

# From struggling student to first-class scholar

## Simple steps for improving mental health at University

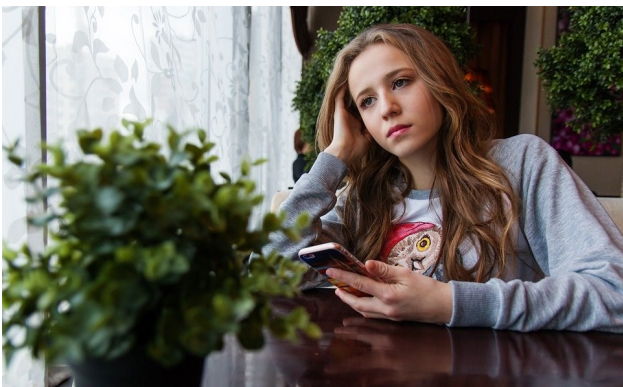
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Let me set the scene; you're at university, you have friends and you're probably achieving average, if not good grades. Yet you still feel unworthy, lonely and overwhelmed – sound familiar? An alarming number of students balance mental health conditions and the demands of university daily and unfortunately, most of us don't feel comfortable enough to seek help. If this is you, it's okay, and you're not alone. There are a number of simple steps you can take at home to ease the stress.

#### Turn your phone off

The first, and honestly the most important, step you can take is detaching from your phone. We're all self-diagnosed social media addicts, myself included, but I cannot stress enough the importance of having at least one-hour quiet time a day, without being reminded of the stress of student life. So, grab your phone and let the 'do not disturb' setting become your best friend.



#### Self-care

Facemasks, bubble baths and books, that's all self-care is right? Wrong. I mean, for me it is, but self-care is anything you want it to be, as long as it makes you feel good inside or out. So why is self-care so important? One of the harsh truths many learn whilst at university is: no one is going to look after you (most of the time) apart from yourself.



#### Socialise

To many, university is synonymous with parties, making friends and fun. However, after freshers finishes and you realise you're actually there to get a degree, not just to get drunk, university can be extremely isolating. Whether it's joining a society, just hanging out with flatmates, or even getting a part time job, socialising is ideal for helping forget your woes and help relieve stress and anxieties. (Side note: don't turn to alcohol and substance abuse as a coping mechanism to make friends, it's unhealthy and you know it).



#### Organisation

I can't say with complete certainty you fit into the stereotype of a disorganised student, but if you do, it may have a negative impact on your relationships and mental health. As someone who suffers from chronic disorganisation, I find keeping a diary is imperative to keeping my stress levels down. If keeping a written diary isn't for you, try visualising your schedule on a wall calendar or use an app to keep track of all your deadlines and meetings.



#### Disclaimer

I am aware mental health is far more complex than I will ever understand, and that this list is not necessarily applicable to or comprehensive enough for those with serious mental health conditions. If you ever feel like university is becoming too much, your grades are slipping or if you have any thoughts of self-harm, please seek professional guidance immediately. And remember, there is no right or wrong way to complete university, no such thing as a good or bad degree, and you can never take too long to complete it – **it's your degree.**