Getting Organized for College Students

Staying organized can be the difference between success and failure in college. For many, college is the first time for people to be away from parents and living on their own. No one is there to give friendly reminders to do your homework, study for that test, pay your bills, etc. By this point, many students have developed their own methods of staying organized; you can check the tips below as a way to assist you in staying organized in college.

Tips for Getting and Staying Organized

Get a planner. This may be the most important thing for college students. Write down everything immediately, and all in one planner. It is especially helpful to use highlighters to color coordinate by category (i.e. homework, test, work, social event, etc.) Some students like to use an electronic document, others do better with printed document - regardless - the best tool is the one that YOU USE!

Keep separate notebooks, folders and binders for every class. Either label or color coordinate these items by class so they can be easily identifiable. Put assignments or things that need to be addressed immediately in the appropriate folder/binder. Use the binder for all other papers and materials for that specific class. You will find that having everything for each class in its one place will keep you from searching for notes, a paper, or an important document.

Don't be a stuffer. Resist the need to grab all of your papers at the end of each class and stuff them into your backpack as you are running out of the room. Papers will get lost, they will be smashed, and ultimately you will lose them or just not want to use them, because they are a mere pile in the bottom of your backpack. Instead try carrying a whole puncher to put papers in the appropriate binder or folder.

Take a stapler to class. If the instructor hands a paper out in class, immediately staple it to the notes so you know right where it is when it comes time to study for the test. Many instructors will appreciate you stapling your assignments as well. Think about what it is like for the instructor to have 50 dog-eared papers, and your neatly stapled paper! Also, understand that when instructors are grading the pages may get misplaced if they are not stapled.

Read the syllabus. These documents are full of very useful information. At the end of the first week of classes, make a quick chart with assignments, papers, and tests for each class. Record the due dates and leave a column open to record the grades so you can easily see if you are on track with where you want your grade to be.

Utilize spare time. Often students find themselves stuck on campus with an hour or two between classes. Instead of pulling up the latest episode of the show you are currently
obsessed with, take the time to get ahead on studying or do tonight’s reading assignment. Don’t be afraid to take a 15 minute cat nap if you need it to stay alert for your next class as well.

**Set a morning routine.** Nothing is worse than rushing around in the morning. This can be avoided if you set a morning routine and give yourself plenty of time to catch the bus, drive, or walk to campus. The night before make sure your bag is packed, computer and phone are charged and homework is complete.

**Have a set schedule.** While studying should be on your agenda every day, set days for other tasks that only need to be completed once a week. For example, Monday is laundry day and Wednesday is house chores. Do what works best in your schedule and keep trying new things until you figure out what works for you!

Transitioning to college is difficult - getting organized can make a huge difference in your ability to relax and focus on key items at the most important times.

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