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■ Molly Quell

I like to joke that there are only two things I'm very good at in life; baking chocolate chip cookies and telling people what to do. While many problems are solved by making and eating cookies, more can be solved by taking my advice.



I'm headed off to backpack through Latin America for the summer without my boyfriend. We won't see each other for two months and contact will be limited. Should we stay together?

First, you should take me with you. I could use a few months in the sun. Second, if you're asking this question, you guys probably aren't very serious. Two months is a long time to be apart early in a relationship, so why not take a break for the duration and see where things stand when you return? If you miss him terribly, you'll see him

when you get back and if not, I'm sure you'll meet plenty of guys while traveling.

I'm worried about getting my deposit back on my apartment when I leave at the end of the semester. Any advice for how to ensure I get my whole check?

First, check with your rental agency or landlord. Often times they will do a pre-inspection inspection to let you know what you need to clean or fix to pass the real inspection. Then, seriously clean. Dirty apartments are more likely to get written up for other problems. Finally, spackle is your friend. Fill in those holes in the wall and be sure to sand it down after it dries.



I'm studying in the Netherlands and, when classes end for the summer, I'm looking for a good way to spend my summer vacation. Many of my friends are traveling but I don't have the money to join them.

I wish I could spend my summer traveling as well. Alas writing an advice column is hard work. Depending on how long you plan to stay here, consider taking a Dutch course. Your university may offer them for a reduced price and if you want to continue living here after graduation, speaking Dutch will go a long way in finding a job.

Also you could think about volunteering. There are plenty of good causes around The Hague which would benefit from your skills. See the volunteering tab on our website for some ideas. Volunteering can be an excellent way to improve your resume as well.

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Need advice?

Write to Molly at molly@theunderground.nlFILED UNDER: [A HELPING HAND](#), [MOLLY'S ADVICE](#)

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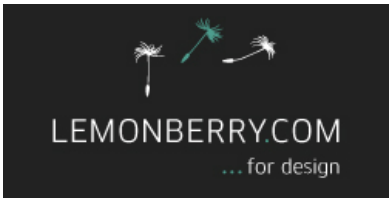
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February 2012
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October 2011
September 2011
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