



**YOUR SUPER QUICK  
GUIDE TO  
UNIVERSITY**

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## TIPS FOR GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Your university or Student's Union will have someone available to support you, should you need it. Contact them sooner rather than later. They will be able to offer free, confidential and non-judgemental advice. In addition to this, there are many other useful contacts who can also help you.

### Useful contacts and websites

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**Samaritans:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) or call 116 123 for free at any time

**Mind:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk), text 86463 or call 0300 123 3393 for free. Lines are open 9am–6pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays)

**Time to Change:** <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>


**ChildLine:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) or call 0800 1111 for free at any time. ChildLine is available for children and young people up to 19

Many universities offer you access to the Nightline at your institution. Nightline is a free, confidential listening service run by student volunteers for students. To find your university's Nightline, visit: <https://www.nightline.ac.uk/want-to-talk/>

### Managing stress

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A student  
told me



*It might take you time to find your place. Some people settle in straight away and find their best friend in their next-door neighbour, but not everyone has that. For some people it can take longer, but you will eventually feel like you've found your home there.*

A student  
told me

Not everyone starts university life and has a positive experience or time in the beginning. This is not your fault and you are not alone with this. It is all about how you manage your expectations before starting out on this journey. Planning and organising yourself before setting off is important but so is being realistic with what you expect from yourself and the university. Don't set your targets or goals too high.

**Stress** is physical or psychological pressure or tension.

Living or working in a stressful environment can cause long-term stress, which is often less perceptible than short-term stress. Long-term stress may cause physical symptoms like poor sleep, which may be assumed to have a different cause.

## Dealing with stress

- **Learn to breathe** – breathe slowly and deeply from the abdomen.
- **Take more exercise** – sport releases endorphins, which creates a feeling of well-being, and regular exercise helps regulate breathing, as well as providing time for reflection and thought. Don't overdo it though. Pay attention to your body's limits.
- **Talk to someone** – rather than bottling your problems up, share them with friends, housemates, family, tutors, a counsellor, or whoever you feel comfortable trusting and talking to.
- **Write it down** – keeping a private and securely protected diary or journal can help relieve stress, help you put things into perspective and allows you to be open and honestly reflective.
- **Make time for yourself** – make use of time-management strategies to ensure you have time to relax and unwind without feeling guilty about tasks or assignments you need to complete or other people you want to help.

- **Meditation** – involves learning techniques for relaxation. Find out if a local group is teaching meditation or mindfulness techniques.
- **Learn a relaxation technique** – you can teach yourself to relax with the help of relaxation media, apps and books.
- **Visualisation** – involves picturing and recording how we think things will realistically happen. Visualising yourself handling a situation better can give you psychological experience for when the real situation happens.
- **Get professional help if you need it** – getting help from trained mental health specialists can be a good idea if you're struggling with serious or unresolved issues. It may seem daunting or difficult to talk to a stranger, but they're there to help. No one will judge you for asking.

A student told me



It is important to try and be as sociable as possible when you start at university, but it is not always easy, in fact it can be excruciatingly difficult, just remember everyone is in the same situation as you, even though some people may seem more confident.

A student told me



Nobody's too cool for you. When you start uni, you might already have a preconceived idea of yourself from school - but your potential new friends don't. This is a great time to make friends for life, and even reinvent yourself a little if you like.

## Creating a good work–life balance

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Your physical and mental health is always more important than work.

Consistently working increased hours has a cumulative effect, and can cause damage to your mental health. How do you know when you have an unhealthy work–life balance, and how can you improve it?



## Signs you may have an unhealthy work–life balance

- You neglect other aspects of your life for example spending time with friends, spending time engaging with hobbies, or doing things you like, because you're too busy studying or working.
- Even when you're not studying or working, you spend a lot of time thinking or worrying about the work you have to do.
- You feel unhappy or stressed.

## How to improve your work–life balance

When planning your time, schedule in downtime from work or study.

Remember that 'me-time' is incredibly important. This is time we all need to think, relax, exercise and recharge our batteries. You've worked for this time, so don't feel guilty about taking it. Also, if you don't give yourself some 'guilt-free me-time' to recharge your batteries, then how will you have enough energy to complete the tasks you need to complete?

Studying for long hours isn't always the most productive, or effective, use of your time. You might be better studying for a couple of hours and then taking a break to give you time to recharge, before going back to your books.

Depending on where you're living, your university bedroom can be a living room, study and sleeping area all rolled into one. This means it can be hard to 'leave work at work'. Try studying in a different location – the library, or

the lounge, if you have one – so that you have a physical divide between work and life.

If you do find it difficult studying at home, then it is important to remember that most universities will have a quiet area set aside for students to work without being interrupted. This is often, but not always limited to, the library. Find out where it is for your university and try it out early in the year to get a feel for whether it suits you or not. Visit the local town or city library and find out what their amenities are like. Simply find somewhere you feel comfortable working that will enable you to get your work done and then switch off when you get home.

Talk to your university welfare officer or personal tutor for help with managing your workload if it feels overwhelming. They will have a lot of experience with this and will be able to signpost you to appropriate help, but also give some golden nuggets of advice that might help you.