-home design services to aid you in your decorating choices.

When you are ready to start out on your furniture hunt, remember to assess your needs, set your priorities, narrow down the styles you are looking for, target a budget and then enjoy your search for the perfect pieces to complement your home. Remember, when acquiring furniture, buy only what you love.

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# Lessors offer advice on choosing the right rental

**MITCH SCHAFER**  
Daily Egyptian

Paying several hundred dollars a month for a place to live isn't an easy thing to do — especially for a college student.

Many things need to happen before a student decides to lease an apartment or a home, and several area apartment managers as well as home lessors said students ranked affordability and cleanliness as apartment and home priorities.

However, students should consider several other factors.

"Students are looking for a high-quality product at a good price," said Ben Craft, The Reserve at Saluki Pointe community manager.

Amenities, location and overall value are also important, he said.

Keith Jackson, The Pointe manager, said students look for a place they can call their own. Students also tend to desire their own bathroom, sufficient Internet and all their bills included in one rent check, he said.

Cheryl Bryant, owner and manager of Bryant Rentals, said cleanliness is an issue which can either make or break a deal. One deal in particular happened quickly because of one residence's cleanliness, she said.

"I had a young man who I was showing an apartment to, he walked into the living room and he said, 'I'll take it,'" she said.

Bryant said she had not yet shown the man the rest of the apartment, but he decided to rent Bryant's available apartment after he compared its cleanliness to others he saw. Bryant said she has had many occupants continue their lease with her because her buildings are maintained well.

However, Jackson said other issues may be

more immediate than cleanliness. He said students should survey the potential living area's neighborhood and determine how safe it might be.

"Students really need to take a hard look at police reports," he said. "They can call the police station themselves and ask what kind of incidents have been reported throughout an apartment complex."

Students should also consider their potential home's proximity to school and how much extra it might cost to have a car, he said.

Bryant said students should look out for parking and maintenance, as well as where the place is located and good landlord service. Being a family-owned business, Bryant said she gets to know her tenants very well.

"There's more to this than just renting and getting the money," she said.

Bryant said she still maintains a good relationship with many of her past tenants, and she will sometimes receive calls from them as they are passing through town.

Despite all the options students want in their apartment, they still need to have good time management. Spring semester is the busiest leasing time because people are looking for a place to live for the next school year, Craft said.

According to Jackson, Craft and Bryant, with the exception of a few leases, apartments are usually filled before summer starts. Apartments will be gone within the next couple of months, so if students haven't chosen their space yet, there's no time like the present.

*Mitch Schafer can be reached at  
mschafer@dailyegyptian.com  
or 536-3311 ext. 254.*

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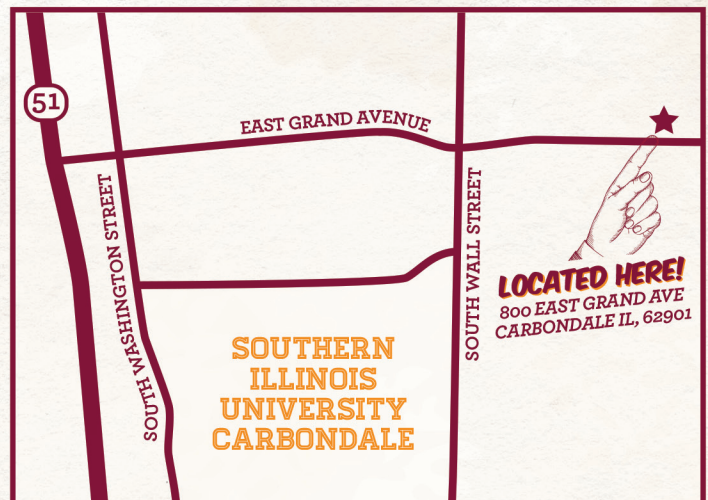
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# How to Design a room

**Cox News Service**

The room you have in mind needs a new look, and you don't know where to start or how to develop a design plan. Getting started is the key to designing a room. It often takes only a suggestion to launch a whole new plan.

You'll need to consider your budget and the time period you want to make the changes. Rushing out to buy new furniture might be your first desire, but taking a little time and to thinking about several factors will ensure that you enjoy the transformation as well as the final product.

Use the room's function to help you determine priorities. Think about how you will use the room and what pieces are essential for maximum comfort and function.

After you've set your priorities, the most important element in designing a well-suited room is for you to view it—not as a chore—but as a developmental project that will give you pleasure for years to come. Here are some guidelines for helping you make decisions and coordinate a plan:

**Sketch a floor plan:** Include all windows, doorways, fireplaces, electrical outlets and architectural features. Measure every aspect of the room, including the ceiling height. Also measure any existing furniture that will be incorporated into the room.

Draw your floor plan on graph paper to be sure your scale is correct. Cut out forms of the pieces of furniture to move them around the floor plan.

**Find a focal point:** To suggest groupings or arrangements of furniture, such as a fireplace or a set of built-in bookshelves. These might be immovable items, but also items that will facilitate the use of the room, such as for conversation or work.

**Identify preferred styles, colors:** This is where ideas begin to form and when you start looking at particular items that appeal to you. If you have

a favorite piece of furniture or a rug that must remain in the room, that might be your color-and-style starting point. Having a key item from which to start does not mean that you are locked into its color or style for the rest of the room.

Styles can be a mixture of simple and ornate, sleek and substantial, or traditional and modern. If styles are tied together by coordinated colors, the dramatic effect of mixed elements can be appealing.

Wall colors are important in pulling all of the room's statements together. This is particularly true of rooms that are large enough to allow for two or more groupings. Do not be afraid to incorporate more than one color into the room's walls and woodwork. Lighter ceilings make the room feel taller and more expansive. Walls do not all need to be the same shade. Lighter colors might be chosen for window walls because window walls typically appear darker than other walls.

Crown moldings and picture moldings in a different color give the space additional depth and definition and soften the abrupt intersection of the ceiling and walls. This also is true of choosing lighter or darker shades or contrasting hues for baseboards and woodwork around doors and windows. If colors for walls and woodwork are chosen to bring out colors in the fabric of the upholstered pieces, the effect can be subtle or dramatic.

Monochromatic schemes can be very interesting, but you should be careful about painting every surface in a room the same color. The same color surrounding a room makes the room seem to fall away from the furnishings rather than exist with them.

Use a specific piece of furniture as the room's anchor. For a bedroom, this might be the bed. A large bedroom might have a sitting area as the focal point, with a loveseat as the anchor.

The bed becomes necessary but not the focus of the room. In many rooms, the largest piece is the anchor. The primary reason for changing a room's design might be the desire to purchase a different anchor piece, thereby opening up everything else in the room for re-evaluation.

If you are hesitant about incorporating strong patterns or dramatic colors into your color scheme, you might let your anchor piece make the largest statement by being bold and uninhibited. The other furnishings in the room can play off of it without competing and establish a lively but restrained new environment.

Leave enough space for the activities that will take place in the room, and consider the lifestyle of those who will be using it. Where you position furniture is crucial to creating a comfortable room. If the activities in the room are social, with tabletops being used for card games, board games or jigsaw puzzles, accessory choices might be minimized so that hosts are not always removing items and replacing them. Active pets such as cats might necessitate keeping delicate figurines behind glass, and rooms where the occupants are



BILLY SMITH II / Cox News Service

**A fireplace can make a strong focal point when designing a room.**

eating and relaxing might not suggest pale colors and delicate fabrics.

Enjoy the process of transforming your room into a space that will give you pleasure for a long time. If you are discarding major items and purchasing new ones, start with the larger pieces first and be sure to take your measuring tape and your floor plan with you. Bringing your color palette along also will help guide your choices.

Whether you choose one primary style or prefer eclectic environments, the space you design will be a statement of who you are and what you like to do. Involve yourself totally in the process, and let your imagination go.

# Put together a first-aid kit

**SARA NOEL**  
Cox News Service

You can create a first-aid kit for your home or vehicle, rather than buying one. Add items such as antibiotic ointment, adhesive bandages, cotton balls, antiseptic wipes, calamine lotion, ChapStick, eyedrops, sunscreen, instant cold compresses, hand-warmer packets, tweezers, a thermometer, gauze and pain-relieving medication. You can also make a power-outage kit for your home that holds items such as candles, a lighter or matches, batteries and flashlights. Don't spend money on the containers for your homemade kits—reuse plastic coffee canisters, baby-wipes containers, plastic ice-cream tubs, tackle boxes or old lunchboxes.

The first reader tip has another suggestion to hold your supplies:

**Repurpose:** I bought a multi-pocket bag at the thrift store. I'm going to use it to create a large first-aid kit for my truck.  
— S.D., Minnesota

**Salvage notions:** When I've got used clothes that are so torn, worn or stained that they aren't worthy of even a donation to Goodwill, I glean buttons, elastic, hooks, snaps and zippers from them that I use later in my sewing projects. I cut up the rest of the fabric to use as rags or tear it into strips to make rag rugs.  
— C.L., Mississippi

**Turn off power:** If you have central air conditioning and you have a big unit outside, go switch off the breaker on the outside unit to avoid using up "phantom power." Phantom power is electricity that is wasted on electrical appliances that are plugged in but not powered up. Many of these devices are designed to come on quickly with the use of a remote, which means that even while they are off, they are drawing energy and running up your electric bill.  
— S.S., Indiana

**Handy measurement:** Whenever I find myself without a tape measure, I can still get a reasonably accurate measurement using currency. Bills are about six inches long, and I've used them more than once in a pinch to get a rough measurement.  
— S.D., Minnesota

**Get a hobby job:** My hubby and I are motorcycle enthusiasts, with two Harleys of our own. I got a part-time job at my favorite independent motorcycle shop about a year ago to earn a little extra money. I love it! Not only am I learning a lot about the care and maintenance of motorcycles, I also get an employee discount on parts and labor. We have

a consignment shelf at the shop for people to sell used parts, and I've saved a lot of money buying from there. And I even have my own display in the shop where I sell key chains and headbands, adding even more to my income. This part-time job is paying off in many frugal ways!

— Mary, Texas




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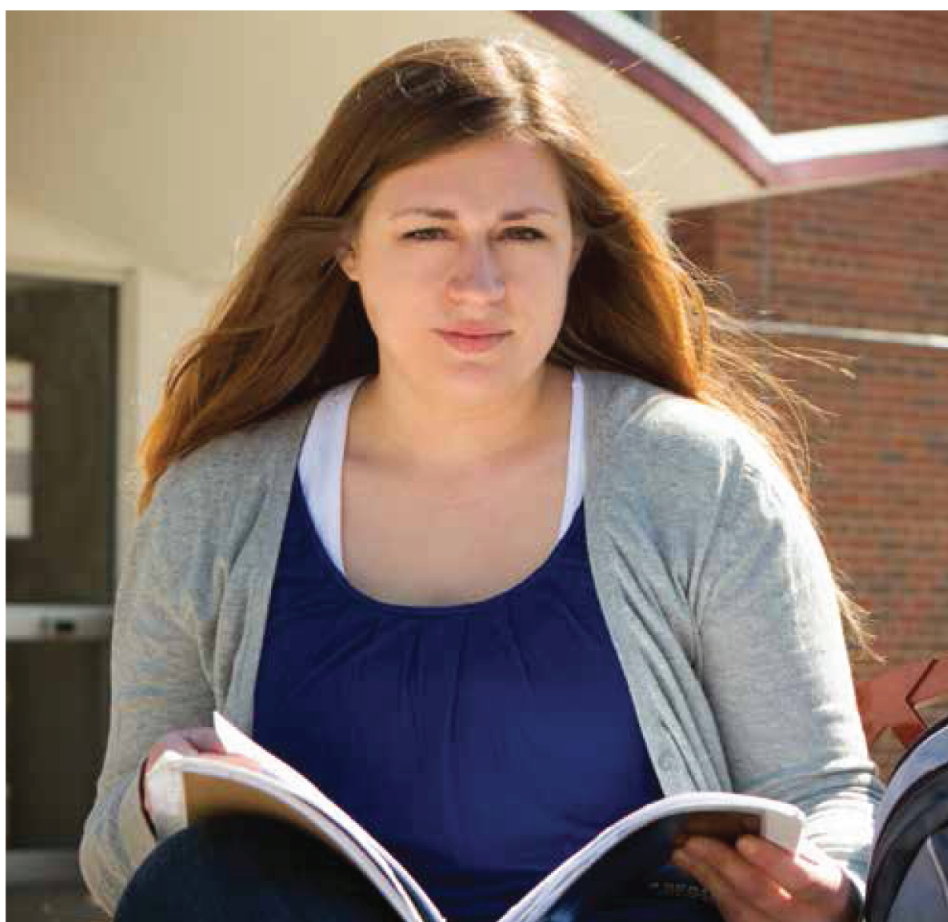


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