

**The 7 College Catastrophes You Must Avoid**

**By**

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For many college students, being on their own is a huge change and one that sometimes leads to disaster! With one in four college freshman dropping out, steering clear of some major pitfalls will help you lead to success.

 #1 – Partying

Ok, so Mom and Dad aren’t around. You can stay up all night if you want to. You come and go as you like from your dorm or apartment. Everyone’s having parties, even on regular ol’ weekdays, and you feel like you have to be part of it to live the college experience. When partying starts taking up more time than your education, you’ve gone overboard! Learn to say NO! Make a list of things that you need to get done for school and put deadlines on them. If you aren’t done with your work, you can’t go to the party. Also, it can do both your body and mind some good to stay in and relax once in a while, even if your work is done.

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 # 2 – Substance Abuse



# Freedom to make your own decisions, doesn’t mean it’s time to indulge in alcohol, drugs or smoking. Doing so, even once or twice, can develop into a downward spiral of abuse. Nothing can kill a college career faster than substance abuse. Associate yourself with clean and sober friends and commit to yourself that you’ll spend your college years having fun, but putting your education FIRST. Remember, you don’t have to drink alcohol or worse in order to have fun. In fact, a lot of people are more fun to talk to and hang out with when they’re not under the influence of anything.

# # 3 – Poor Study Habits



# Maybe in high school, you could write your English Lit paper on the morning it’s due, but this isn’t the case in college. Expectations of you are significantly higher in college. You have to develop and maintain good study habits to succeed. Make sure you have a clean, spacious area to work at, such as a desk or table. Set aside a specific time for your studying. Don’t try to work, watch TV or talk with friends while you’re studying. Limit your distractions! Start with the hardest assignments first when you’re fresh. If you find yourself getting poor grades on assignments or not keeping up, don’t blame the professors, the students, the assistant professor, etc…. take responsibility for yourself and seek out the help you need.

# # 4 – Poor Diet and Sleep Habits

It’s easy to fall into the fast food habit and snacking instead of eating regular healthy meals. Good nutrition and 8 hours of sleep every night are vital to your physical health. Having a strong body and well-rested mind will help you in your education. You can avoid the “Freshman Twenty” by eating healthy foods, not eating late at night or indulging in junk foods. Remember, alcohol is high in calories and can stimulate appetite, making you gain weight. You will look and feel better about yourself by keeping disciplined in your eating habits. Also, regular exercise helps limit stress and clear the head while helping you become more energetic and fit. By the way, do not use High Energy Drinks. They can cause all kinds of problems, including heart problems! Check it out and think twice!

# # 5 – Money

If you’ve never had to manage your own money before, college will force you to do so! For many college students, keeping track of their funds is a difficult task; so much so, that they sometimes just ignore it, until they’re broke. Money problems can be a stressful burden on the student and his family as well. Manage your budget. Know what you have and what your living expenses are and keep track of them. This will help you avoid the pitfall of being broke. If your expenses are greater than your savings or income, then consider getting a part time job to help offset the difference.

# # 6 – Major Decisions



**Choosing the wrong major is a pitfall that many college students fall into because they feel pressured to “choose” a major. In many cases, they choose something that “sounds good”, and have no real idea what it is. Later on, as they lose interest, they transfer to another degree, costing precious time and money.**

**Spend some time analyzing your strengths and weaknesses, what you enjoy and what kind of work you enjoy. Note these items and talk with your parents, a friend, a mentor, or a school counselor. When you have some career interests in mind, interview some professionals in that career and find out what their strengths and weaknesses are and what they think would be good qualities to have in their particular career. Volunteer, intern or work part time during school breaks to see if you like your field of study and to gain experience.**



# # 7 – Too Many Commitments

**Social, work and school calendars look pretty bare when separated, but put them together and wow, all of a sudden, you’re a busy person! It’s easy to over commit with clubs, fraternities/sororities, volunteering, internships, work, family, holidays, school – and studying falls off the schedule.**

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