

101 Health & Wellness Tips For College Students



College is a time for growing as an individual. For many students, it's their first time moving away from home and the most freedom they've ever had. You can now choose your own classes, decide on whether you're actually going to show up to them, and are responsible for crazy things like meals and laundry. Between trying to make friends, study for tests, and catch up on your recordings- finding the time to be healthy usually ranks towards the bottom of our list. To have the very best college experience, it is important to take good care of yourself. Here are all of the things I wish someone would have told me before I started my freshmen year in College.

Sexual Health

College is a place where many students choose to explore their sexuality. Students can do this safely by following these tips.

1. **Get tested.** Know your status. 1 in 3 Americans will get an STD before age 25. Most schools have information on local clinics that offer these tests for free or at a low cost, so all students, even those with small incomes, can afford the tests.

2. **Always use protection.** The stereotype that only men should bring the condoms is outdated, and leaves too much room for error. Always be prepared and bring your own condoms. With so many different types of condoms out there, you're sure to find one that pleases both of you.

3. **Consider birth control.**

4. **Discuss issues with your partner.** Sex shouldn't be painful or scary. If you are nervous or uncomfortable with any element of your sexual relationship, make sure to bring these things up with your partner or health care provider to ensure things are emotionally and physically OK.

5. **Get regular exams.** Whether you're male or female, getting your downstairs checked out regularly is a must. Well Woman Exams include things like pap smears and breast exams which can greatly help in cancer prevention.

6. **Take advantage of vaccinations.** Many clinics local to your school now offer the HPV vaccination. Female students can take advantage of these to reduce their chance of contracting the HPV virus, the leading cause of almost all cervical cancers.

7. **Attend informational classes.** Most colleges offer classes that discuss sexual health, so you can educate yourself and learn to stay healthy and happy.

8. **Find someone to talk to.** If you are having any questions about your sexual health or orientation, find someone that you trust that you can share how you're feeling with. If you feel alone, there are people out there that can help. Talk to your school about different guidance and help-line options.

9. **Don't do anything you're not comfortable with.** While you may feel pressure from a partner or even those around you to engage in certain sexual activities, never do anything you aren't completely comfortable with. It's completely OK to tell our partner stop, or no, no matter how far into it you are.

Diet

Have you heard of the Freshmen 15? Well, this ugly rumor is true. Now that you are away from home, your eating habits can drastically change. Follow these tips to avoid the 15, and to keep your body healthy and in shape.

10. **Vary your meals.** Have you been getting the chicken sandwich with fries and iced tea for 7 days straight now? With drive-thru and dollar pizza, it gets pretty easy to fall into the same daily meal plan. Changing up your diet from day to day is an important part of good nutrition so take advantage of the variety of selections available to you.

11. **Eat breakfast.** Whether you're one of the few waking up for that 8am class, or snoring until 1pm, make sure that you are eating breakfast within one hour of waking up. This signals your body that it's time to wake up, and also kick starts your metabolism.

12. **Keep healthy snacks around.** The Snicker's commercial is right about one thing, "You're not you when you're hungry." During down times between classes, it's smart to have something to munch on to keep you focused through your next lecture. Try some hummus and pretzels or fresh fruit and almond butter.

13. **Drink moderately.** Partying is awesome. Consuming hundreds and hundreds of calories from all those beers is not so awesome. Drink in moderation and you can have a good time without hurting your health. Try drinking one glass of water for every alcoholic drink that you have. This will help to slow down your drinking, keep you hydrated, and reduce tomorrow's hangover.

14. **Don't fight stress by eating.** Instead, work out or take a break instead.

15. **Drink water.** Try drinking at least 7 glasses a day. Drink a full glass of ice water before meals helps to curb your appetite. If you replace that can of Coke outside of class with a bottle of water, you'll be saving yourself about 140 calories.

16. **Limit sugary and caffeinated beverages.**

17. **Eat your fruits and veggies.** Eating healthy does not have to mean boring! There are tons of tasty [recipes](#) out there like lemon parmesan asparagus.

18. **Limit junk food.** Want to avoid the Freshmen 15? Then look at junk food as enemy #1.

19. **Make it convenient to eat right.** Buy healthy foods and stock your fridge and room with them to ensure they're the first things at hand when you get hungry.

20. **Don't skip meals.** With so much going on, it's easy to skip eating to run off to class or the library. Don't put your body into starvation mode. Prep foods you can eat on the run so you'll have the energy to keep going.

21. **Indulge every once in awhile.** Don't lose your mind trying to be healthy all the time. It's perfectly OK to have a cheat meal, or snack, every so often.

22. **Take vitamins.** I wish someone would've told me how beneficial it is to take a multivitamin. Take one after a night of drinking and you'll thank me in the morning.

23. **Get help for eating disorders.** If you are worried you have an eating disorder and want help, don't be afraid to reach out to campus resources for help.

24. **Learn proper portion size.** To avoid eating too much, keep track of how much you're eating. For most people, meat servings should be about the size of a deck of cards. Make sure you are also filling your plate with plenty of vegetables and fruit.

Exercise

Fitting exercise into a busy schedule isn't always the easiest thing, but take stock of some of these tips to help you get on track to fitness.

25. **Stretch first.** Help yourself avoid injuries by stretching each time you exercise. Simple stretches before and after you work out or engage in physical activity can help keep you active and pain free.

26. **Ride your bike.** Instead of taking the bus or driving to class, try **biking** instead. It will give you a few minutes of exercise between your classes, and get your legs nice and toned!

27. **Play a sport.** Check out your campus's teams, or find a local league.

28. **Use safety equipment.**

29. **Head to the gym.** Most schools provide students with gym facilities they can take advantage of for free. Head to the gym between classes or when you get up in the morning to squeeze in a workout.

30. **Take advantage of fitness courses.** Additional to gym facilities, most students will have access to fitness classes they can take. Since you're already paying for these through your tuition you may as well take advantage and get a workout that will help keep you in shape and motivate you.

31. **Walk to class.**

32. **Incorporate different kinds of exercise in your routine.** Your body quickly adapts to routine and will get used to exercises that you do daily. Try and switch it up every time you work out, and make sure you are challenging yourself every time you hit the gym.

33. **Make it fun.** If a trip to the gym ranks just above a root canal, try to do some physical activities that appeal to you. From naked yoga (we dare you), to Zumba, there's a class out there for everyone.

34. **Bring a friend.** It's fun and keeps you motivated not to skip the gym after school.

35. **Try a group fitness class.**

36. **Take advantage of open spaces.** Most colleges are equipped with large grassy quads or trails you can walk on. Take advantage of these spaces to take hikes, play Frisbee or just walk around.

Sleep

College students aren't exactly known for their early to bed early to rise attitudes, but getting sleep is an integral part of staying healthy. Check out these tips to help you fall sleep as quickly as possible.

37. **Have a routine.**

38. **Make sure you're active enough during the day.** This will help you to feel tired and sleepy once it's time for bed.

39. **Do something calming before bed like breathing exercises or some light [yoga](#)/stretching.**

40. **Keep a “Deal With it Tomorrow” Notepad.** If you find yourself thinking too much before bed, try keeping a notebook and pen next to your bed to jot down your thoughts. You’ll be able to relax and clear your mind knowing that you can better focus on it in the morning after a good night’s rest.

41. **Drink more tea, and less caffeine.** Did you know the caffeine in that frappuccino you had after work can have lasting effect on your sleep for up to 4-6 hours? Studies have shown that the heat from a cup of decaf tea can help to relax you.

42. **Don’t eat so close to bedtime.** Your body typically takes around 4 hours to digest food. Don’t get us wrong- we’re guilty of occasionally stuffing our face with chocolate cake while Netflixing it up under the covers, but this can also cause you to toss and turn all night while your body works to digest all of that triple fudge frosting.

43. **Get away from all screens at least 45 minutes before bed.** The bright light from cell phones, TVs, tablets, and laptops provides too much stimulation for your brain. Instead, send your brain signals that it’s time for bed.

44. **Have a comfortable bed.** It’s worth the couple of extra dollars to splurge on a those hotel-quality pillows or extra luxurious sheets.

45. **Say yes to snooze.** If you’re one of the many people out there who *just has to hit the snooze button every morning*, set your alarm for 7 minutes earlier. Now you can hit snooze, and wake up at the right time.

46. **Wear a sleep mask.**

Illness

With communal living and thousands of other students sharing classroom space, spreading colds and viruses is easy if you’re not careful. These tips can help keep you from getting sick.

47. **Wash your hands.** Students are all in close proximity on campuses and the chances of you catching a cold is higher than usual.

48. **Avoid sharing beverages.** Sharing your drink is one of the easiest ways to spread germs.
49. **Don't go to class.** If you're sick, don't force yourself to go to class. It will only make you feel worse and infect other students. Email your professors that you're ill and stay home and rest.
50. **Get to the doctor.** If you have symptoms that aren't showing any signs of clearing up within a few days, you should make an appointment to talk to a doctor. You may need antibiotics to completely get rid of your cold.
51. **Drink lots of fluids.** Drink plenty of water, orange juice, and Gatorade for the electrolytes.
52. **Get a flu shot.**
53. **Wear flip flops in the shower.** As you will be able to tell after the first week, dorm showers get pretty dirty fast. With so many students using it daily, you run the risk of bacteria that causes athlete's foot and warts (um, GROSS!)
54. **Avoid sick friends.**
55. **Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.** The membranes in these areas make it easy for bacteria and viruses to enter your body.
56. **Try simple over the counter remedies.** Try out over the counter remedies to help ease your symptoms.
57. **Keep immunizations up to date.** While most students will have been immunized as a child, some shots may need to be updated when you enter college. Make sure yours are up to date to keep you from contracting a serious illness.

Stress

Students can have a melt down with so much going on. These tips can help you beat the stress.

58. **Create a routine.** If you get yourself in the habit of studying, working out, and sleeping at certain hours, it will be easier to fit in all the things you need to do in a day without feeling too **stressed out**.

59. **Put limits on work hours.** You can't work all the time—fun and relaxation have to be part of your routine as well. Limit the times when you will work to give yourself time to sleep and rest up so you won't get sick.

60. **Give yourself a break.** If you've been working steadily for hours, give your eyes and mind a chance for a rest by taking a break. You can come back feeling more refreshed and ready to go.

61. **Be realistic.** Sometimes there's just no way you're going to get done everything you'd like to in one day. Be realistic about your goals and understand that you can only do so much.

62. **Understand you can't do everything.** Focus on doing the things you truly love and forget about the rest. Trying to be super woman all the time is going to eventually break you down and stress you out.

63. **Get help.** If you're feeling overwhelmed, reach out and ask for help from professors and friends. They may be able to give you more time or help you to complete projects and studying more quickly.

64. **Take advantage of campus meditation and yoga programs.** Many campuses are equipped with programs that can help students get a release from their stresses through a relaxing session of meditation.

65. **Cut back if needed.** Sometimes students overwhelm themselves with everything they have going on. Reevaluate your goals and what you can manage in the time you have. Determine what you can do without, and drop it off your list for now.

66. **Relax with hobbies.** Whether you like to draw or go surfing with your friends, making time for the things you love is an important part of keeping yourself from getting too stressed out.

67. **Give yourself plenty of time.** It's easy to put off starting on a big project or studying for a test until the last minute. You'll be much less stressed out, and will likely do better if you give yourself more time to work on it.

68. **Spend time with friends.**

69. **Don't let yourself get run down.** When you feel overwhelmed take a deep breath and reevaluate your to-do list. Determine what's most important and start from there.

70. **Learn time management skills.** Learning how to prioritize and get things done on time will greatly benefit you in both school and work.

Mental Health

College students are in a high risk group for depression, so make sure you keep yourself happy and healthy with these simple tips.

71. **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** You are surrounded by a variety of resources that are all there to help you in any way you need it.

72. **Keep in touch with family and friends.** Beat homesickness with social media and things like Face Time. There's nothing like talking to a family member or old friend to make you feel less lonely.

73. **Build new friendships.**

74. **Expect things to change.**

75. **Understand that it may take time to fit in.** Remember Elle Woods from Legally Blonde?

76. **Don't let stress get the best of you.** Stress can be a major factor in many students' depression. If you're feeling stressed out make sure to take a break and set aside time to relax.

77. **Realize you don't have to please everyone.** Concentrate on making yourself happy.

78. **Know the signs of depression.** It can be hard to differentiate a simple slump from serious **depression** so learn the signs of depression not only for your own benefit but for the benefit of your friends as well.

79. **Build on your confidence.** Concentrate on what you excel in rather than your flaws.

80. **Find strength in numbers.** You may have an easier time feeling good and fitting in if you find a group of students who share similar interests and values as you.

81. **Volunteer.** It feels good to do something that benefits others too.

82. **Get involved on campus.** Joining clubs and social groups on campus can help you to meet new friends and keep you from feeling lonely or isolated.

83. **Set goals.** You'll be more motivated and positive if you give yourself goals to work towards throughout the school year.

Safety

It's smart to practice safety tips now that you're living on your own and away from home. Follow these precautions and you'll lessen your chances of becoming a victim.

84. **Trust your gut.** You know that weird feeling you get when something is off? If you start feeling like you shouldn't be somewhere, or with someone, make an excuse to get out of there.

85. **Be aware of your surroundings.**

86. **Don't walk alone at night.** Always walk with a friend. Try and walk in well-lit areas and stay where people can see you.

87. **Keep mace in your purse and also carry a whistle.**

88. **Let people know where you are.** If you're going somewhere for an extended period of time, let your roommate, a friend, or family member know where you'll be and when you expect to be back. If anything were to happen to you, people would be able to start tracking you down.

89. **Report suspicious activity.** If you see something that looks fishy or out of the norm, call campus security. If the situation seems like an emergency, call 911.

90. **Keep your dorm windows and doors locked.**

91. **Look into self-defense courses.** Many campuses offer programs and classes that help to teach students basic moves they can use if they were in a dangerous situation.

Miscellaneous

Here are a few other tips to keep you a healthy and active college student.

92. **Avoid walking to class in flip flops.** If you are walking long distances, it's best to leave the sandals at home and avoid the arch pain and pinching associated with them.

93. **Keep backpacks from being too heavy.** An overfilled backpack can hurt your back and leave you with some serious back and shoulder pain later. Make sure your backpack is properly fitted and avoid carrying around more than you need.

94. **Quit smoking.**

95. **Don't drink and drive.** If you do overindulge in drinking, call a cab or get a sober friend to take you home.

96. **Make sure you have emergency contacts.** In case something does happen to you, make sure that the school and those around you know who to contact to get those you care about to you when you need their support.

97. **Wear [sunscreen](#).**

98. **Ensure that your medical insurance covers physicians in the area.** If you aren't going with your school's insurance plan, make sure that your parent's or your own insurance covers doctors in your area.

99. **Be aware that health concerns differ for men and women.** While men and women's anatomy is similar in many ways, some things that seem like they should be the same simply aren't. Educate yourself on the sex-specific aspects of wellness to keep yourself healthier and to know what to watch out for.

100. **Monitor existing health conditions carefully.** If you leave for college knowing you have a preexisting medical condition, make arrangements to ensure that it's properly monitored while you're at school.

101. **Assert yourself.** Don't let anyone make health or wellness decisions for you that you feel uncomfortable with. If you don't want to eat that doughnut or have a drink, then don't.