

Breathe Easy By Jake Bredow

It's 4:30 pm and the sun is already ducking below the horizon. Hearts sprint and foreheads perspire as assignments begin to pile up. Your stomach grumbles as you finish a rough draft while Spanish homework patiently waits—and you still have to do laundry. Days of infinite sunlight and ever-lasting slumbers are over; you are in the midst of your first semester of college. As an incoming first-year, the many unknowns coming into college life may seem intimidating at first. Living on your own for the first time is no small feat. The task at hand may seem impossible, but overcoming stress is a day-by-day, step-by-step process that can be achieved. Time management is key to maintaining good mental health.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

I arrived on campus after being home for my first semester as a Loyola student due to COVID-19. It was a complete culture shock; I was very accustomed to online school. Coming into 2021's spring semester, I was scared: I was scared my grades would dip. I was scared I wouldn't meet any friends. I was scared of the world beyond my hometown. I quickly learned that I had no reason to be scared. I was not alone; everybody was in the same boat. Beginning by personalizing my dorm room and getting dinner with the guys on the floor, my roommate and I adapted readily. [Messina](#) is Loyola's program for first-years to make the transition into college easier. It has helped infinite students find their friends in order to make their college experiences great.

REST AND FOCUS

Sleep is key to staying on top of your work. If you are well rested and ready to start the day, you can focus and get your work done while still having time to be social. If you are tired and unable to work to the best of your ability, sleep and come back to it. If you do fall behind on sleep, however, there is no need to panic. For the most part, professors here at Loyola are very lenient. Sometimes due dates can be extended and exceptions can be made as long as you communicate with your teachers. Coming into college, I expected my professors to be just as unforgiving as my high school teachers; that is not the case. Each and every member of the faculty is here to aid you in order to maximize your college experience. If you need help on an assignment,

time management, or another issue, speak to a professor—they will help you.

STAYING ALERT

In both of my on-campus semesters, I found that in order to maximize each hour of the day you most likely need to have a solid schedule. Going to sleep fairly early and waking up at a decent hour before class—call it about 90 minutes—gives you an ample amount of time to gather yourself before you start your day. This may include last minute studying or eating a solid breakfast. Not all studying should be last minute: start looking over your notes a good number of days before your test or quiz. Another way to maximize your day is to go outside and get your blood flowing. Whether going to the [FAC](#) or simply walking around campus, I found that getting some fresh air is always a good way to calm my nerves. It is also important to get out and explore to relieve stress. Baltimore's Inner Harbor is a great way to get out of the room and spend the day in the sea-side air.

DON'T SWEAT!

If you find that you need to talk to someone regarding an issue, there is always somebody on campus to listen. Whether it be your eventual best friends (I guarantee you will meet them), one of your professors, or somebody at the [Counseling Center](#), there will always be someone within your Loyola family to listen. It is very important to discuss what is ailing you, so do not be afraid to reach out! As you venture into your first year of college, remember that everything will turn out just fine. As long as you balance your sleep schedule, school work, and social life, you will have plenty of time to relax and have fun.

Our Loyola family is and always will be there for you.



Messina flags in Bowman