



Press release

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HOUSTON, WE DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM

- Roommate site SpareRoom turns to former US NASA astronaut to help roommates avoid conflicts in shared living spaces -

- SpareRoom has appointed former US NASA astronaut and International Space Station (ISS) commander Terry Virts as 'House Share Goodwill Ambassador'
- Using his NASA training and the key principles of astronaut psychology, Terry will share tips and advice to help roommates avoid conflict and live together in harmony
- Living in close quarters can be difficult – there's no more heightened version of that than the ISS so SpareRoom decided to get someone who's lived through it to help
- 25% of roommates have had a fall out over toilet paper and 69% have feuded over their roommate not cleaning up after cooking. 37% have even moved out of their apartment share because of clashes with roomies
- A film of former US NASA astronaut Terry Virts passing on his advice as House Share Goodwill Ambassador can be viewed [here](#)

The International Space Station: a cramped assortment of corridors, labs and claustrophobic crew quarters. But despite the lack of privacy and personal space in space, astronauts live in peace for months on end and really enjoy hanging out with one another. Down on Earth, however, the harmony in a typical apartment share can be easily unsettled - often triggered by toilet paper, dirty dishes, loud music and food theft.

Today, in a bid to help Earth's roommates achieve the kind of shared living serenity that comes so easily to astronauts, leading roommate site SpareRoom has appointed former US NASA astronaut and ISS commander Terry Virts to the unique role of 'House Share Goodwill Ambassador'.

In his new role, Terry, 50, will draw on his NASA training, extensive experience of living with others in space for seven months and knowledge of astronaut psychology to help roommates avoid everyday apartment share conflict and live together in peace and harmony. A film of Terry in his role as House Share Goodwill Ambassador can be seen [here](#).

SpareRoom turned to one of NASA's former top astronauts after UK research* highlighted some of the key issues roommates face in shared apartments. Research carried out by SpareRoom revealed a quarter (25%) of roommates have had a fall out over toilet paper (or a lack thereof), a gigantic 69% have got mad after their roommate hasn't cleaned up after cooking and over a third (38%) have argued over accusations of stealing food and drink belonging to other roommates. What's more, one in 10 (11%) fall out on a regular basis and 37% have gone as far as actually moving out of their apartment share as a result of everyday cohabiting conflicts.

Morgan McCarthy, Marketing Manager at SpareRoom US: "We know living with roommates can be an awesome experience, but we also know it can prove tricky at times. We're on a mission to help the US's millions of roommates have those great experiences. What better way to learn how to live in harmony with others than from a real life astronaut who has shared his space at the most heightened level - having spent months on end in close quarters with others.

We appointed a former US NASA astronaut to be our House Share Goodwill Ambassador so we could learn from the best and be able to help our customers avoid issues altogether, or navigate their way out of arguments quickly when things get a little intense. Following Terry's tips means taking small steps, but they can turn into giant leaps for roommate relations."

Former US NASA astronaut, and current SpareRoom House Share Goodwill Ambassador Terry Virts added: "The ISS cost over \$135 billion and is arguably one of the most important shared living spaces for the human race. So you can see why space agencies spend so much time and money ensuring their astronauts have the right personality traits and training to all get along in space. Because, let's face it, it's not so easy for them to just move out when they're orbiting 250 miles above the Earth! But astronauts are still people - which means conflict will happen sometimes - so knowing how to relate to others and deal with stress is a valuable skill that can make a big difference.

While the stakes might be higher on a space station than in an apartment, the psychology and training used to ensure astronauts don't get into arguments can be easily adapted and applied to roommates. I hope that by passing on some of what I've learned from my time in space I can help roommates across the planet live together in peace and harmony."

Terry Virts, SpareRoom's House Share Goodwill Ambassador, will be answering roommate's questions in an online Q&A. If you have a question you want to ask Terry, simply head over to SpareRoom's Facebook page and submit your questions from 15th - 18th June.

Terry Virts's tips for achieving apartment share harmony

TIP 1 - It might sound obvious, but it is important to respect each other's personal space, as in both space and apartment shares, sometimes it can be limited! As great as it is to spend time with each other, make sure you give yourself and others some room to breathe now and again. NASA taught us that mentally stimulating tasks like playing a game or reading a book were a good way of having some solo chill out time, so give it a go!

TIP 2 - Make sure you help out around the apartment and do your share of the cleaning. Astronauts are just like the rest of us when it comes to chores, they aren't fun, but they have

to be done! When I was in space we stuck to a strict schedule and cleaned the International Space Station for 2-4 hours every Saturday morning - it's actually kept cleaner than a lot of places on Earth. If you don't do your share around the apartment it can cause resentment amongst your roommates. 76% of apartment sharers believe having rules around the apartment helps maintain the peace, so why not start a cleaning schedule to ensure everyone pulls their weight.

TIP 3 - Don't take someone else's food or drink without asking – you should always get permission first and make sure you replace anything you borrow. Astronauts, like everyone else, need to eat regularly, but unlike on Earth we don't have shops available to replenish borrowed meals. The key to living, working and thriving in outer space is taking care of your own possessions and respecting other people's possessions. The same applies in an apartment share. Form good habits, and respect boundaries and all will be well.

TIP 4 - Before heading into space for a long-duration, we were taught that crewmembers had to be open with one another and always willing to talk about any feelings of tension or stress. We also had regular private video sessions with a NASA psychologist in which we'd be candid about how we were getting on with our fellow crewmembers. The notion of getting everything out in the open applies to an apartment share just as much as it does a space station. If something is bothering you, make sure you talk about it rather than simmering in silence, or worse, leaving passive aggressive notes for your roomies to find. From SpareRoom's research it was found that 65% would happily confront their roommates face-to-face over issues, but it's important to go about this the right way. Most of all, don't pick a fight, just be honest and work through things amicably.

TIP 5 – Using the toilet in space is not a simple task. They're an intricate combination of foot straps, pipes that look like elephant trunks and airtight disposable bags, plus it takes time and effort in training to learn how to use them. Even with these complexities in place, we still managed to replace the toilet paper and leave the loo in a good state for the next user. This is such a quick and easy thing to do in an apartment share and can prevent issues.

TIP 6 - While on the subject of the bathroom, be mindful of how much time you spend in the shower and be aware of who is in the queue behind you. On the International Space Station we don't have tubs or showers, so the upside is there's no waiting in line. But down on Earth, every minute you're hogging the shower is a minute your roommates could be late for work. On the ISS water has to be recycled and the process isn't instant, so being mindful of water supply is part of the job. Just remember that next time you get a large water bill in the mail because you liked taking long showers every day.

TIP 7 - One of the benefits of an apartment share is that you often have free choice of who you want to live with. Before space training even starts, astronauts are rigorously put through their paces to check they are compatible with each other in order to avoid any potential conflict when in space. With this in mind, be sure to meet your potential roommates before moving into the apartment to see whether you get along.

- ENDS -

For more information please contact spareroom@cowpr.com or +4420 7234 9150

Notes to Editors

*1 - Research conducted with 1,000 UK SpareRoom apartment sharers

About Terry Virts

Terry Virts graduated from the US Airforce Academy in 1989 and was commissioned as an officer in the USAF and earned his pilot wings. In 2000 NASA selected Terry as an astronaut on February 8th 2010 he made his first spaceflight as pilot of the Space Shuttle Endeavour during STS-130 for two weeks. On November 23rd 2014 Terry launched on-board Soyuz TMA-15M from Baikonur, Kazakhstan to the International Space Station. In March of the following year, Terry assumed command of the ISS as Commander of Expedition 43. Terry spent 200 days in space on his Expedition 42/43 flight, which is the fourth longest continuous NASA space mission. He is also one of only four astronauts ever to have piloted a space shuttle, flown on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft, performed space walks and commanded the ISS.

About SpareRoom

SpareRoom was launched in New York in 2011 and so far has helped over half a million people find a room or a roommate.

SpareRoom is available via iOS and Android apps as well as online. Every ad is moderated and SpareRoom also runs weekly [Speed Roommating](#) events in NYC, where roommates can meet face to face in a safe environment.