



National Center For
College Planning, LLC
"Making College Affordable"

Cleared for Takeoff

Managing the First Weeks of College

The first few weeks of college are uniquely exciting ... and stressful. Luckily, there are proven ways to ease your transition so you can launch into your college years with optimism and confidence.

Get Involved!

This is first on the list because it is so important. The best way to adjust to any new environment is through action and connection. Colleges offer an unbelievable number of clubs and activities to help students connect and be engaged with one another and the school: theater, sports, gaming, nationality clubs, science, research, philanthropy, writing, art, music, the list goes on and on. During the first few weeks of school, most colleges will set up tables around campus where you can learn more about and sign up for clubs and groups. Do it.

Know that you are not alone

If you are feeling scared, lonely, unsure, homesick - you are not alone! One of the great things about college is that you're not the only "new kid at school." Every freshman on campus is going through the same transition and likely feeling a lot of the same feelings that you are. Don't be afraid to talk to people, be honest, and try to be the person who makes other people feel comfortable. Sometimes the best way to get over your own feelings of anxiety is to help someone else with theirs.

Limit social media

It can be hard to focus on creating a new life where you are if you keep seeing images of the great time your high school friends are having somewhere else. As hard as it is, try to limit your exposure to social media images. These images are curated to show you only the best moments. Focus on your surroundings, your experience, and the people right in front of you.

Go. To. Class.

This advice is simple. Get out of bed. Get to class. Unlike any schooling that you've had before, attendance in many college classes is not mandatory. At some big schools, the classes are simply too large to track attendance, and nobody is going to tell your mom and dad that you skipped class so, it is entirely up to you to get to yourself to class. While it can be tempting to take advantage of your newfound anonymity, do not do it. Beyond the simple fact that you're wasting the investment of time and money in your own future, you also risk falling behind or failing. Besides, going to class is a great way to meet new people and start forging new friendships.



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Find a study zone and focus

While there is nothing wrong with studying in your room, dorm life can make it hard to focus. Seek out study spaces where you can block out distractions. Aside from the library, many schools have quiet spaces speckled across campus. Put your phone on silent mode and focus on the work you have to do.

Seek connections with advisors and professors

Advisors, professors, and teaching assistants are all invested in your success. Don't be afraid to reach out for help, ask a question, or go to office hours.

Establish healthy habits

They're called healthy habits for a reason: eat right; exercise; get enough sleep. Each of these can be challenging with college's unstructured schedule and limitless dining options. Do your best to choose healthy options in the dining hall, schedule a workout or two throughout the week (consider joining a club or intramural team), and have a goal for going to sleep at night. Also, don't give up any healthy habits that helped you handle the stresses of high school, such as meditation, journaling, art, any healthy choice that helps you relax and unwind.

The first few weeks of college are an adjustment. Give yourself some grace. Be friendly, organized, and don't give up the healthy, disciplined choices that made it possible for you to have the kind of success it took to get to college.