4 Ready-to-Go Checklists You Need Before College

The transition to a college life is looming. In the movies, kids show up to their spacious dorm rooms with a few suitcases and transform the place into a magical wonderland. The reality is a bit different.



1: Emotional Preparation

- [ ] Identify your goals (academic, social, personal).
- [ ] List your personal beliefs and morals so you ensure that the choices you make in college align with who you are.
- [ ] Know what activities recharge you and make plans to continue those at school by looking into groups and activities on or near campus. Check out student life pages on the college website and meetup groups in the local area.
- [ ] Build your confidence by making a list of all your accomplishments. Get your friends and family to tell you something that think is exceptional about you.
- [ ] Spend one-on-one time with family members.
- [ ] Spend one-on-one time with good friends.
- [ ] Decide on how you'll communicate with friends and family while you're at school.
- [ ] Take a spontaneous trip and experience what it's like to do something unexpected.
- [ ] Plan how you'll continue to practice your religion/faith/spirituality away from home.
- [ ] Know that you'll change because of your new experiences. Remember, sometimes change can feel uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean it's bad.

2: Financial Preparation

- [ ] First off: figure out where your tuition money is coming from (scholarships, grants, work study, job, parents, savings, etc.).
- [ ] Create your budget so necessary expenses are covered (books, car payments, insurance, etc.) and you know how much

money is left over after expenses.

- [ ] Decide on how much you'll spend on other necessities, like food and college costs (events, fees, etc.).
- [ ] Use a banking or budgeting app to keep track of your spending.
- [ ] Stick to your budget in the months leading up to college—remember, practice makes perfect!
- [ ] Don't add to your budget every month if you have money left over. Put that money into savings and pretend it's not available.
- [ ] Look at your bank statements each month.
- [ ] If possible, see if your budget will allow you to start paying back loans while still in school.

3: Logistical Preparation

- [ ] Tour the dorms before move in.
- [ ] Contact your roommate WAY ahead of time and decide who's bringing what.
- [ ] Look into stores that ship to dorms so you don't have to pack items like bedding and refrigerators.
- [ ] Know where the local stores are near the dorm for last minute forgotten items and don't forget to ask for a college student discount!
- [ ] Plan for weather during moving. Bring lots of water bottles for places that get hot and tarps for places where it rains.
- [ ] Get to the dorms as soon as you can on Arrival Day. Parking for unloading can get messy.
- [ ] Bring snacks to help you power through the move.
- [ ] Accept your family's help to move in and arrange the room. This will give you more time to say goodbyes and to attend Welcome Week events.
- [ ] Pack as light as possible, but know your situation. If you're at a rural school without a car, you'll want to bring all the small items you can think of. If you're at a school in the city or have a car, you can pick things up as needed.

4: The Stuff

- [ ] Dorm Room Items
- [ ] Linens
- [ ] School Supplies
- [ ] Electronics
- [ ] Shared with Roommate
- [ ] Bathroom/Meds
- [ ] Clothes
- [ ] Cleaning Items
- [ ] Food (check with roommate about allergies before buying)
- [ ] Personal

- [ ] Documents
- [ ] Safety

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