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# So you're headed to college...

## Freshman Year—First Semester

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Tips, Tricks, and General Advice That You Probably Don't Think You Need Right Now



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## Introduction

So, you're going to college. How exciting! For me, the thought of going to college was enough of a motivator to do well in school from 1st grade onward. We went to UCLA games on a regular basis, in 3rd grade we went to the "I'm going to college" program on the UCLA campus. College was always in the cards.

Especially in high school, it seemed to be as equal of a promise as it was a threat. "If you don't do this, you probably won't get into college." "Get good grades so colleges like you." "Do thirty extracurriculars so you seem like a well-rounded candidate." WELL ALL THAT IS 100% BEHIND YOU. YOU MADE IT, BABY!



*Me dancing for you.*

### SO LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT TO EXPECT

Your first semester is going to be a whirlwind. Heck, your first day is.

No matter how close to home you're going to be living, your parents are going to cry, you're going to be embarrassed, you're probably going to cry, and instead of being worried about getting **into** college, you're going to be worried about starting over (I know that you're tough, but it's OK to be worried.)

#### **Here's my advice for that first day/week:**

1) **Tell your parents/family members dropping you off "Thank you." and that you love them.** They're probably having a hard time, so don't be a jerk like I was and be like "I'M FINE WITHOUT YOU I'M FREEEEEE." because that's one of my biggest regrets.

2) **Leave your dorm door open when you're there.** Say "hi" to people passing, say "hi" to people who have their doors open. (Just remember to close it and lock it when you leave—and don't forget your key!)

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3) **Walk around campus before classes start.** It's a little calmer but still busy so you'll get a feel for what it's going to be like when it's packed. **Bring your class schedule and map out where your classes are.**

4) **Go to opening events.** Club fairs, dorm events, whatever is happening, go to it for at least 10-15 minutes. Get some free food, hang out, find things that you enjoy doing. Don't forget to say "hi" to people—compliment shirts, talk about similar interests, it's worth it to try.

5) **Stick with healthy habits.** I know that it's exciting to have chicken tenders on site, to have parties available, and to not have any parents dictating what you ingest. This is 100% how I gained a LOT of weight freshman year. Don't be me.

**That first week goes by really fast, so here's some advice I have for that first month:**

1) **Establish a solid sleep routine.** Make sure you're getting 7-8 hours so that you're functional. Partying or studying late is not worth losing sleep over.

2) **Have at least one meal with at least one person every day.** Whether it's someone in your dorm or someone from class. Don't be afraid to say, "Hey, I'm thinking of going to \_\_\_ for lunch. Wanna come?"

3) **Get to know your RA.** They're going to become one of your biggest cheerleaders and they enjoy having kind residents. Talk to them, ask questions, that's what they're there for! (And for safety.) Never EVER be afraid to go home. Your RA is not scary.

4) **If you live near family, take at least 1 weekend a month to go home, catch them up, and do some laundry FOR FREE.** I wish I could have. But you also isolate yourself if you go *every* weekend. Bring your friends sometimes, too! They might need a break from campus.

5) **Don't cram junk into your body.** That cafeteria or restaurant will be there all year. Eat healthy, don't go crazy, and treat yo-self (within reason) on a weekend.



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## Now all semester:

- 1) **Clean your room once in a while.** (We don't want rats or cucarachas)
- 2) **Go to your classes!** Gen Eds especially are sometimes hard to show up for.

However, if I actually attended all of my classes (except for when I was sick), I would have probably graduated with a 4.0.

3) **Talk to professors that you like and go to office hours.** My professors became the *best* part about college, especially the ones that knew me really well. It's worth reaching out to them for help if you need it or just to chat.

4) **Parties exist.** (I'll have a section about this next).

5) **Go out of your comfort zone and find the good in things that you're trying.** Let's say there's a basketball game happening and you don't *really* like basketball. It's there, it's happening, why not go out and try at least one game?



## Let's talk about PARTIES and SEX (ooohhh scary):

### PART 1: PARTIES

Parents don't like to talk about this, but I'm going to. I went to a particularly party-heavy university and got caught up in that shiny-new-freshman lifestyle for a bit. So, here's what I learned (I'm basically your guinea pig).

**I'm not forbidding you to go, I'm just saying be careful.** If you've never had a drink in your life or anything beyond a sip or half a glass of wine with your family, you don't know your limits. Just...

- a) have 1 drink and nurse it slowly
- b) remember that it is **ILLEGAL** for someone under 21 to be drinking
- c) don't do any hard drugs
- d) don't waste any of your money on alcohol
- e) understand that no one's going to pressure you into doing anything. Your choices are your own
- f) have at least 3 reasons in your pocket why you



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can't do something if you don't feel comfortable with it (such as..."I can't smoke I'm a singer." or "My \_\_\_ died of lung cancer, so I'm not even gonna touch that.")

g) bring a reusable water bottle filled with water with you. People will probably be dumb and think it's vodka or something, but it's really just some water.

h) set an allotted amount of time for when you're going to leave ("When I finish my water bottle." "At midnight.") This way you've gone and been social, but you haven't pushed any of your limits

i) get home safely. Take a Lyft, take an Uber, ask a friend who **100% HAS NOT** been drinking.

Here's what to do if you or your friends have had too much to drink:

- 1) Vomit if you have to. Clear out all of the bad stuff.
- 2) Eat a good meal.
- 3) Lay down on your side in case you or them vomits in your/their sleep.
- 4) Call 911 if it is serious. If anyone is incoherent, "sleeping" somewhere they probably shouldn't, or has any signs of alcohol poisoning, the Good Samaritan Law protects you. If you're underage, have been drinking or your friend has been drinking, and you call 911 in an emergency, you will not be arrested for your underaged drinking.

## PART 2: SEX

Another thing parents don't like to talk about.

Dear god I hope you've already had "the talk" so I'm not going to go into that  
BUT JUST IN CASE:

- 1) You 100% do not have to have sex if you don't want to.
- 2) Never have sex with someone if you or them is drunk—it's illegal. Make sure they're safe and LEAVE.
- 3) Oral sex is still sex, anal sex is still sex.
- 4) Wear a condom 100% of the time.
- 5) Get tested for STDs at a doctor's office or campus health clinic before you have sex or have a new sexual partner.
- 6) Hookup culture is ever-present. You don't need to be part of it. Your actual friends don't care who you have sex with. It's private.

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## OKAY NOW THAT ALL THAT SERIOUS SH\*T IS OVER, LET'S TALK ABOUT DORM ROOMS

1) Having a roommate can be really great for the first couple of weeks when you need a friend, no matter how weird they turn out.

2) Spend time outside of your room to do homework. Don't be a hermit!

3) Your RA is probably one of the coolest people you'll ever meet. Respect them, get to know them, and remember that they're also a human and in college so they know what's up.

4) I 100% recommend living in the dorms for at least 2 years. It was a pain trying to find housing off campus and it was super expensive.

5) Keep it relatively clean and do your laundry—don't have clothing mountain to deal with.

6) Everyone loves snacks. Keep lots of snacks in your room.



### LAUNDRY

1) Separate your greys and whites from your darks and colors. You don't have to \*actually\* do 30 piles.

2) Cold water=darks

3) Hot water=lights

4) Figure out how you use your machines—coins? card? student ID?

5) You only need 1 tide pod per load of laundry.

6) Set a timer and get your clothes as soon as they're done.

7) Do laundry on a random weekday in the morning or late afternoon. The weekends will always be crowded.



### FINAL THOUGHTS

Freshman year will never happen again. You will make mistakes, you will learn a lot on the way, and don't worry if you don't keep all the friends you first met. You've got four years to sort everything out, so don't ever give up hope! (Also, only use your credit card for emergencies, it's not fun paying it off).