

What You Need to Know About College

Living in a new place can be an adjustment. Especially as a freshman living in a college dorm away from home for the first time. There are a number of questions you probably have running through your head such as what will your room be like, will you be able to fit all of your stuff in it, and will you meet new friends?

Making the Move

Dorm rooms are generally quite small. But more often than not, they aren't as small as you might think. If you learn to position your belongings strategically you will be able to fit more in your space. A number of students choose to loft their beds which conserves on a great deal of space. Also, prepare for college dorm life by checking with your roommate beforehand to see what types of bigger items they are bringing so that you don't bring doubles of items.

The Roommate

Sometimes you will know your roommate and sometimes you won't. Either way, you can have a positive college dorm life experience or a not so positive experience. Just because you are living with your best friend doesn't mean you won't ever fight, or because you don't know your roommate doesn't mean you won't ever talk to them.

Roommates must set ground rules from the start. Everything from bed times to chores to visiting hours must be discussed well in advance in order to prevent conflict between you and your roommate. Once rules are discussed and set in place there should be no excuse for disrespectful behavior between you and your roommate.

Opportunities for Meeting New People

As a college freshman remember one thing: Everyone is in the same situation you are. Everyone is in a new setting, in a new living situation, and surrounded by a lot of people they don't know. Everyone needs to meet people so why not get the ball rolling? Introduce yourself to others in your hall to get to know people. Too afraid to initiate the process? Then do what makes you feel comfortable, even if that does mean waiting for people to come up to you.

Try to get involved in on campus. Join campus organizations, clubs, or get a part-time job on campus. These are all great ways to meet new people. Campus organizations and clubs are a great way to meet people who have similar interests as yourself. A part-time job will not only earn you extra income, but will allow you to meet people at the same time.

There are many unknowns when making the move to college. A steady transition to dorm life is possible if you keep an open mind and allow yourself to be open to the possibilities that college dorm life has to offer.

Among life's defining moments, the move to college ranks up there with marriage and kids. Going from the carefully planned world of bedtimes, locker breaks, and home-cooked meals to the boundless, curfew-less, self-guided universe of higher education can be scary. Luckily, the back-to-school blues aren't incurable. Check out these ways to deal with life away from home.

Keep in Touch

Just because you are thousands of miles from home doesn't mean you have to feel like it. E-mail and instant messaging programs are free while online phone networks such as Skype offer low-cost calls using Internet lines. For technophobes and those without computer access, calling cards and snail mail are always an option. Keeping contact with the homestead will make you feel less isolated and remind you that you may not be missing that much after all.

Get Involved

The best way to make friends is by simply being you and that means becoming actively involved in your passions. Studies show that students who are directly involved in campus clubs are less prone to depression and less likely to transfer than those who are not. Start by checking out a list of your school's student organizations. Colleges have a larger budgets and student body than high schools; therefore, there are infinitely more extracurricular activities. If your interest isn't offered, don't be afraid to start a group of your own.

Stay Busy

Boredom is depression's nasty best friend. If you find yourself with too much time, beef up your credit hours, volunteer, take a college internship, or get a part-time job. Remember that the more you're involved in, the more people you'll meet. With your hands busy and mind engaged, you may not have time to get homesick.