***8 College Survival Tips for Adults Students***

**Returning to school after a long break from higher education is not for the faint of heart. You’ll need to balance the usual school challenges—communicating with professors, understanding course demands, meeting deadlines, and getting to know other students—with the many obstacles an already busy adult life presents. You may have less time with your kids or spouse, spend more time at the computer or away from home, or get less sleep. You’ll likely have less free time.**

**All of this hard work, though, can add up to a brighter future. You can make more money, pursue a career you love, and eventually have more control over the direction of your life. Of course, when you’re deep in the throes of stress and school-life balance, it can be difficult to see the light at the end. These college survival tips will help you remain focused on your goals, reduce stress, and potentially shorten the time to graduation.**

**Set Clear Goals**

**Why are you returning to school? You might think you have an answer, but “to have a career I love and a better life” isn’t enough. You need a specific goal in mind and a clear understanding of the best path to achieve that goal. This can help guide the decisions you make each semester. Some questions to ask as you begin your journey include:**

* **What careers are most lucrative in my area, and what training do they require?**
* **What work do I enjoy doing? Which jobs are the best fit for my skills and desired lifestyle?**
* **How long will it take to get the training I need?**
* **Are there any good jobs for which I already have some training? Is returning to school to complete an unfinished degree rather than start an entirely new one an option?**
* **How quickly do I need to finish school to meet my goals and stay within my budget?**

**Explore Financial Aid Options**

**You might think of financial aid as something for high schoolers with great academic records or impressive sports achievements. Adult students are eligible for financial aid too. And because your aid options will be based on your income—not your parents’ earnings—you may actually be eligible for more aid than you could get when you were younger.**

**Most schools offer financial aid consultations. Schools that work with adult students can help you explore special options for returning learners. Better still, you may be able to get financial aid to cover the non-academic expenses of school. For example, if you need to transition to part-time work or pay for extra childcare, it may be an option to use student loan funds to do so.**

**Map Out Each Semester**

**When you’re in your teens and early twenties, it’s fine for college to move at a leisurely pace. After all, you’re learning who you are and exploring your interests. You might take some extra classes or pad your schedule with a random elective here or there.**

**When you're an adult student, you already know what you want. The goal is to remain focused on that. This means that you need to chart a course from here to graduation. Talk to an advisor about which courses you need to take—and on what timeline—to graduate on time. You might need to take specific prerequisites first, so prioritize those. Or there may be some classes that are only available once a year, so it’s important to fit them into your schedule as soon as the opportunity presents itself.**

**Armed with a map of what your next few semesters will look like, you’ll then need to buckle down and spend some time planning each upcoming semester. Look into childcare options ahead of time. Take a hard look at how much time you’ll need to spend on homework and studying. You should have a clear understanding of how your semester will look and how you intend to spend your time before you sit down in your first class.**

**Budget Time and Work Ahead**

**You probably spend a lot of time monitoring where your money goes. Perhaps you limit eating at restaurants or needless spending on impulse purchases. Do you put as much effort into protecting your time? Time is a finite asset. Once it’s gone, it’s gone for good, so you need to budget it as carefully as you budget cash. Identify your biggest time wasters and find ways to eliminate them. Some common sources of wasted time include:**

* **Phone calls that could have been quick texts or emails**
* **In-person meetings that could have happened over the phone**
* **Social media, especially as a form of procrastination**
* **Running errands when you could have purchased something online instead**

**You probably have your own list of common time wasters. Maybe you’re constantly cleaning up after the kids or helping your spouse find their lost keys. Whatever wastes the most time, you’ll want to first identify it and then get it under control. Ask for help. Learn to say no. Treat your time like something that matters, because it does.**

**After you’ve zeroed in on your biggest time wasters, make the most of your day with a time budget. Consider making a list of goals for each semester. Then break those down into smaller steps for each month, week, and day.**

**Just as you save money, you can also bank time by working ahead. Review your class syllabus so you have a clear idea of the tasks that lie ahead each semester. Rather than doing homework every day, try carving out a larger chunk of time and working ahead. When you finish work faster than you expect, use the extra time to do extra coursework. This way, when you’re in a time crunch or have a sudden emergency at work or with your kids, you won’t fall behind.**

**Maintain a Consistent Schedule**

**Life for many adult students can be chaotic and unpredictable. That’s inevitable if you never know how you’re going to spend your day. Instead, take time at the beginning of each semester to establish a consistent schedule. Run errands on a specific day. Schedule a recurring time slot for homework. Maintain a consistent schedule with your kids, even when someone else is there to do the bedtime or morning ritual. Consistency makes everything feel more manageable and can help ease the anxiety of a major life change.**

**Explore School Resources**

**Adult students have different needs. Schools that cater to non-traditional learners understand this and often offer a wide variety of resources and support services.  And ask if your school has an adult learner support office. They may offer time management strategies, grants to fund common needs, and additional resources you might never have considered. As you near graduation, visit career services for advice about transitioning into a lucrative, rewarding career.**

**Take Time to Enjoy Your Life**

**Returning to school might mean temporarily giving up some of the things you love, such as time-consuming hobbies or leisurely mornings spent sleeping in. That doesn’t mean you should feel obligated to spend your life constantly moving. If you don’t take care of yourself, you can’t excel at school, work, or parenting.**

**Carve out some time each week to do something you enjoy. It’s not selfish. It’s self-care that is vital to your health. Whether it’s a few minutes in the garden, reading a good book, exercise, or just sleeping in, taking a few extra moments to yourself can give you the strength you need to navigate the stress and chaos of life as an adult student.**

**Choose the Right School**

**The right school can empower your success, while the wrong one might undermine it. Some schools work almost exclusively with kids and young adults. They may not offer evening or online classes, and they tend to have few options for people who can’t afford to commit to full-time education. Schools that routinely work with adult learners understand the challenges you face. They offer flexible schedules, understanding professors, online classes, and a wide range of courses to help you graduate as quickly as possible.**

**​Information available from : https://degrees.snu.edu/blog/8-essential-college-survival-tips-for-adult-students#:~:text=8%20Essential%20College%20Survival%20Tips%20for%20Adult%20Students,Life%20...%208%20Choose%20the%20Right%20School%20**