

Fresher Success:

Get to grips with university life before you set foot on campus



By Martin Hughes - TheUniversityBlog

<http://theuniversityblog.co.uk/>

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Introduction

So you're going to university. Congratulations. The next few years of your life are sorted. But what does it all mean? What's going to happen? How do you make the most of it? Do you think you'll be working all hours of the day, or are you expecting a 24/7 party?

Until you first get to uni, it's hard to know exactly what to expect. That's why I've written this e-book. I want to share the things I've experienced and let you know what's worked for me and other students who know what it's like to be a Fresher.

First things first. Your student experience starts before you arrive on campus. It starts as soon as you let it. And once you've secured a place, it's an interesting time, an exciting time, and a scary time. Right now, it's time to go crazy and prepare for the best time of your life. I'm serious.

I have broken this e-book down into three sections:

1. Tips for before you start;
2. Tips for when you start;
3. More than 90 tips from past Freshers who've been through it all before.

I don't expect you to follow every single tip here. Find what works best for you. Be open. University is about discovery and experience. You'll find your way as you go along, but this book is written to help give you a brilliant head start.

By all means pass this on to your other mates who are off to university. And when you start at uni, feel free to pass it on to the people you meet. If they already have it, then you've got at least one new thing to talk about and compare thoughts on. It's all win!

However much you've already prepared and whatever your thoughts are for the future, I hope you get something positive from this book. Remember, you're going to university to do more than study...it's the whole package. So start unwrapping and enjoy the gifts inside!

And if you ever want more information, advice, and news, you're more than welcome to visit [TheUniversityBlog](#) and see what's on offer there.

Part I – Tips 1 to 8

BEFORE YOU START

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Tip 1: Don't panic!

After getting accepted at university, all sorts of emotions flow out. Relief, excitement, concern, confusion, panic, happiness, intense focus, boredom, a sense of being overwhelmed. All sorts of things could be going through your head.

And that's fine.

You're not expected to know precisely what's about to take place. The good news is this:

A lot of what happens in the coming few years is up to you!

You'll get to make most of the choices in your life from here on. That may sound even scarier now, but it's great news and you'll soon get used to it. I wouldn't be surprised if you'd been looking for a bit more freedom in the last few years anyway. Now's your time!

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University is not going to be too much for you. It may be overwhelming at the start and can even freak you out a bit, but that passes. It really does. And everyone else is going through similar feelings, however it looks to you.

So the main thing to do before you do anything else is simply to relax and smile. You've done the hard work and got the grades to get in to uni. Now you can prepare for a much more exciting journey.

Just don't pack too much junk. I doubt you'll need it. More on what to pack in [Tip 7](#).

Tip 2: Don't waste summer

Welcome packs slam through the post, reading lists demand your time, and intro guides melt your brain. But it's all there to help you make the best start to a new life.

You're not expected to remember everything off by heart and you'd be mad to buy all the suggested reading straight away. But it pays to spend a bit of time getting an overview of the uni you're about to attend, an idea of what's on offer for you, and what your course is about.

When the time comes to start on essays and coursework, you'll be told not to use [Wikipedia](#) to back things up (among other things). But there's nothing wrong in checking the basic facts here before you start your course. Just getting an idea of key concepts will put you in a strong position for the first term.

Wikipedia even has a '[simple language](#)' version on offer for many terms. You can compare standard and simple versions of Wikipedia articles at the website [Again But Slower](#) so you can decide what level of understanding you want to cope with at this stage.



[Photo by Kathryn](#)

[Continued →](#)

Tip 2: Don't waste summer

Your reading lists will probably mention a couple of books that you WILL be using on a regular basis. If it's clear, buy those books and try devouring them as soon as possible. Don't panic if you can't understand what's going on, it should be explained when you start anyway. First, try checking [Wikipedia](#) and [Google](#) searches (a good Google tip is to add 'define:' to the beginning of a word and Google brings back definitions from the web). If you still don't understand, that's fine. You're not expected to understand everything from the outset...don't sweat it!

Sometimes your reading lists don't clearly state the required reading. You may see a 'required reading' list, but it may have way too many books for your liking. If that's the case, look down the list for books that appear to be an 'Introduction', 'Textbook', or 'Reader' to the subject. At least those books should give you the lowdown, even if you still do have to buy the other books when you arrive at uni.

As for welcome packs and induction booklets, they are designed to guide you in the right direction. But with so much information to take in, they can be overwhelming and even scary. Don't be alarmed at the amount of stuff you're told. Some of it will be about your first days on campus, so you'll need to be aware of that. But a lot of detail is set out to cover all sorts of issues that you may not need to think about at all while you're there.

So DON'T be afraid of the packs you're sent, but DO give it a read and DO keep hold of everything for later reference. You never know when you'll need to look something up!

And definitely read up on the events in Freshers' Week, because you're going to want to check some of these out!

Tip 3: Get a diary & plan ahead

We all like to [plan differently](#), but that doesn't mean living without some form of diary or planner. At the very least, get a decent calendar to hang up in a prominent place. It can inform you of the most important happenings.

But to make the most of the coming years, you need to invest in a good diary and actually keep it up to date.

You'll already have a load of dates to add when you get the welcome packs with term dates and the like. And don't forget the Students' Union events in the first weeks. Make a note of them so you don't overbook, or double book, your time.

If you really enjoy the process, why not upgrade your experience and [start an academic journal](#)? Write about the problems you're trying to solve, ways of working that you've [found most helpful](#), plans for the future, and so on. A few minutes on that may save hours in the long run.



[Photo by Kathryn](#)

Tip 4: Sort romantic relationships

If you're in a relationship at home, you've got two choices before going off to uni:

1. Commit to the relationship;
2. End the relationship.

It's as simple as that.

Long-distance relationships (LDRs) shouldn't be left to wander. If you aren't sure what you want, you may not be that committed to commitment...

Whatever the case, don't avoid or ignore the situation. You need to make one of these choices or you face trouble later on. It's crazy for you and your poor other half if you don't have the bottle to end things and would rather let it hang until you drift away uneasily.

If you go down the commitment route, both of you need to be happy about the changes. You may personally be happy to maintain a loving LDR, but it's pointless if your partner isn't happy too.

You may not want to talk about it, but life's about to get a whole lot different. Talking about it now is far easier. I've seen a lot when it comes to LDRs that weren't properly considered...it's not pretty!

For more tips and information, check out these links on TheUniversityBlog:

1. [Long-Distance Relationship: is it for you? – Part 1, Questions and Advice](#)
2. [Long-Distance Relationship: is it for you? – Part 2, Story Time](#)
3. [Long-Distance Relationship: 10 Helpful Links](#)

Tip 5: Work out what you want

Ask yourself what you want from university. You may not have a clue yet. So try and work it out in advance to benefit as much as you can.

The fact that you're going to uni means you probably have some idea of why you're going. It won't all be about the study. Social life is a big deal too and you'll know that. But you may not really know what you want from the overall experience.

What end result are you looking for? Do you want power? Do you want a solid CV when you graduate? Do you want to find love (or just get laid)? Do you want to say that you were one of those people who ran around campus naked with your mates, just for a laugh? Do you want a First and a string of other academic achievements over anything else?

Think about this carefully as early as you can and keep thinking about it as you go through your degree. The less you think about it, the less focus you'll have and the more difficult it'll be to succeed.

When you get to uni, you can't expect everything to come to you. A lot of stuff will be thrown in your direction, yes, but you have to put in a bit of work to get it all to come together. Whether it's academic excellence, social clout, activity in clubs and societies, or creating new ventures, you always need to return to the question of what you want out of uni.

In fact, you should ask yourself in ANY situation in life, **“What do I really want from this?”**

When you can answer this question convincingly, you'll be a long way to getting what you really want.

Tip 6: Network on the Internet

[Facebook](#) is your friend. [Twitter](#) too. And all online social networks. Meet up before you meet up!

Most universities have got Facebook pages dedicated to incoming Freshers for the new academic year. Just search for something like “XX Freshers 09/10” or “XX Freshers 2009” (XX being your university) and you’ll probably find the right pages. There are official groups, unofficial groups, pages for different halls of residence, and all sorts of places to start making friends straight away.

Like many others do, you can ask who else will be on your course. When you find out what halls/corridor/house you’ll be in, you can ask who else will be living with you. There’s no point in waiting until you get there. Finding out through Facebook can help make things less intimidating. You’ll have more time to have fun straight away.

Getting to know people in advance is a massive help. **The more people you get to know before you move in, the better.**

[More people are signing up to Twitter too.](#) You may find fellow Freshers and start a conversation through your Tweets. There are a [number](#) of [guides](#) available for [using](#) the [service](#).

You never know, you could be one of the insanely popular people before you’ve even moved in!

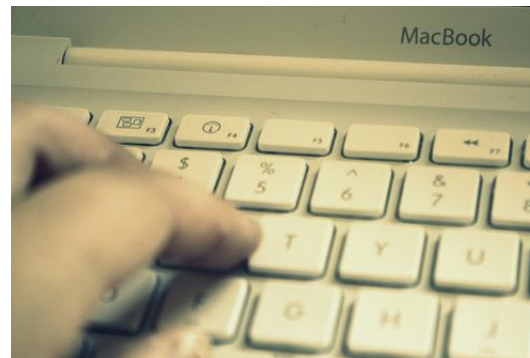


Photo by Kathryn

Tip 7: Prepare what to pack

Ah, your belongings...this is always a good laugh.

Everyone turns up armed with so much junk that seems so important at the time. But then it stays in the cupboard or on the shelf (or in the box you packed it in!), gathering dust.

Only you know what stuff you truly WANT to take with you. But that's up to you. If you know you're going to use it, great. As for everything else, give it some thought before wasting money (even if it's not your own), wasting time, and wasting valuable space that could be used for more important goods (alcohol is, of course, one possibility out of many...).

There are already loads of lists out there telling you what to take. Here are some:

- [The Student Room – What To Take To University](#)
- [Studential – Checklist of stuff to take to university](#)
- [Independent – What to pack for university](#)
- [Leeds Student Life – What to bring to uni](#) (for Leeds students, but mainly standard advice)

It's good to take some ice-breaking tools, such as a pack of cards, a simple/saucy/silly board game, a TV (remember you may need a licence), or some DVDs. That way you can get to know your housemates better, even if none of you want to venture outside in the first couple of nights.

There are also things that you probably don't need to take to uni:

1. Find out what's already provided – like any kitchen equipment, iron, shared bath/toilet stuff.
2. You're going to be kept busy, so you shouldn't need many personal items to occupy you alone.
3. Start small – The first few weeks will be busy. Unless you're not going back home for ages, just see how you go and pick up more of the less important stuff in a few weeks' time.

Tip 8: Pack early!

If there's one stress you don't need, it's the one where you're meant to leave, but you've still got half your stuff to pack. It always takes longer than you think and you can do a lot of it in advance.

This is the best chance to get rid of the junk that's somehow taken over your room. Throw stuff out, give stuff away, clear everything up and get it organised. Half the process of effective packing doesn't actually involve packing!

Greater organisation lets you pack (relatively) quickly and easily.

If you're not taking everything with you, make sure you know what's staying behind in case you need it later. And find out if your room is going to remain exclusively your room. Some students have told me how shocked they were when their parents started using the bedroom for other uses, such as a study or junk room.

And don't get the hump if they have got plans for your room while you're away. You'll soon be treating it as a simple place to crash when you're away from your new home. Then it'll be your parents who get the hump that you now call university 'home'. The tables turn quickly...



[Photo by chispita_666](#)

[Photo by TheAllNewAventuresOfMe](#)



Part 2 – Tips 9 to 18

WHEN YOU START

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Tip 9: (Excitedly) Chill out

All Freshers are in the same boat as you. Even if you know that, the first few days can be daunting.

There are three things you should do as soon as you arrive at university:

1. Relax;
2. Enjoy;
3. Be Genuine.

When you move in to a student hall/flat/house, you meet totally random people who you're expected to spend the whole academic year living with. You have no control over these people and their behaviour. Understandably, this is worrying. What if they don't like you? What if they already know loads of people? What if they are noisy and messy (or quiet and tidy...)? I'm sure you can add loads of other equally concerning questions that are relevant to you.

But your housemates will be just as worried about you!

As a Senior Student, I moved in with new Freshers in my final year. Just as my own first year at uni, it was the genuine people who settled in quickest and gelled with others best.

Accept that some people may not have the same interests as you. Understand that some people will rub you up the wrong way. Realise that some people put on a front, trying to be someone that they're not. Don't let that worry you and don't put a front on yourself.

There are always little niggling problems. You can sort these out later. At the start, it's all about settling in and coping with the big changes. Make your social life a priority.

In short, just welcome your housemates and calmly let the fun commence!

[Continued →](#)

Tip 9: (Excitedly) Chill out

Even after all the fun dies down and the lectures begin, you should relax and enjoy this part too.

The first couple of lectures and seminars may scare the pants off you. Even if you prepared by reading up on the topics and read some books on the reading list, you may still be shell-shocked.

This isn't a surprise. You can stop telling yourself you're not ready for Higher Education. You're expected to find the change from school/college to university a bit eye-opening.

And don't panic if fellow students around you seem to know more than you. Some will no doubt be bluffing, while others may have studied something you hadn't and have the knowledge that way. Anyway, not everyone is perfect. Naturally, you'll find some modules easier to study than others. And that's a good thing...you can devote more study time to the subjects you're not so sure about, then whizz through the topics you're clued up on.

If, several weeks down the line, you still don't have a clue, no matter how much you try, help is at hand. Your academic advisor/personal tutor can guide you, your other lecturers should be able to point you in the right direction, and many universities have study workshops and learning development meetings to help sharpen your skills and develop talents you didn't even realise you had.

Finally, in case you'd forgotten, here are the three magic keys to happiness at university:

1. Relax;
2. Enjoy;
3. Be Genuine.

Got it? Good! 😊

Tip 10: Talk to strangers

This is the one time in life you're probably going to see this advice EVERYWHERE.

You're all strangers at first. Even if you know one or two people from school who happen to be going to the same uni, you'll probably be in different halls and on a different course. So it's unlikely you can rely on who you already know anyway. It's a relaxing thought, but not the way forward.

Nobody knows anyone else, so someone has to make the first move, otherwise nobody would get talking. There's no harm in saying 'hi' to get the ball rolling. You're all working from the same clean sheet. No preconceptions and no worries.

Be prepared to answer the same questions a lot (like "What are you studying?", "Where are you from?" and so on). If you get a bit more daring, think of some different questions to keep things going. Go with broad entertainment subjects like music, TV and film. Even if you don't share the same tastes, at least you're finding stuff out. It's unlikely someone is just going to say, "I don't like music. None of it. Music's rubbish."

When you're a bit more confident and saying 'hi' is easy to do, you can move on and [start turning the Smalltalk into Bigtalk](#). Then you should always have something to talk about.



[Photo by Kathryn](#)

Tip 11: Unpack!

This doesn't sound like much of a tip, does it?

I was amazed how many people didn't bother unpacking everything to make their room look a bit more homely.

Oh yeah, I was one of those people.

As a Fresher, I didn't have a place for everything and I took half the year to unpack properly. That situation didn't help my productivity, even though I managed to get a lot done. Despite clear ambition and hard work, I knew I could do a lot better.

So in my second year, I kept a pretty empty room most of the time. A few strategically placed ornaments and mementos saved the place from looking clinical, but it gave me space to think and branch out if I so wished. It's one of the best moves I made.

Not only does it personally feel a lot better to unpack, but it's also much easier for people to relax in your room and feel welcomed. I remember how the first people to make their room look lived in were the most popular people to spend time with in their room. A homely room is comfy and welcoming. If you're the first person in student digs to be unpacked and settled in, be prepared for company, especially if you've brought a doorstep with you. Just don't let everybody outstay their welcome when it gets to the studying part of uni life!

Tip 12: Take on homesickness

Homesickness comes and goes throughout your degree. But it's most apparent in the first months, before the long Christmas break. Here are some ways to combat the worst of the homesickness:

- Bring posters and ornaments that remind you of home. Put up photos of family and friends.
- Talk to others and embrace the new life of independence. Life is moving on for the better!
- Resist the urge to contact your parents every five minutes, as it will remind you of home more.
- Prepare for big events taking place when you next visit home. Something to look forward to!
- Get involved in Student Union events, clubs & societies, and local activities to occupy your mind.
- Get a job. Perhaps extreme, but a job will occupy time and keep your mind off things like home.
- Confront your feelings. Make sure other problems aren't disguised as homesickness.
- Invite your mates to visit from back home. Let a part of home come to you!
- Use the word 'home' with your new surroundings. It's a powerful technique and should help sway your perceptions. Soon, your university town will become your new home.
- Keep a diary. Write about your surroundings, your new friends and experiences, and what you're enjoying about university.
- Use a webcam. Conquer the distance problem by chatting with your parents on webcam. Simple!
- Eat, drink and sleep well. If you don't, you'll end up cranky and more homesick than ever.
- Stop dwelling on it. Recreating thoughts of back home just build on the homesickness. Far from helping, this will just make you even less happy.
- Explore the local area. Get used to it. Look around the living area, the campus, around town, and further afield. Buy a local map and track down bus or train timetables to see where else you can go nearby. The more you know the area, the more you can help plan events with others too.
- Remember that time passes quickly. You'll be back home in no time and then you'll only want to be back at uni again...

Tip 13: Be wise with money

When that large wodge of money falls into your shiny new student account, it feels like the best thing ever. Suddenly, you've come into money and it's there for the spending. Okay, so it's a loan, but it's a loan for you to use, isn't it?

Hang on a second. That money needs to last a bit longer than a fortnight. A blinding Freshers' Week won't feel anything like as good if you come out the other end of it with nothing in the bank.

One of the best ways to be wise with your money is to budget all the way. A helpful tool is the [UNIAID Student Calculator](#), which lets you put together all your outgoings and incomings, giving you an idea of how to manage the money, whatever type of student you are.

And for numerous hints and tips on how to be thrifty and save the pennies and pounds, check the following links from my site:

[Your Money: 7 Things to do as a Student](#)

[Your Money: 7 Things NOT to do as a Student](#)

[Use Your Cash Wisely: 10 Major Money Tips](#)

[Yet More Money Saving Tips](#)

[Groceries on a Grant, Lunches on a Loan, Breakfasts on a Bursary...](#)

Tip 14: Improve your sleep

Students are famed for staying up late and getting up late. Stumbling back in the early hours of the morning from a great night out and getting up in the afternoon the following day can happen, but it isn't (or at least, shouldn't) be a regular thing.

To improve the quality of your sleep, here are some suggestions:

- If you can't sleep after 20 minutes of tossing and turning, get out of bed and do something calm like reading a non-demanding novel or listening to some quiet music (or in my case, drum and bass, which actually relaxes me...takes all sorts, I guess!). After a short period, get back to your comfy bed and let a renewed calm take you to slumber.
- If you have lots of ideas in your head when you're trying to get to sleep, you're less likely to fall asleep. Keep a notepad and pen next to the bed so you can write down any thoughts and ideas, ready for the next day. Then you won't forget and you won't need to keep thinking about it!
- Take in a deep breath, hold it for a moment, then let it out slowly. Repeat the process a few times. Let the deep breathing slow you down and give you a sense of lightness. Concentrate on the breathing and nothing else, winding down to a real sense of peace.
- Listen to your body. If you're not tired, don't go to bed. If you are tired, go to bed. It's more hassle to fight against your body. Listen to it and it will reward you!
- Don't use the weekend as an excuse for a lie-in. Embrace the weekend and get loads done then, when everyone else is in bed (or at home). Getting up at a more regular time doesn't only help your sleeping patterns, but also gives you more time to be productive. That way you can spend more of your time on leisurely pursuits. Woo!

Tip 15: Start studying

It may sound mad, but just a couple of hours reading each week before lectures start will get you in the right frame of mind for study.

With a bit of luck, you'll then have more time to continue having fun, even when the work does ramp up.

Learn your way around the library too. Visit the library as soon as you can and see how it's laid out (and where the best quiet study rooms are...you'll be needing them soon). Try finding some of the books on your reading lists that you don't already have.

Little things like this will get you focused on the studying that's about to kick off and should give you a head start. You can get hold of the books you want before other students have grabbed them. Poor them, but good for you!

Your mind isn't going to be on the work in the first couple of weeks. That's why lectures don't usually start until you're settled in. But just a few hours' of work should be enough to boost your confidence and put you in the perfect starting position for when the real work begins.

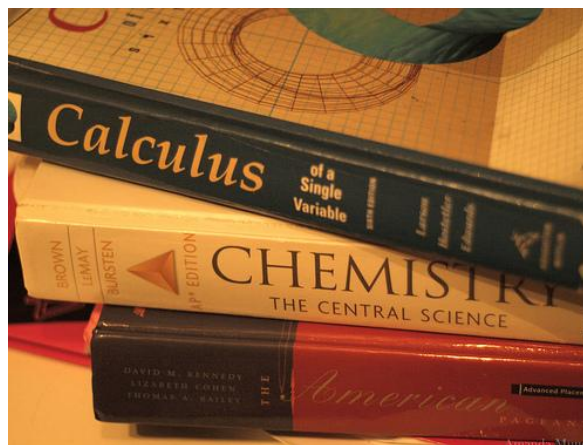


Photo by Amanda Munoz

Tip 16: Get out more...

Freshers' Week is stuffed with events to get you out. It is designed to welcome you and help you feel like you're at the centre of proceedings. The whole point is that you enjoy yourself and get to know as many people as possible. You should feel at home in no time.

But that only works if you actually take part in the events!

Again, this probably sounds obvious, but some people keep their distance and miss out on the easiest ice-breaking events. The longer it's left, the more difficult it becomes to be fully engaged with what's going on around campus.

So go to Fresher events and do as much as you can in the first few weeks. You can settle down later on, when you've developed the positive vibes. That positivity will make settling down easier anyway.

I wouldn't usually suggest you do as much as possible, but the first couple of weeks on campus are an exception. People are most productive when focused on two or three specific goals, so it's wise to stick to that. However, Freshers' Week is an opportunity to go a bit more crazy trying to find new experiences that you hadn't thought about in the past.



Photo by Kathryn

Tip 17: Know your Reps!

Everyone needs help from time to time. When you start your degree, you may not know who to turn to for help. There's so much going on and so many things to consider, it's not easy to know where to go.

That's why there are bound to be Senior Students, subject representatives, Fresher guides, and all sorts of people happy to help you with your queries...no matter how stupid you think they are. They won't be stupid. It's all new to you, so why should you know it all straight away?

Be aware of who your reps are and what they do. Your hall may have a dedicated student from a higher year on hand to help when it's needed. I was a Senior Student at uni, living with a load of Freshers and directly responsible for about 28 of them. If someone needed pointing in the right direction, I was able to do it.

Your welcome packs and Students' Union guide should have good contacts listed. You should also be told about specific people who are there to help. Make the most of this information and keep it safe, in case you ever need it later.

Your subject or School should also have elected course representatives who are there to ensure the teaching and administration is working for students. If you have any issues that you cannot (or don't want to) deal with through staff, the Course Reps can help.

This is all on top of the Student Services, counselling services, service centres, helpdesks, and all the other avenues available to you as a student.

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. That's what the Reps there for.

If all that isn't already enough, there's another amazing, often untapped, resource available to you. Read [Tip 18](#) and find out what your Students' Union can do. They aren't just for events!

Tip 18: Love your Students' Union

Get involved with your Students' Union (or Guild of Students) as soon as you can. They are there to support YOU!

I wish I'd understood that I could turn to my Students' Union for help. I also wish I'd been more involved with them throughout my time as an undergraduate. Unions are generally more visible now and many introduce their elected full-time officers and president straight off. Those elected are current students or recent graduates who have been voted in by students to work on their behalf.

However, the closest a lot of students get to their SU is having a few pints down the Union, joining a club, enjoying big events and possibly voting for one of these officers. I'm sure some people don't want to look any closer than that. But many would if they realised the fantastic benefits and opportunities involved, not to mention the fun.

An SU represents the interests of its members (you, the students). They lobby in many areas important to you, like fees and loans, student welfare, rights, and so on. Their remit covers anything within the scope of being a student.

Other than the full-time Exec officers, there are a number of other studying and unpaid officers/ reps elected by the student body in order to work toward what their fellow students want.

I recently compiled a [list of Students' Unions on Twitter](#). Get following yours to make sure you keep up to date. Also check their dedicated website for news, information and blogs from the officers. Your SU will be active on campus...remember they are working for you and you can be a big part of it. The more you support your Union, the more it can support you.

Part 3

OVER 90 TIPS FROM PAST FRESHERS

(ADVICE FROM THOSE WHO KNOW...)



EVERY FRESHER EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT...

...So it's nice to hear what a whole load of past Freshers have to say. They survived it, but what would they suggest now to give you a head start?



Photo by Kathryn

I asked a range of students and graduates for a simple piece of advice that would help you get the most out of Fresher life.

Over the next four pages, I have included some of those answers. They range from general to personal, reasonable to ridiculous, and sensible to strange.

Think of it as a grab bag of possibilities & ideas.

- "Make the most of it! You can't get the time back!"
- "Don't take life too seriously. A First doesn't matter as much as the connections and experiences made."
- "Organise! Don't get lost in a zillion things. Stay organised and get it all done."
- "Do the modules you're interested in, not the modules you think look good to companies. Most companies don't care what modules you did anyway."
- "Get a balance between study and social time. Don't burn out but don't forget you're there to work either."
- "Do the stuff you want, not what you think is for the best."
- "Jump right in!"
- "Study in advance. Then relax and do everything else you're meant to do."
- "Listen to advice, even if it's from your family and you don't think they know what they're talking about."
- "Go to quiet places to study. It's impossible to work properly in a room of noisy friends!"
- "Don't spend all your money straight away, you idiot! I'd tell myself that if I could go back in time."
- "Work hard from the start. Don't bum out your Fresher year."
- "Get all the free stuff, even if you hate it. Take take take! Then give the stuff you hate to people who love it. And they'll be well happy with you."
- "Save money if you can. And work in the summer even if you don't work in the year."
- "Use all the free time well. Don't just do dumb s*&t."
- "Get a laptop."
- "Buy a proper computer for your room. Laptops are pointless when there are loads of computers over campus."
- "Don't be scared to ask for help."
- "Make good notes, even if it's just to focus your brain."
- "Party!"
- "Don't party so much in the first year."
- "Talk to as many people as you can. Don't be shy, cuz no one knows no one."

- "Get a timetable going so you don't waste time."
- "Plan for EVERYTHING. Plan for when you go back home and when you have holidays. Plan it all. Plan."
- "Don't be lazy when people around you want to be."
- "Get ready for unexpected s*&t and love it!"
- "Do essays on time."
- "Don't do a module just so you can be with your friends. Worst thing I could have done."
- "Think about what you buy all the time. Do you need a pack of sweets just because you're passing the shop? Probably not."
- "Believe in yourself."
- "Remember to actually revise before an exam..."
- "Get a system that works for you. Everyone studies different."
- "Read and don't stop reading."
- "Get involved in activities and meet as many people as you can."
- "Think carefully about what you are doing. University is a laugh, but it is not JUST a laugh."
- "Don't get off with _____ or you'll regret it."
- "Talk to teachers and don't be scared to ask them for help."
- "Don't live off takeaways or there'll be no money left. Use the kitchen and make your own food."
- "Learn to cook for yourself."
- "Learn to cook some basic meals to impress mates (or a girl)."
- "Don't bother with a proper relationship."
- "Make mistakes. Let them happen. Learning happens like that."
- "Make decisions and stick to them."
- "Find yourself and don't be scared to change."
- "Have a plan, but let it evolve. Do that the rest of your life."

- "Don't let twats get in the way."
- "Whatever you're expecting, stop expecting it and just get on with having fun!!"
- "Relax."
- "Enjoy!"
- "Learn about things and not just the answer."
- "Be indulgent. If there's ever a time for indulgence, it's now."
- "Keep an open mind and don't judge."
- "Don't leave everything to the last minute."
- "Be confident."
- "Stop listening to your parents and do whatever the hell you want for once."
- "Aim to make a difference."
- "Don't go home every weekend."
- "Don't do Maths." [!]
- "Don't be a tit and spend all the money you saved on drinks and on people you don't know."
- "Live for yourself and help others do the same."
- "Bluffing doesn't work."
- "Read ahead and try to enjoy the work as that's why we went to university in the first place."
- "Just do the best and be happy."
- "Be proactive on Day One and don't stop until you're done."
- "Network."
- "Do loads of travelling and don't forget who your mates are."
- "Work on study skills and different methods of learning."
- "Get over yourself if you haven't already. This isn't Sixth Form anymore."

- "Find motivation in everything."
- "Be what you want to be."
- "Experiment a bit to get it out your system."
- "Start working on the course as early as possible."
- "Try to remember everyone's names."
- "Do your washing up or you p*ss people off."
- "Money doesn't solve everything."
- "Don't buy everything new. What's the point?"
- "Ask questions and be interested!"
- "Get to know everyone, but don't trust them straight away."
- "Take the amount of time you think you'll need to read and then double it."
- "It's okay to be homesick and it's okay to stop being homesick."
- "Friends can come and go, it's fine."
- "Find good friends as soon as you can to help settle in."
- "Don't worry about the quality of friends at the start of the year. The best friends will be apparent over time."
- "Look for a job and maybe one to help in the future on CV."
- "Get a life or get lost."
- "Get up early when you're not going out at night. Study when the campus is quiet and you can hear yourself think."
- "Be brave."
- "Try finding more hours in the day. Who needs sleep?"
- "Don't give up after five minutes. You'll find your way."
- "Work smart."
- "Don't try to be cool. The ones who tried looked stupid."
- "Love every minute of time in those three precious years. I was gutted to leave."

Afterword

There you have it.

Now feel free to ignore everything you've read and do your own thing...

Because that's what university is about.

Whatever happens, I hope you enjoy the ride as much as I did, or even more! Let me know how it's going by dropping a comment at my site, [TheUniversityBlog](#), or give me a shout over at [Twitter](#) (I'm [@universityboy](#), by the way).

But I do understand if you're too busy enjoying yourself...

Because that's what university is about! ;-)

You want more!?

Here are some other websites I recommend you check out for all sorts of student help and information:

- [The Student Room](#) – Massive student community with loads of forums.
- [Charade](#) – For stylish and successful students surviving on a budget ([Fresher Guide](#)).
- [Study Hacks](#) – Teaching students to do (very) well without burning out.
- [Zen College Life](#) – Helping you get the most out of your student experience.
- [Scott H Young](#) – How to get more from life. Holistic learning & productivity tips.
- [Independent: Students](#) – The latest student news and info from The Independent.
- [Guardian: Students](#) – The Guardian's take on student news and information.
- [TimesOnline: Student Life](#) – More helpful student information.
- [National Union of Students \(NUS\)](#) – You're most likely a member (or about to become one)...get the lowdown on their website.



[Photo by Amanda Munoz](#)

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Thanks for reading.

Read more student tips at [TheUniversityBlog](http://theuniversityblog.co.uk/) (<http://theuniversityblog.co.uk/>)