

# Learning Objectives

- Know exactly what furniture and amenities every coliving room needs
- Understand the cost tiers for furnishing rooms (budget, standard, and premium)
- Learn room layout best practices that maximize space and appeal
- Source furniture affordably from the right vendors
- Identify rent-boosting amenities that pay for themselves
- Understand PadSplit room requirements vs. self-managed flexibility
- Take listing photos that fill rooms fast

## Why Room Setup Matters

Your rooms are your product. In coliving, each bedroom is a self-contained unit that a tenant evaluates independently. A well-furnished room commands higher rent, fills faster, and attracts better tenants. A poorly set up room sits vacant, generates complaints, and increases turnover.

### KEY INSIGHT

The difference between a \$600/month room and an \$800/month room is often just \$300-500 in extra furnishing investment. That

investment pays for itself in the first month and generates returns every month after.

## PadSplit vs. Self-Managed: Room Standards

Your approach to room setup depends on whether you are listing through PadSplit or managing tenants yourself. PadSplit has specific requirements you must meet to get approved. Self-managed properties give you more flexibility, but you should still aim for a high standard.

### PadSplit Requirements

- **Bed frame + mattress** (full or queen required)
- **Dresser** with at least 3 drawers
- **Nightstand** with lamp
- **Interior lock** on bedroom door (keyed or smart lock)
- **Closet or wardrobe** with hangers
- **Mirror** (wall-mounted or full-length)
- **Trash can** in every room
- **Window coverings** (blinds or curtains)

### Self-Managed Flexibility

- You set your own furniture standards
- Can offer unfurnished rooms at lower rent
- Can offer premium furnished rooms at higher rent
- Flexibility on bed size (twin OK for smaller rooms)
- Lock type is your choice (deadbolt, smart lock, padlock)

- **Smoke detector** in each room
- Room must be a minimum of 70 sq ft
- Must have a window for egress
- Must have a closet or wardrobe

- No minimum room size mandated by platform
- Can customize amenity packages per room
- Can charge furniture deposits
- Can allow tenants to bring their own furniture
- Still follow local habitability codes

#### **IMPORTANT FOR BOTH TRACKS**

Regardless of PadSplit or self-managed, always check your local housing codes. Many municipalities have minimum bedroom size requirements (often 70 sq ft minimum), egress window requirements, and smoke/CO detector mandates. Violating these can result in fines or loss of your rental license.

## **Essential Furniture Checklist**

Every coliving room needs a core set of furniture to be functional and attractive. Here is the complete list broken into must-haves and nice-to-haves.

## Must-Have Items (Every Room)

| ITEM                        | BUDGET RANGE     | NOTES  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Bed Frame</b>            | \$80 -<br>\$250  | Platform frames skip the box spring. Metal frames are durable and cheap.   |
| <b>Mattress</b>             | \$150 -<br>\$400 | Full or Queen. Bed-in-a-box options (Zinus, Linenspa) work great.          |
| <b>Mattress Protector</b>   | \$15 -<br>\$30   | Waterproof. Non-negotiable. Protects your mattress investment.             |
| <b>Sheet Set</b>            | \$20 -<br>\$50   | Provide one set. Neutral colors (white, gray, navy).                       |
| <b>Pillows (2)</b>          | \$15 -<br>\$40   | Medium-firm. Include pillow protectors.                                    |
| <b>Comforter/<br/>Duvet</b> | \$30 -<br>\$80   | Neutral, machine-washable. Duvet with removable cover is easiest to clean. |
| <b>Dresser</b>              | \$80 -<br>\$200  | Minimum 3-drawer. Anchor to wall for safety.                               |
| <b>Desk</b>                 | \$50 -<br>\$150  | Work-from-home is standard now. Even a small writing desk adds value.      |

| ITEM                        | BUDGET RANGE | NOTES   |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---|
| <b>Desk Chair</b>           | \$50 - \$120 | Ergonomic office - style preferred over dining chairs.                    |
| <b>Nightstand</b>           | \$30 - \$80  | Even a small one. Place for phone, water, alarm.                          |
| <b>Desk Lamp</b>            | \$15 - \$40  | LED with multiple brightness levels preferred.                            |
| <b>Mirror</b>               | \$20 - \$60  | Full-length preferred. Wall-mount or over-the-door.                       |
| <b>Trash Can</b>            | \$8 - \$20   | Small with lid. Include a few starter bags.                               |
| <b>Curtains/<br/>Blinds</b> | \$15 - \$50  | Blackout preferred. Huge quality-of-life upgrade.                         |
| <b>Door Lock</b>            | \$25 - \$150 | Smart lock (\$80 - 150) or keyed knob (\$25 - 40). Required for PadSplit. |
| <b>Hangers<br/>(10-15)</b>  | \$5 - \$15   | Matching set looks professional. Velvet slim hangers save space.          |
| <b>Power Strip</b>          |              |   |

| ITEM | BUDGET RANGE | NOTES  |
|------|--------------|--|
|      | \$10 - \$25  | Surge-protected with USB ports.<br>Tenants always need more outlets. |

## Nice-to-Have Upgrades

- **Floating shelves** (\$15-40) - Extra storage without floor space
- **Small rug** (\$20-50) - Softens hard floors, adds warmth
- **Wall art/decor** (\$10-30) - 1-2 framed prints elevate the room
- **Shoe rack** (\$15-30) - Keeps closet area organized
- **Over-door hooks** (\$8-15) - Extra hanging storage
- **Bedside caddy** (\$10-15) - Remote, phone, book holder

## Room Layout Best Practices

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How you arrange furniture matters as much as what furniture you include. Poor layout makes a room feel cramped even when it is not. Good layout creates flow and makes small rooms feel spacious.

### Layout Rules

1. **Bed against the longest wall:** Anchor the room. Ideally opposite the door so the bed is the first thing seen.
2. **Desk near the window:** Natural light for working. If no window desk area, ensure the desk lamp provides adequate light.

3. **Clear path from door to window:** Never block the egress window. This is also a fire code requirement in most jurisdictions.
4. **Nightstand on the non-wall side of the bed:** Accessible from where the tenant sleeps.
5. **Dresser near the closet:** Creates a natural dressing zone.
6. **Mirror near the dresser or closet door:** Functional placement for getting ready.
7. **Leave 24+ inches of walkway:** Around all furniture. The room should feel open, not obstacle-course tight.

## Layout by Room Size

| ROOM SIZE                               | BED SIZE      | DESK?                            | DRESSER SIZE    | LAYOUT TIP   |
|---|---------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Small<br/>(70 - 100<br/>sq ft)</b>   | Full          | Small writing desk or shelf-desk | 3-drawer narrow | Use vertical space: floating shelves, over-door hooks, under-bed storage |
| <b>Medium<br/>(100 - 130<br/>sq ft)</b> | Full or Queen | Standard desk                    | 4-5 drawer      | Comfortable fit for all essentials. Add a small rug for warmth.          |
|   | Queen         |                                  |                 |  |

| ROOM SIZE                                    | BED SIZE            | DESK?                        | DRESSER SIZE                                       | LAYOUT TIP  |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Large<br/>(130 - 180<br/>sq ft)</b>       |                     | Full desk<br>with<br>drawers | 5 - 6 drawer<br>or dresser<br>+ small<br>bookshelf | Can add accent<br>chair, mini<br>fridge, or TV<br>stand. Premium<br>room potential. |
| <b>XL /<br/>Primary<br/>(180+ sq<br/>ft)</b> | Queen<br>or<br>King | Full desk<br>setup           | Full dresser<br>+ closet<br>system                 | Premium suite.<br>Add sitting<br>area, TV, mini<br>fridge. Charge<br>top dollar.    |

## Furnished Room Cost Breakdown

Your furnishing budget depends on your market, target rent, and investment strategy. Here are three tiers with detailed breakdowns.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Budget Tier</b></p> <p><b>\$1,200 -<br/>\$1,500</b></p> <p>Per Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metal platform bed frame - \$80</li> </ul> | <p><b>Standard Tier</b></p> <p><b>\$1,500 -<br/>\$2,500</b></p> <p>Per Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood/<br/>upholstered</li> </ul> | <p><b>Premium Tier</b></p> <p><b>\$2,500 -<br/>\$3,500</b></p> |
|---|---|--|

- Bed-in-a-box mattress (Zinus 8") - \$150
- Mattress protector - \$15
- Basic sheet set - \$20
- Pillows (2) - \$15
- Comforter - \$30
- 3-drawer dresser (IKEA KULLEN) - \$80
- Simple desk - \$50
- Basic office chair - \$50
- Nightstand - \$30
- Desk lamp - \$15
- Over-door mirror - \$20
- Trash can - \$8
- Basic curtains - \$15
- Keyed doorknob lock - \$25
- Hangers (15) - \$8
- Power strip - \$12

- platform frame - \$180
- 10" memory foam mattress - \$250
- Mattress protector - \$25
- Quality sheet set (1000TC) - \$40
- Pillows (2) + protectors - \$30
- Duvet + cover - \$60
- 5-drawer dresser - \$150
- Desk with drawer - \$100
- Ergonomic office chair - \$90
- Nightstand with drawer - \$60
- LED desk lamp - \$30
- Full-length wall mirror - \$40
- Trash can with lid - \$15
- Blackout curtains - \$35

## Per Room

- Quality wood bed frame - \$300
- 12" hybrid mattress - \$400
- Premium mattress protector - \$30
- Luxury sheet set - \$60
- Quality pillows (2) + protectors - \$50
- Premium duvet + cover - \$80
- 6-drawer dresser - \$250
- Large desk with storage - \$180
- Quality ergonomic chair - \$150
- Nightstand with charging - \$80
- LED lamp + overhead lighting - \$50
- Framed wall mirror - \$60

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**Estimated Total:  
~\$623 (items) +  
paint/prep  
~\$200 +  
assembly labor  
~\$100 +  
contingency**

- Smart lock (August/Wyze) - \$100
- Velvet hangers (20) - \$12
- Surge protector with USB - \$18
- Small rug - \$30
- Wall art (1-2 pieces) - \$20
- Floating shelf - \$20

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**Estimated Total:  
~\$1,305 (items)  
+ paint/prep  
~\$250 +  
assembly ~\$150  
+ contingency**

- Premium trash can - \$20
- Blackout curtains (quality) - \$50
- Smart lock (Schlage/Yale) - \$150
- Matching hangers (20) - \$15
- Power strip + USB hub - \$25
- Area rug - \$60
- Wall art (2-3 pieces) - \$40
- Floating shelves (2) - \$35
- Mini fridge - \$120
- 32" Smart TV + mount - \$180

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**Estimated Total:  
~\$2,385 (items)  
+ paint/prep  
~\$300 +  
assembly ~\$200  
+ contingency**

### WHICH TIER SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

**Budget tier** works great for starter properties, lower-rent markets, or PadSplit rooms where the platform drives demand. **Standard tier** is the sweet spot for most markets and gives you the best return on investment. **Premium tier** is for higher-rent markets, primary bedrooms, or properties where you are competing with apartments and want top dollar.

## Furniture Sourcing Strategy

Where you buy furniture dramatically impacts your total cost. Smart sourcing can cut your furnishing budget by 30-50% without sacrificing quality.

### Top Sources (Ranked by Value)

| SOURCE                      | BEST FOR                              | SAVINGS VS. RETAIL  | TIPS  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| <b>Facebook Marketplace</b> | Dressers, desks, nightstands, mirrors | 50-80% off          | Search "moving sale" for bulk deals. Negotiate hard. Inspect before buying. |
| <b>IKEA</b>                 |                                       | Retail but low-cost | KULLEN dresser (\$80), MICKE desk (\$70). As-Is                             |

| SOURCE                         | BEST FOR                               | SAVINGS VS. RETAIL           | TIPS  |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
|                                | Dressers, desks, shelves, organization |                              | section for extra savings.  |
| <b>Amazon</b>                  | Mattresses, bed frames, bedding, lamps | 30-50% vs. stores            | Zinus and Linenspa for mattresses. Subscribe & Save for bedding basics.       |
| <b>Wayfair</b>                 | Bed frames, full furniture sets        | 20-40% during sales          | Wait for Way Day or clearance sales. Open box deals for deep discounts.       |
| <b>Walmart</b>                 | Bedding, curtains, trash cans, basics  | Lowest prices on consumables | Mainstays brand is surprisingly decent for the price. Great for bedding sets. |
| <b>Estate Sales / Auctions</b> | Quality dressers, desks, mirrors       | 60-90% off                   | Estate sales often have furniture in excellent                                |

| SOURCE                 | BEST FOR                      | SAVINGS VS. RETAIL | TIPS   |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|
|                        |                               |                    | condition. Check EstateSales.net.                                    |
| <b>Habitat ReStore</b> | Miscellaneous, sometimes gems | 50-70% off         | Inventory varies. Visit regularly. Great for mirrors, lamps, chairs. |

#### PRO SOURCING STRATEGY: THE HYBRID APPROACH

Buy **mattresses and bed frames new** (Amazon/Wayfair) for hygiene and warranty. Buy **dressers, desks, and nightstands used** (Facebook Marketplace/estate sales) for maximum savings. Buy **bedding and consumables new** (Walmart/Amazon) for freshness. Buy **locks and tech new** (Amazon) for reliability. This hybrid approach typically brings a standard-tier room down to budget-tier pricing.

## Bulk Buying Tips

- **Buy 5+ of the same item:** Contact Amazon/Wayfair sellers directly for bulk discounts
- **Standardize across rooms:** Same bed frame, same mattress, same bedding. Makes replacement easy and keeps costs predictable.
- **Stock spare bedding:** Buy 2 sheet sets per room so you can do quick turnovers without waiting for laundry

- **Create a furniture inventory spreadsheet:** Track what is in each room, purchase date, cost, and warranty info

## Bedding Packages

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Bedding is your most frequently replaced item. Having a standardized, affordable bedding package streamlines turnover and keeps rooms looking fresh.

### Basic Bedding Package (~\$80/room)

- Waterproof mattress protector - \$15
- Sheet set (microfiber) - \$20
- 2 pillows (standard) - \$15
- Comforter (solid color) - \$30

Replace sheets and pillows every turnover. Wash comforter if in good shape.

### Upgraded Bedding Package (~\$150/room)

- Premium mattress protector - \$25
- Cotton sheet set (400TC+) - \$40
- 2 quality pillows + protectors - \$30
- Duvet insert + removable cover - \$55

Duvet covers are easier to wash than comforters. Feels more hotel-like.

### COLOR STRATEGY

Stick with **white, gray, or navy** for all bedding. White looks cleanest in photos and is easy to bleach. Gray hides stains better for budget

properties. Navy is a solid middle ground. Avoid patterns -- they look dated fast and are harder to replace with exact matches.

## Rent-Boosting Amenities

Certain room upgrades have an outsized impact on what tenants will pay. These amenities often pay for themselves within 1-3 months through higher rent.

| AMENITY               | COST                | RENT INCREASE     | PAYBACK PERIOD | NOTES  |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Smart Lock</b>     | \$80 -<br>\$150     | \$25 -<br>\$50/mo | 2-3<br>months  | Eliminates key management. Tenants love keyless entry. Essential for PadSplit. |
| <b>Mini Fridge</b>    | \$100<br>-<br>\$150 | \$25 -<br>\$50/mo | 2-4<br>months  | Reduces kitchen conflicts. Huge for tenant satisfaction. 3.2 cu ft is ideal.   |
| <b>Smart TV (32")</b> |                     | \$25 -<br>\$50/mo | 3-4<br>months  | Wall-mounted saves space. Let  |

| AMENITY                        | COST                | RENT INCREASE     | PAYBACK PERIOD | NOTES  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
|                                | \$120<br>-<br>\$180 |                   |                | tenants use their own streaming accounts.                                  |
| <b>Blackout Curtains</b>       | \$25 -<br>\$50      | \$10 -<br>\$25/mo | 1-2<br>months  | Night-shift workers and light sleepers consider this essential.            |
| <b>Desk + Chair</b>            | \$100<br>-<br>\$250 | \$25 -<br>\$50/mo | 3-5<br>months  | Remote workers will pay more for a functional workspace.                   |
| <b>USB Charging Nightstand</b> | \$60 -<br>\$100     | \$10 -<br>\$15/mo | 4-6<br>months  | Small touch that signals quality. Built-in USB ports or wireless charging. |

**ROI EXAMPLE: PREMIUM ROOM UPGRADE**

Adding a smart lock (\$100) + mini fridge (\$120) + TV (\$150) = **\$370 total investment.**

These three items can justify **\$75-\$150/month more in rent.**

Payback in **2.5-5 months**, then pure profit every month after.

Over 12 months, that \$370 investment returns **\$900-\$1,800 in additional rent.**

## Photography Tips for Listings

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Your listing photos are the single biggest factor in filling rooms fast. Bad photos mean empty rooms, no matter how nice the space actually is. You do not need a professional photographer -- a smartphone and these tips will get the job done.

### Before the Shoot

- **Deep clean everything:** Vacuum, dust, wipe all surfaces, make the bed hotel-crisp
- **Stage the room:** Add a plant, a book on the nightstand, a folded towel on the bed
- **Remove all personal items:** The room should look move-in ready, not lived-in
- **Open blinds/curtains:** Natural light makes photos dramatically better
- **Turn on all lights:** Overhead light + desk lamp + any accent lighting

### Camera Settings & Technique

1. **Use your phone in landscape mode:** Always horizontal, never vertical
2. **Shoot from the doorway:** Stand in the doorway at chest height. This shows the full room and gives the viewer the "walking in" perspective.

3. **Shoot corners:** Stand in one corner and shoot toward the opposite corner. This makes rooms look larger.
4. **Get the bed, desk, and window in one shot if possible**
5. **Take 10-15 photos per room:** Different angles. You will pick the best 3-5.
6. **Shoot during the day:** Between 10am-2pm for the best natural light
7. **Clean your lens:** Seriously. A smudged phone lens ruins otherwise good shots.

## Must-Have Shots for Each Room Listing

- Full room from doorway (hero shot)
- Bed area close-up (shows bedding quality)
- Desk/workspace area
- Closet (open, with hangers visible)
- Window with natural light
- Any special amenities (TV, mini fridge, smart lock)

### PADSPLIT PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

PadSplit requires photos of every room as part of the listing approval process. They want clear, well-lit photos showing the bed, furniture, lock, window, and closet. Follow the shot list above and you will easily meet their requirements.

## Action Steps

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1. **Choose your furnishing tier** (budget, standard, or premium) based on your market and target rent
2. **Create your room furniture shopping list** using the Room Setup Checklist tool
3. **Source your big-ticket items first:** Bed frame, mattress, dresser, desk
4. **Set up one model room** before buying for all rooms -- test the layout and adjust
5. **Photograph your model room** using the tips above for listing photos
6. **Calculate your per-room cost** and total furnishing budget
7. **Order bedding in bulk** with 1 spare set per room for quick turnovers
8. **Decide on rent-boosting amenities** and calculate the ROI for each

## Key Takeaways

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- **Every room needs 17 core items** -- from bed frame to power strip. Do not skip any.
- **Budget rooms cost \$1,200-\$1,500**, standard \$1,500-\$2,500, premium \$2,500-\$3,500
- **Use the hybrid sourcing strategy:** New for mattresses/bedding, used for case goods, to cut costs 30-50%
- **Smart locks, mini fridges, and TVs** are the top three rent-boosting amenities with 2-5 month payback

- **PadSplit has mandatory requirements** -- meet them all or your listing will not be approved
- **Room layout matters as much as furniture quality** -- bed on the longest wall, desk by the window, clear pathways
- **Good listing photos fill rooms fast** -- shoot from the doorway, use natural light, stage the space
- **Standardize everything** across rooms for easy replacement and cost predictability

## Your Deliverable

Plan every room in your property with an interactive checklist and cost calculator.