



TEN TIPS

for Beating the Homesickness BLUES

Moving away from home for the first time to attend college or university can be both exciting – and a little daunting! Leaving familiar faces and places behind as you adjust to all of the new changes in your life can be overwhelming, and you might find yourself longing for the safety and security of home. Feeling homesick is natural, but it doesn't have to get you down. Here are some tips to help make the road to independence a little bit less bumpy!

1. **Keep busy.** Get involved at your new school. Join some campus clubs, seek out volunteer opportunities, join the gym or take up an intramural sport, attend social events. Not only will you meet new people, but your days will be so full that you won't have time to feel lonely.
2. **Get to know the city.** Act like a tourist, and have fun exploring your new surroundings. Visit a museum or art gallery, attend a play or concert, find a really good ethnic grocery store or restaurant, take a walking tour of some famous city districts, find a nice park, get acquainted with your local library, get to know your new neighbourhood.
3. **Plan a trip back home.** Set a specific date and mark it on your calendar. This will give you something positive to look forward to.
4. **Phone or write to your family and friends -- but set limits.** It's important to keep in touch, but don't forget to live in the present as well. Find a balance between catching up and reminiscing with old friends, and creating new relationships and experiences.
5. **Keep a scrapbook of your new life.** Take pictures, save ticket stubs or brochures from events that you have attended, keep a journal of your thoughts and impressions. Show your scrapbook to the people back home so they can see all the new things that you are doing. Keeping a scrapbook will often prompt you to consciously seek out interesting things to do so that you have new mementoes to add to your book!





6. **Bring a bit of home into the city.** Bring along some posters from your old room, make a collage of family photos or fond memories, get your friends to sign an autograph book or yearbook before you leave. Learn your mom's best cookie recipe and make a batch for yourself. Does your family have certain traditions, such as watching movies on a Friday night? Continue to do some of these things either by yourself or with your new friends.
7. **Throw yourself into your studies.** One upside of being away from home is that you will have less distractions to interfere with your studies. Take advantage of this time to set study goals and learn some new study techniques. When your social life does begin to pick up, you will have developed some good habits that help you continue to succeed.
8. **Learn to budget.** One of the new challenges that you will face right away is learning how to manage money. Cash flow problems can be very stressful and draining, so get started on the right foot. The staff in the financial aid office on your campus can often give you great advice for setting – and sticking to – a budget.
9. **Become familiar with your campus resources.** Your campus offers many services, both academic and non-academic, that can help you throughout the course of your studies. These include personal and career counselling, academic advising, student associations, study skills centers, disability services, recreation facilities, and the library, to name a few. Arrange to take a tour of your campus, and make full use of all the resources that are available to you.
10. **Congratulate yourself!** Facing change and the unknown is difficult for anyone, and it is natural to feel a bit anxious at first. It takes a lot of courage to try new things, especially when you are without your usual support network. You should take pride in your initiative, resourcefulness, and determination! While it is important to focus on your studies, remember to take time to relax and have some fun as well. Before you know it, you will be enjoying your new “home away from home” and looking forward to all of your new adventures!

