1. **Be Generous with your friendships but stingy with your trust.**

   Maybe you went to Welcome week, shared your life story, and bonded forever with the person sitting next to you. BEST FRIENDS 4 LYFE kind of bond...in a week. Sure. More likely, you skipped the finer points of Welcome Week, but still became inseparable friends with someone down the hall. And that’s great, but they still have to earn your trust—don’t just hand it out like Dr. Pepper at a Baylor function. Maybe the friends you made this week will be lifelong friends, or maybe they’ll try to involve you in a pyramid scheme sometime around October. It happens. Save your deep dark secrets for later in the semester and don’t loan out your keys or lend someone your car to drive to Austin on Friday nights.

2. **Go to class.**

   If you’ll do some quick math, you’ll soon discover that every hour you get to sit in the BSB or Old Main or Tidwell (for the average 12-hour student at 15 weeks of school per semester) costs more than $100 per hour of class time. Of course, no one hands out gold stars for perfect attendance at the end of the day, and most (Most! Not all! Check your syllabus—some will dock your final grade for a single absence), professors allow one or two absences but save them for the end of semester when you have two term papers, mono, and an exam.

3. **Constant Vigilance! (At least for the first few weeks...)**

   The first few weekends are ah...um...a bit of a free-for-all. Have a blast in college; just don’t cram it all into the first two weeks. Take the time to get to know your surroundings. Don’t add a boyfriend or girlfriend to the mix just yet and avoid hooking up with someone who might be bad news. The odds are just against you here. Also, watch your finances. Your parents won’t believe you spent all your spare cash on laundry in the first two weeks. If you don’t have the luxury of calling home for those magical funds called BearBucks, all the more reason to hang on to your summer savings. New college students are sitting ducks for credit cards. Be smart, dodge the predatory lending schemes.
4. **Sleep**

Coffee is good. Coffee will NOT, contrary to popular belief, enable you to live without sleep. The espresso laden Nervous Breakdown from Common Grounds may sustain you through one jittery night of hasty project completion, but I suggest you refrain from making a habit of it. Case in point: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaMN5cY23Ec&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaMN5cY23Ec&feature=related).

5. **Get involved...but not too involved.**

Late Night at the SLC is tonight. Basically, the SLC will be cram-full of every single campus organization (there’s also a rather hysterical dodgeball tournament going on in the gym where one of my good friends competed in a full Indian headdress...worth checking out at any rate.) Maybe Greek life isn’t your thing, but it can’t hurt to go by the tables and meet some new people. Try a new sport like water polo, crew, or Ultimate Frisbee. That said, don’t go overboard. Be picky and find one or two organizations you’re stoked about.

6. **Living with a Weirdo**

One summer I had a roommate who spent her spare time calculating the volume of dry ice she would need to suffocate me in my sleep. But after that initial greeting, we discovered we both liked Thai food and the band Death Cab for Cutie. Really, we got along okay: our shower schedules didn’t conflict, she refilled the toilet paper with a new roll, and she respected my possession of the Cheez-It box. We didn’t spend every waking moment together, but we shared some laughs. If your roommate is absolutely nuts, look at it as a chance to meet more people outside of your dorm and consider having a chat with your CL.

7. **Fight Homesickness without Trekking Up and Down I-35**

Maybe you’re sitting in U1000 right now with your dirty clothes hamper in the trunk of your car ready to head home. Maybe your roommate and half the people on your hall are already gone for the weekend. You can hear the crickets and you don’t want to be left out in the cold. But you’ve got more collegiate adventuring spirit than the rest of them put together because you’re not going home for the weekend. You get 15 weekends this semester. FIFTEEN. These are your college weekends: the stuff of legend. Don’t spend those weekends spending some quality time in I-35 traffic. Make the most of them. Explore Waco. Run the Bear Trail with you roommate. Knock on all the doors in your hall and go dancing. Toss tortillas off the suspension bridge. If all else fails, bake some cookie dough and watch a movie with the roommate. Going home makes for a comfortable weekend, but it just makes returning on Monday more difficult.
8. **Helpful people.**

The CL. Knock on the door, find a convenient time to have a chat. They spent a fair part of their summers trying to make your door decorations cute. If they just wanted cheap housing, they’d look elsewhere, they seriously want to get to know you. I promise.

The Residence Hall Director/Hall Chaplain/Faculty in Residence. Send your RD an email. Drop by and say hi. These people can be incredibly helpful and often have dorm apartments that smell like warm cookies. These people graduated from college (often more than once), have families, and still want to live in the dorms. They are seriously helpful people.

9. **Keep stuff safe.**

   - **ALWAYS LOCK:**
     - Door: even if you’re just going to the laundry room. You may have a kleptomaniac for a neighbor. There is no way to know.
     - Car: Rows of cars in college look like sitting ducks to people who are down on their luck and really want a stereo. If you get back late at night and park out in the boonies, remember you can call for escort services. This is an intelligent thing to do.
     - Bike: not with a chain, not with a coil lock, with a U-Lock. You can buy them at Target and Walmart any week except the week where anyone moves in. But get one stat. If you caught the late end of the back to school shopping, check Bicycles Outback for some really serious U-Locks. Heed my advice or wake up one morning to find your bike MIA. Also, if you U-Lock it, it is still possible for someone to steal the front wheel if it’s not chained. Just, in case you were wondering.

   - **KEEP TABS ON YOUR:**
     - Phone/iPhone/cell: leave it sitting on the corner of a Starbucks table and give it 20-minute tops before someone takes it off your hands.
     - Laptop: It’s just not worth the risk. Think of all your photos, music files, video files, and essays.
     - Backpack/Purse: fairly self-explanatory.

10. **Friendships**

After the first week, take a step back and reassess some friendships. Are you laughing at the same jokes? Do you want to get to know the people at the other end of the hall? Don’t restrict yourself to the group of people you met the first week, keep meeting new people.
Don’t be afraid to widen your circle. If you’re having trouble meeting people you can always sign up for intermurals at any point in the semester. (I have the hand-eye coordination of a grapefruit but had a blast playing intermural Ping-Pong with some girls down the hall.) A note about Greek Life: It’s not for everyone, but it doesn’t hurt to sign up for Recruitment (Fall Parties for girls) just to meet people. You don’t have to pledge. When I went through I wound up being great friends with the girl in alphabetical order next to me. Give it a chance.

11. **Drinking (Direct quote from BustedHalo.com)**

You might be tempted to tune this advice out because you’ve heard it so many times but...DON’T! I can’t tell you how many kids I’ve known who’ve bombed out because they drank too much! Without the simple limits of home — curfews, “my mom will know if I spend the night hugging the toilet,” friends who don’t want to go drinking — it’s easy to find yourself with a very expensive waste of a semester. It’s a really embarrassing way to flunk out of college or get yourself into stupid trouble. If you won’t take my word for it, the statistics on the effects of college drinking are astounding — see for yourself. If you’re getting wasted every weekend you’re headed for trouble. If you’re missing class because you’re hung over you’re IN trouble. [See the list of helpful people in #8.] Underage drinking is a bad idea. Don’t do it.

12. **Psych 101**

College maybe touted as “the BEST FOUR YEARS OF YOUR LIFE!!” but in reality early young adulthood can take a toll on your emotional health. Addiction, anxiety, self-injury, and mental illness can be extremely disruptive and dangerous issues for college freshman. If you’re struggling I’d wager there is someone else on your hall struggling with the same issues. Go to the counseling center and stay emotionally healthy.

13. **Dating and Relationships on Campus (Direct quote from BustedHalo.com)**

Everyone seems to have a story about a bad dating decision or a hook-up gone wrong. Whether it’s an older student that takes advantage of freshman naïveté, a crush turned stalker, or simply a case of leaping prior to looking; campus relationships can be a bit of a minefield. Be particularly cautious in those first few weeks when everyone’s still adrift. Falling for someone who’s just looking for a little recreational intimacy early in your first semester can mess up your head, not to mention your grades. Besides a broken heart or a
bruised ego there are lots of other reasons to avoid hooking up. College is a great place to get an STD. According to “Go Ask Alice,” somewhere between 20 and 25 percent of college students are or have been infected with a sexually transmitted disease. Wait ‘til you’ve been on campus and have built some friendships you can fall back on before getting into a romantic relationship. Then if your romance works out you’ll have some friends to be happy for you, and if not there’ll be somebody to hand you a Kleenex when you’re crying into your teacup.

14. Words about Religion
Just because Baylor is Baptist doesn’t mean there won’t be different ideas floating around campus. There are different ideas not only about Christianity, but also about Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and others. Being a good arguer and being a good Christian are certainly not synonymous. If you find yourself in a conversation about God that makes you uncomfortable or defensive, don’t feel like you have to keep talking or listening. Also, you don’t have to let someone pray for you.

15. Wash your hands!
College is much less fun when you’re ill.

16. Remember to HALT
Keep your act together! Don’t let yourself get too...

- **Hungry** - Your mom’s not here to remind you to eat. Get to the dining hall and take care of yourself. Skipping meals messes with your mood AND your appetite.
- **Angry** - Manage your emotions, take a walk, work out, talk to a friend, and especially don’t drink while you’re angry! Angry + drunk = stupid behavior, sometimes involving campus security.
- **Lonely** - Stay connected to your support network. Call your mother! IM your old friends, e-mail your youth minister/pastor/mentor.
- **Tired** - if you find yourself weepy all the time, impose a strict bedtime on yourself and see if that doesn’t improve your mood. All-nighters are a bad idea. NOBODY does their best work under pressure—that’s just something we procrastinators tell ourselves to rationalize our bad behavior
17. **Food (Direct Quote from BustedHalo.com)**

Doritos is NOT a food group. Everyone is afraid of the Freshman 15—the infamous fattening up that happens to so many new college students—but many people have trouble avoiding it. Most of us are used to having our mom set a plate in front of us with a pretty balanced meal—something meaty/protein, something green, something starchy. When you head into the dining hall the first time you may be dazzled by the array of choices, but make sure that what ends up on your plate has some balance to it. And just because you can have ice cream with every meal doesn’t mean you should! Try not to skip meals; you can end up overeating at the next meal or just wolfing down a bag of chips (or three) back in the dorm because you’ve gotten so hungry. Drink water, not soda. You can easily pack on a few pounds in your first semester by adding two or three cans of soda to your daily food intake. This also applies to other canned beverages. They don’t call it a beer gut for nuthin’!

**The other extreme: Eating disorders**—in this new high-pressure environment some people respond by controlling the one thing they feel they can: what they eat. You probably already know if this is a danger for you. The people who would normally help you keep an eye on your eating problems are also the people who would help you deal with the stress that causes them...and they’re not here! AHHHH! But fear not! You can hook up with some help at the counseling center—a number of colleges now have eating disorder support groups that meet right on campus—find yourself a supportive friend (or two) that you feel you can share your struggles with, and stay accountable to friends or family from back home who can encourage and support you. Watching your weight can become a dangerous obsession that will distract you from your goals just as surely as any other addiction! If you’ve never had problems with dieting, binge eating or weight obsession before, but you find yourself distracted by calorie counting, controlling your weight, or are afraid to eat—talk to someone! The counseling center offers help and resources.

18. **Unplug (Gaming, online porn, gambling) (Direct quote from BustedHalo.com)**

Whatever your game system, favorite online RPG, or electronic distraction is, be careful! That harmless looking little XBOX can be your education’s worst nightmare. It should stay in the closet and only come out on weekends after your paper is written! Anything addictive or familiar right now is going to be more attractive than going to class and getting your work done. TV, Facebook, blogging, You Tube, downloading music, IM-ing or just surfing can all be nice stress busters but it’s a slippery slope. You start out just finding a little comfort or harmless distraction and before you know it you’ve stayed up all night, not written your paper and missed a couple classes because you were up too late! Self-discipline is a bigger challenge for some of us than others but one of the biggest tasks in life is setting your own limits. If you’re struggling, give yourself an Internet, television, or Wii
“allowance” each day and stick to it. Nobody can multi-task! All it does is slow you down and keep you up later. When you’re doing homework, put up your away message and silence your cell phone. Don’t let anything or anyone steal your study time. Chat or text for 15 minutes and then get off IM and get your work done! Afterwards you can stay up and chat without the worry of the unfinished work hanging over you.

And while we’re talking about the Internet... here’s a hint! Online porn and poker are a bad idea! 2008 Class President Greg Hogan robbed a bank to pay off his online gambling debts! Hopefully you won’t go to such extremes but because you’re in a strange place with new people (and suddenly without the people and habits that would set external limits on you) anything addictive can be a danger zone. Porn and online gambling, besides their general unsavory nature, are both extraordinarily addictive and the Internet gives us unprecedented access. Don’t get sucked in! Quit. If you find you can’t quit, even when you know you should, there’s lots of help available.

19. Enjoy Waco

The Baylor Bubble only exists if you let it. Embrace the Valley Mills Starplex. Also take some time to enjoy the Local Waco Restaurants. A few local favorites are:

- Harold Waite’s Pancake & Steak House 941 Lake Air Drive
- Gospel Café 828 S. 10th St.
- The World Cup Café 1321 N. 15th St.
- Bangkok Royal Thai 215 S. University Parks
- Kitok Restaurant 1815 N 18th St.
- Teriyaki Park 220 S. 2nd St.
- Vitek’s 1600 Speight Ave.
- Cupp’s Drive-n 1424 Speight
- Dubl-R Burgers 1801 Herring Ave
- Health Camp 2601 Circle Road
- Baris 904 N. Valley Mills
- Poppa Rolo’s 703 N. Valley Mills Dr.
- D’s Chicken & Mediterranean Grill 1503 Colcord
- Leal’s 9000 Panther Dr.
- Terry & Jo’s Food For Thought 1121 Speight Avenue
- Schmultz’s 105 S. 5th St.
- Lula Janes 406 Elm Street
- Café Cappuccino 100 N. 6th St. #100