

Living with Your Parents: Should You Stay or Should You Go?



You're an adult, and that distinction comes with some privileges, benefits, responsibilities, and choices to make, including the potential decision of whether to live with your parents or move out. Not surprisingly, there are pluses and minuses to either option.

Do you have a choice?

If you're right out of school or between jobs, you may not have the income to afford a place of your own. On the other hand, moving back home might not be realistic for a number of reasons. There may not be available accommodations at your parents', your folks may have moved, or their home isn't close to your job or school. Not having a choice may pose other issues, but assuming you do have the choice of living at home or on your own, here are some things to consider.

Will there be terms and conditions?

Before you can make an informed decision, you need to address several potential issues with your parents. If living at home is an option, it's important that both you and your parents have a clear understanding of what each of you expects moving forward. For instance:

- *What are the terms?* Will you be expected to pay rent and, if so, how much and for how long? When will you be expected to move out: Once your loans are paid off, when you have a steady income, when you reach a certain age? Aside from or in addition to rent, will you be expected to pay for other things such as food and utilities?
- *What are the expectations?* Do your parents expect you to help around the house with cleaning, shopping, or doing other chores? Will they have rules on whether or when you can entertain guests, or how late you and your companions can hang out, so to speak?

Once you hash out all the terms, conditions, and expectations, you will be in a better position to make the decision on whether to move back home or find your own place. As you think about what to do, you'll probably find that each option has its advantages and disadvantages.

Should you stay?

Living with your parents might come with some advantages, such as:

- Laundry facilities

Just having use of a washer and dryer is enough to tip the scales in favor of moving back home. The alternative is probably using a public laundromat, which may be unclean, have machines that don't work well (if they work at all), and requires you to stay on the premises while your clothes are semi-cleaned out of fear someone may swipe your favorite pair of jeans.

- **Familiar surroundings**

It's your fortress of solitude (or at least it used to be), and you spent the better part of your life getting it exactly the way you want it. Also, instead of depending on frozen meals or fast food (and the pounds you'll likely gain), you might have access to a well-stocked kitchen, unless you're expected to buy and cook your own food.

- **Saving money and paying off bills**

Living at home may not cost as much as living on your own, which may give you the chance to pay off school loans, car loans, and credit cards. And you might even be able save some money for things such as marriage, retirement, or your own preferred living accommodations.

Should you go?

On the other hand, having your own place may have its good points, including:

- **Maintaining your privacy**

Unless you have a roommate, your place is your own private castle. You can entertain whomever and whenever you wish (as long as it's legal), talk on the phone in tones above a whisper, and view your computer screen without fear of having someone looking over your shoulder. And if you're so inclined, you might even be able to work from home or study without interruption.

- **Your parents will have their privacy**

Your parents may have dedicated their adult lives to providing for you and your siblings (if any), but there comes a time when parents want to focus on their own lives. By moving out, you're not only getting your own privacy, but you're probably giving your parents some private space as well.

- **Have things your way**

Having a place of your own gives you the freedom to design it the way you want. You can live by your rules and make your own choices. It's an opportunity to behave responsibly, which means you can't always act on a whim without thinking about the consequences of your decisions. But the freedom to make your own decisions can come with a price, and you won't have your parents to blame if you make a wrong choice.

- **Financial responsibilities**

Living on your own means you're now financially responsible for your well-being, which means you'll have to pay for your housing, food, clothing, utilities, cable TV, transportation, etc. Of equal if not greater importance, you'll have to establish and maintain a budget, which is tantamount to making ends meet.

As you can see, there are many factors to consider when deciding whether to live at home or on your own. The decision may not be as easy as it first appears. And remember, in either case, it's your decision, and there are responsibilities attached to either choice.

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