

# Couples who cohabit before engagement are more likely to struggle

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University of Denver (DU) researchers find that couples who live together before they are engaged have a higher chance of getting divorced than those who wait until they are married to live together, or at least wait until they are engaged. In addition, couples who lived together before engagement and then married, reported a lower satisfaction in their marriages.

The research, which appears in the "[Journal of Family Psychology](#)," was conducted by Galena Rhoades, senior researcher, Scott Stanley, research professor, and Howard Markman, professor of psychology.

"We think that some [couples](#) who move in together without a clear commitment to marriage may wind up sliding into [marriage](#) partly because they are already cohabiting," Rhoades says.

"It seems wise to talk about commitment and what living together might mean for the future of the [relationship](#) before moving in together, especially because cohabiting likely makes it harder to break up compared to [dating](#)," Stanley says.

The three researchers also studied the reasons why couples decide to live together. That study, which appeared in the "[Journal of Family Issues](#)," shows that most couples chose to live together in order to spend more time together. The second most popular reason is convenience, followed by testing the relationship. This is different than previous research that found most people cohabit to test the relationship.

"Cohabiting to test a relationship turns out to be associated with the most problems in relationships," Rhoades says. "Perhaps if a person is feeling a need to test the relationship, he or she already knows some important information about how a relationship may go over time."

Source: University of Denver

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