



What to Do the Summer Before Starting College

High school is finished, graduation parties are winding down, and it's time to set your sights on the future. The transition from high school to college is an exciting and busy time for young adults, and you may feel a bit overwhelmed with last-minute arrangements, new responsibilities, and prioritizing your education. Campus life is full of new people, unique experiences, and juggling a busy schedule. The summer before you begin college is like the calm before the storm; a time for final hurrahs and eleventh-hour preparations. Check out these tips to help you be ready for the start of college classes in the fall:

Tour Your Campus. Many colleges offer guided tours throughout July and August. If you haven't visited your campus, summer is a great time to explore. During your visit, you can learn more about the school, meet a few students, and familiarize yourself with campus navigation, dormitories, dining locations, and classroom buildings. This will help ease some of the stress on your first day of classes.

Attend Orientation. Along the same lines, many colleges and universities hold a summer orientation for new and transfer students. It's the perfect time to connect with your roommate, make friends, and begin feeling more comfortable with the overall transition. Orientation is typically when first-year students register for classes, and counselors are available to assist you. You can also learn more about student clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities.

Arrange Financing. Students are typically required to pay for tuition and fees prior to the first day of classes. Make sure to complete any financing arrangements and plan out your payment schedule accordingly. If you're applying for student loans, the approval process may take up to several weeks. Student loans from Emerald Credit Union, in partnership with Sallie Mae® could help. [Learn which loan is right for you.](#) Once a loan is secured, the lender will often send financing directly to your college or university.

Earn Money. College is expensive! Consider spending your summer earning extra money to pay for books, supplies, and living expenses. Look for a job with an employer offering benefits like store discounts or tuition reimbursement; these will help support your new and upcoming student life. You may also create your own side-hustle like babysitting or dog walking. Clean out your bedroom and closet to identify items you don't use or won't need anymore, then have a garage sale.

Shop for Supplies. Summer is the perfect time to purchase your school supplies and dormitory items. Many retailers have back-to-school sales, but it's also wise to be on the lookout for coupons and mobile app discounts to stack up your savings. Bonus tip: Don't buy your textbooks too early. It's not uncommon to receive your syllabus on the first day of class and hear your professor say the textbook is optional. Once you're at school, you may be able to buy books cheaper from previous students, or even borrow them from the campus library.

Spend Time with Friends and Family. This may seem obvious, but it needs to be said. Summer is your final stretch of free-time before classes, studying, busy schedules, and all the things that come with student life begin. Time may become a precious commodity, and you won't be able to spend as much of it with your loved ones as you used to. Consider a special outing or a celebratory dinner with your family. Enjoy shared experiences that are meaningful to you. Hit up your favorite local spots or

take a road trip with friends. Setup a support network with parents, siblings, friends, or mentors; anyone you can reach out to when you're feeling homesick or particularly challenged. A little support can go a long way to help boost your mental well-being.

Starting college is an important milestone, marking a new and exciting stage in your life. There's no magic formula to know how long it will take you to adjust. But, tackling some of these tasks during the summer can help you anticipate the changes coming your way, and help you feel more prepared as a new college student.