

Transition Tips

QUICK TIPS AND COPING SKILLS AS
WE RETURN TO CAMPUS

TIP 1

Set Yourself Up for Success

Being back on campus is exciting and anxiety provoking at the same time. As the new quarter starts, it may be helpful to think of ways to set yourself up for success for the coming academic year. Be aware as you dive into campus life that there is a continuum of comfort, where people around you may be at different levels of comfort than you (e.g., wearing masks, physical distance, hesitant to be in public spaces).

SKILLS!

- Set up a routine and be consistent. Carve out time to eat, sleep, study, work, attend classes, and socialize.
- Map out where classes are held and other important campus spaces.
- Declutter and organize your living space. A clean environment can help with concentration.
- It's all right to try out different things to see what works and doesn't for you.

TIP 2

Nurturing your emotional well-being

As you transition back to campus, we may experience a range of emotions that may impact your mental health in different ways (e.g., anxiety, depression). Nurture yourself by recognizing your emotions and validating your needs in that moment.

SKILLS!

- Check in with your emotions (e.g., What do I feel?)
- Sit with your emotions: give yourself permission to feel even when uncomfortable
- Managing emotions: use all five senses to connect to the present moment, journal about your experiences, practice gratitude, and observe what went well for you despite hard times
- Pair emotions with activities (e.g., taking calming breaths when overwhelmed)
- Seek out support (<https://counseling.uci.edu/>)

TIP 3

Learn how to Manage Time

You did not have to think as much about time when remote learning. However, when we return to campus, managing time will look different. Get a head start by developing a routine for your quarter. A schedule can help the transition back to campus feel smoother.

SKILLS!

- Choose a tool that can help you organize your day/week (e.g., planner)
- Block out times for essential tasks/activities you must do daily/weekly and don't forget to schedule times to eat and sleep!
- Build in flexibility time for unseen events or interruptions
- Schedule tasks/activities that meet your personal goals (e.g., social connection)
- Finally, evaluate your schedule. If you feel everything cannot fit, reflect on what changes can be made.

TIP 4

Zoom Out of Your Screen

We used Zoom to attend classes, work, and socialize. While having in-person interactions may be relieving for some, others may feel more anxious about seeing people. Some may even feel disconnected from others while interacting in-person. It may be helpful to take certain steps to re-acclimate socializing in-person.

SKILLS!

- Get familiar with spaces on campus (e.g., ARC, library, coffee shops, etc.) where you can meet with friends and classmates.
- Set up times to meet with friends on- or off-campus. Use study groups to slowly get used to seeing people.
- Explore various student organizations – joining one can be a great way to meet others with common interests!

TIP 5

Engage in Self-Compassion

The campus environment may feel different to you, so be kind to yourself in the process. Remember the patience/kindness you gave yourself when transitioning into the pandemic, give yourself that same patience/ kindness as you return to campus.

SKILLS!

- Be your own friend! As yourself, "how would I speak to my friend going through a stressful situation?"
- One way to be self-compassionate is to practice gratitude. Keep a journal where you can write 3-5 things you are grateful for daily.

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TIP 6

Grief and Loss

We have experienced loss in this pandemic (loved ones, sense of normalcy, financial stability, important events). Take time to recognize grief and give yourself the gift of patience while processing all the losses you have endured. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and where you are is where you are supposed to be in the process.

SKILLS!

- Check-in with your emotions and feelings
- Take a self-compassionate stance: be your own friend when having self-critical thoughts
- Grief toolbox (<https://www.thefyi.org/toolkits/grief-support-tool-kit/>)
- Reach out for support, both personal and professional (<https://counseling.uci.edu/>)

TIP 7

Honor Your Body

Your body may have gone through many changes during the pandemic, and you may even be more anxious about your body's appearance and feel reluctant to be in public spaces. While self-critical thoughts about your body may be more easily accessible at this time, honor your body by taking a self-compassionate and accepting stance.

SKILLS!

- There are NO "good" foods and "bad" foods. All foods are good when eaten in moderation. And variety is the spice of life!
- Engage in flexible and mindful eating that values pleasure and nutritional needs
- Develop awareness of underlying feelings that are associated with eating and food without judgment
- Become an informed consumer of food while respecting your own needs and values instead feeling pressured to follow the diet trends from the media
- Seek out support (<https://counseling.uci.edu/>)

TIP 8

Check-in on the 8 Dimensions of Well-Being

The 8 dimensions of well-being include: Emotional/Mental, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, Spiritual. Reflect on what dimensions need more care and check out this link to get more helpful tips on how to develop each dimension.

<https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/health-and-wellness/eight-dimensions-wellness>

SKILLS!

- You may realize that some dimensions of your well-being need more attention or for the first time you are becoming aware of a dimension of well-being.
- Connect with others who also may be building or honing a similar dimension as you. Also, connect with resources on campus that can help you build/hone these dimensions (e.g. LARC, CC, DSC.).
- Use this tool to help identify and prioritize your values: <https://www.think2perform.com/our-approach/values>

TIP 9

Build a Coping Toolbox

As you return to campus, you may experience multiple stressors due to the continued unknowns. That's okay because transitions are inherently stressful! However, you can champion your own well-being by creating/honing your coping toolbox. A way of grounding/relaxing and reducing distress is to use our five senses. Get creative in connecting with your senses!

SKILLS!

- **See:** soothing colors, coloring books, scenic pictures, ambient lighting
- **Hear:** guided meditations, calming music, nature sound, rhythmic beats
- **Smell:** scented candles, fresh air, calming smells
- **Taste:** strong flavors, soothing flavors, warm beverages, nostalgic food
- **Touch:** lotion on hands, soft blanket, hot shower, cuddle things

TIP 10

Sleep Happy!

You may have drastically changed your sleep habits due to being home during the pandemic. Establishing healthy sleep hygiene will help with re-adjusting to campus life, as sleep is associated with better physical, emotional, and academic wellbeing. Lack of sleep often leads to irritation, constant fatigue, and difficulty with concentration, and is associated with poorer health concerns.

SKILLS!

- Be consistent with your sleep schedule and set a routine to signal sleep time (e.g., brushing teeth, taking a shower, washing face, etc.).
- Bed is used for only two things: sleep or sex. Avoid working on your bed so that your bed is associated as an oasis of calm, rather than stress.
- Avoid drinking caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine at least 4-6 hours before bedtime.
- Sleep when sleepy, and if you are not sleeping, get up and try again.