

A GUIDE TO HEALTH AND  
WELLBEING AT UNIVERSITY

# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF



@UoR\_Student



@UoR\_LifeTools

# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

## A GUIDE TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT UNIVERSITY

One of the most important aspects of university life is giving time and thought to looking after yourself.

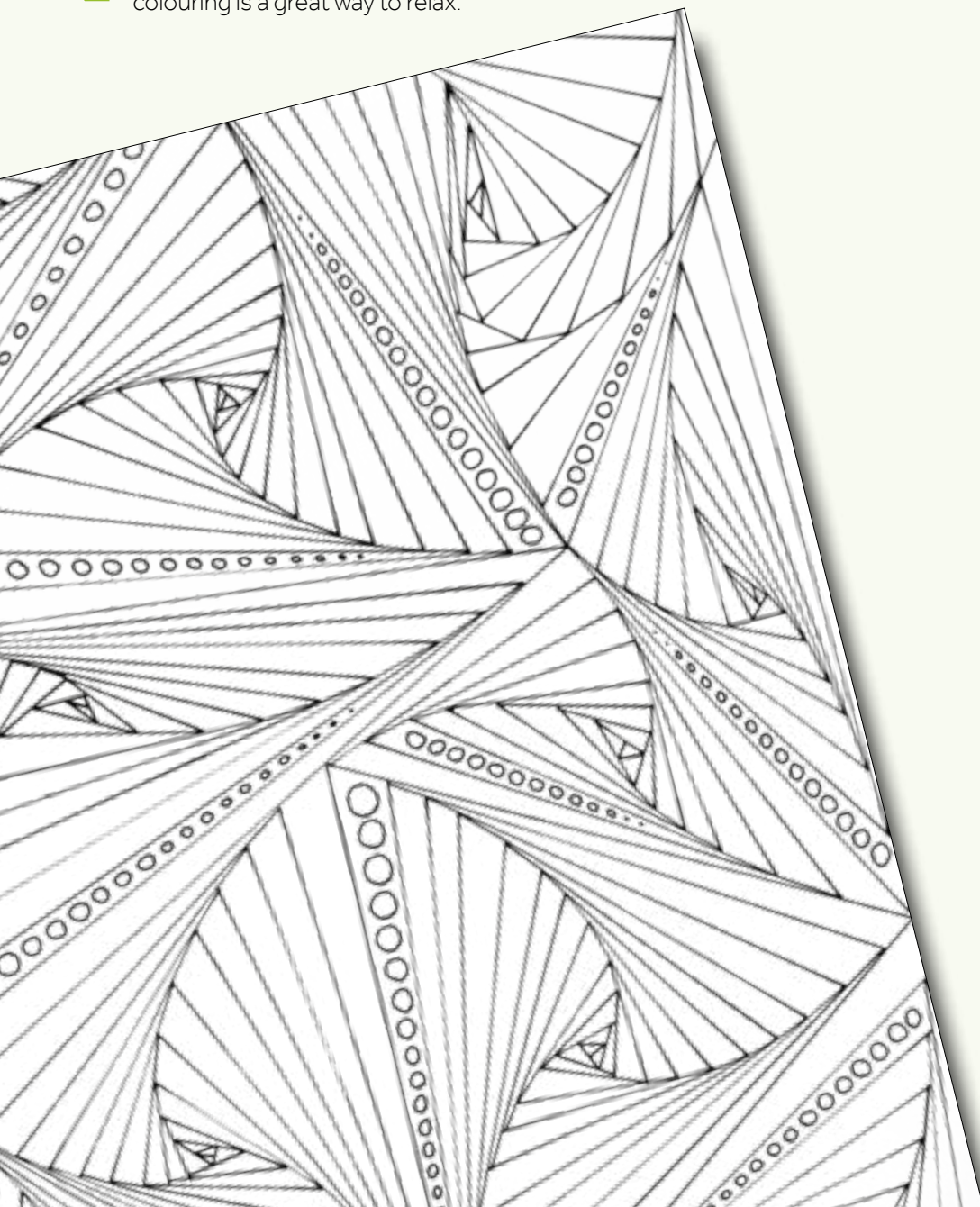
Here at Reading we have many different Student Support teams and services on hand to help throughout the year. In this guide you will find tips to enable you to settle in at university.

"We have added some puzzles and mindfulness colouring images as doing something different (away from screens), is relaxing and grounding. Why not invite another student to solve the puzzle? Connect with others and start a conversation."

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➡ Take time off screens -  
colouring is a great way to relax.



## 1. Registering with services

### Download the UoR Student App

The app has been designed specifically for you and brings together essential information, helping you stay organised, informed and connected. You can find your timetable, instant notifications of the most important updates and quick access to a range of support information.



### GP

Many students spend more weeks of the year at a university address than their home address, so it is recommended to register with a doctor near the university as soon as possible. That way you can receive emergency care if you need it, and access health services quickly and easily while you are here.

**The University Medical Practice is nearby and works closely with the University to give students a strong support network.**

We recommend you register with them as soon as you can. Visit [readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk](https://readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk) or contact them on **01189 874551**. You can choose to register with any local GP you feel comfortable with. You can also stay registered at your home practice at the same time, so you are covered if you commute from a home address or go back during the breaks.

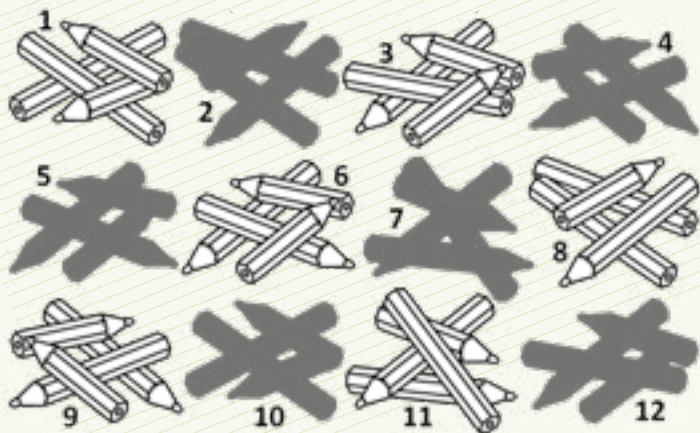
### Free prescriptions

You can check if you are eligible for free prescriptions. Use the HC1 form\* to apply for free prescriptions due to low income (includes dental and spectacles).

*\* Please note that section 8 when it asks about 'other people living in your home' it does not mean joint tenants, partners or friends or family you live with.*



Match to shadow



## Disability

Consider register with the Disability Advisory Service as they support students with a wide range of disabilities, which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This can include physical or sensory disabilities, long term medical conditions (including medically recognised mental health difficulties such as depression or anxiety disorder), specific learning difference, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADD as well as developmental conditions such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome.



## 2. Enrol on the Life Tools programme

The Life Tools programme is a series of recorded talks, webinars and live presentations designed by experts to facilitate your transition into university and enhance your personal, academic and professional development.

The programme is on Blackboard and by enrolling you will have access to online resources (recorded webinars, podcasts, bite size videos and more). Also, enrolled students receive a weekly email with the webinars planned for the following week, plus information about other webinars and updates. There are no assessments, and you are free to join any of the webinars you are interested in.

You can find out more information about the programme and the link to enrol on Blackboard by going to the Life Tools page on Essentials.

Attending Life Tools can contribute towards the training element of the RED Award, and to complete the Life Tools certificate.





### 3. Managing your money

On the Essentials pages you can find guidance on how to make your money go further.

#### Living well on a student budget

- ✓ The University's has a free online system, **Blackbullion**, which will help you make your money go further by analysing your spending habits and improving your money management skills.
- ✓ Get an **NUS Totum discount card** which can give you discounts on everything from fashion, food, tech, and more. You also use the card for 10% off everytime you shop at the campus Co-op.
- ✓ On a night out do not buy rounds of drinks. If you are on a budget it is perfectly acceptable to stick to buying yourself drinks.
- ✓ Never go shopping when you are hungry – you will be tempted to buy more food, and make less healthy choices.
- ✓ **Plan your meals** for the week and think about drinks, snacks, breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- ✓ Ordering your weekly shop online can help you minimise impulse purchases. It also means you can monitor your spending as you shop.
- ✓ Don't be swayed by name brands. Often the food of non-name brands are just as good as the other.
- ✓ **Buy a refillable water bottle:** and refill wherever possible. There are various refill stations around campus, see our wellbeing map.
- ✓ Get some basic recipes as home cooking is often cheaper than eating out and healthier too.
- ✓ In some circumstances, **payment plans** can be set up to help with payment of tuition fees and accommodation fees. Our Student Finance team can discuss your circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

#### Travel

- ✓ Travel is always expensive, whether you are a student or not! Sign up for a **16-25 railcard** if you do not already have one, and Reading buses offer a third off with student cards.
- ✓ If you are going out, think about your journey. Taxis can be expensive so travel with friends to split the bill or agree to use public transport together.

If you are worried about money contact RUSU [readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support](https://readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support)

➔ Make a path by drawing a line through the boxes that have a difference of 2, 4 or 8, to help the mouse get to the cheese!

16 - 8	10 - 8	14 - 10	16 - 12	19 - 18	17 - 3
19 - 15	8 - 1	12 - 6	9 - 1	16 - 14	11 - 7
14 - 6	15 - 7	14 - 13	10 - 4	8 - 3	4 - 2
15 - 1	19 - 11	13 - 7		12 - 4	8 - 8
18 - 11	5 - 3	15 - 9	9 - 8	15 - 5	14 - 7
	2		11 - 8	14 - 11	9 - 4
					17 - 6

➔



## 4. Managing academic pressure

A degree requires high levels of concentration and dedication.

To create depth in your work, while juggling multiple deadlines and managing expectations to achieve the academic standards required, we have designed some easy to follow tips.

Build your strategies to manage pressure, maintain your strength, and learn better while keeping well.

### Tips to manage study

- ✓ **Map your year** with key deadlines. Using a calendar you can plan ahead and allocate time for study, rest, work and fun. Highlight exam and assignment times well in advance.
- ✓ Identify your priorities and allow time appropriate for your studies and other activities or commitments.
- ✓ Plan for breaks: resting is just as important as working. Schedule in resting in between your studying time each day as well as having a full day off. **Breaks are very important for concentration and to restore your energy.**
- ✓ Assign time to revise across the year. **It is easier to retain information in smaller doses** than it is to cram it all into the last few weeks before an exam.
- ✓ A great way to learn a topic is to teach – find a friend who is willing to listen to a 10 minute presentation about a topic and return the favour.
- ✓ **Practice is the key.** If you are unsure about presentations, practise makes perfect.
- ✓ **Feedback** is important: It may feel critical and hard to hear at times but do pay attention to the advice and guidance provided – it is there to help you develop your academic skills.
- ✓ Try the Student Progress Dashboard: this RISIS function can help you assess your academic progress, and set your own targets.

For guidance on your specific area of study, always **talk to your Academic Tutor**. All students are allocated an Academic Tutor – a member of academic staff in your School or Department who are there to give you the guidance you need to make your academic progress. PhD students can contact their supervisors.

**The Student Dashboard** shows key information about your progress in the current academic year. Access it through RISIS. [risisweb.reading.ac.uk](https://risisweb.reading.ac.uk)

If you have any questions about IT you can contact [sites.reading.ac.uk/dts-hub](https://sites.reading.ac.uk/dts-hub)

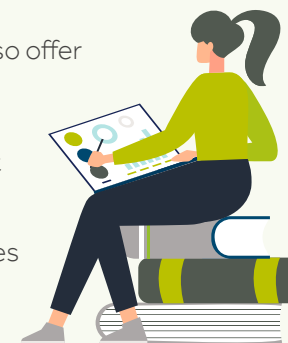
If you are just starting out at university, we also offer **Study Smart** – an online course which we've created especially for all of our new undergraduate students to give you the best possible start to your degree.

For a lot more general guidance and resources on university study check the Study Advice Team's website [reading.ac.uk/study-advice](https://reading.ac.uk/study-advice)

Also, check the Life Tools programme, it has webinars/talks on managing academic pressure, increasing concentration, preventing procrastination, increasing concentration and more.

For details of upcoming webinars go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)

For blog post on managing academic pressure go to [blogs.reading.ac.uk/life-tools-programme/managing-academic-pressure-and-meeting-deadlines/](https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/life-tools-programme/managing-academic-pressure-and-meeting-deadlines/)





## 5. Getting a good night's sleep

A good night's sleep is essential for your physical and mental health, and can help make you more energetic and productive when you're awake. It's just as important as getting enough exercise and keeping a balanced diet. Poor sleep will also affect your performance the next day, preventing you from concentrating.

### Tips to improve sleep

What helps good sleep?	What works against good sleep?
😊 <b>Get into a sleep routine</b>	😬 Excessive use of electronic devices before bed
😊 <b>Keep your bedroom dark and cool</b>	😬 Too much caffeine can make you too stimulated
😊 <b>Regular exercise helps good quality sleep</b>	😬 If you're too stressed, this makes it harder – talk or write about anything that's bothering you
😊 <b>Relax before bed – read a book, meditate, whatever works for you</b>	😬 Clock watching will make your body tense
😊 <b>Keep a sleep journal to identify patterns of problems</b>	😬 Don't stay in bed if you're not tired – leave the room and come back when you are

For more information go to Life Tools for some helpful tips on how to improve your sleep pattern [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)



### SELF CARE IS A PRIORITY. NOT A LUXURY.

You wouldn't let this happen to your phone. Don't let this happen to you either.

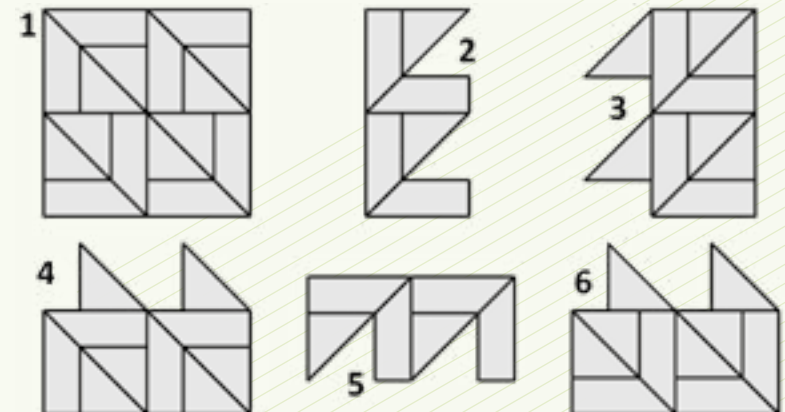
If you consistently struggle to sleep or if existing sleep problems are getting worse you should seek out help. Consult your doctor. If you are not registered at a doctor, consider registering at the University Medical Practice for more support

[readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk](https://readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk)

For blog post on sleep go to

[blogs.reading.ac.uk/life-tools-programme/getting-a-good-nights-sleep/](https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/life-tools-programme/getting-a-good-nights-sleep/)

➡ Which two shapes were used to produce shape 1 (rotation does matter)?





## 6. Food and Mood

Good nutrition is essential. Improving your diet can give you more energy and aid cognition making it easier to study.

### Eat well

- ✓ Try to **eat a range of foods** to ensure you get a wide range of nutrients.
- ✓ You need the right balance of vitamins and minerals in your diet.
- ✓ Too much **caffeine** can be unhelpful. It is a stimulant and can give you a short burst of energy but it can lead to feelings of anxiety and disturb your sleep.
- ✓ Do not try to change your diet suddenly, making healthy choices over time has more chance of making a sustained difference.
- ✓ Missing meals causes a loss in energy. Avoid foods which make your blood sugar levels change rapidly such as sweets, sugary drinks and alcohol. Eat slow energy release foods like brown rice, oats, nuts and seeds, they make you feel fuller for longer.
- ✓ **Stay hydrated:** get a reusable water bottle and top it up regularly, it is recommended that we have 6-8 glasses of fluid a day.
- ✓ Plan cooking times and make extra meals to store for those days when you do not have the time or energy to cook.

### Did you know?

- ✓ Protein is essential in providing your brain with amino acids which regulate your thoughts and feelings. Think about sources of protein and include these in your diet for healthy brain development.
- ✓ Your brain needs fatty acids to aid it in performing at its best. Eating the right fats can make a huge difference to your wellbeing. Try eating oily fish, poultry, nuts, olive oils and seeds, cheese and eggs.

### Eating with friends

- ✓ Make time to sit down and have your meal, it aids digestion and it can be a relaxing activity when sharing a meal with other students and get to know them better.
- ✓ The university offers an additional service to those who would like support with food in the form of meal plans: [hospitalityuor.co.uk/clever-cuisine](https://hospitalityuor.co.uk/clever-cuisine)
- ✓ When there is the opportunity, it can be a fun activity to prepare a meal with other students.

You can find some recipes on well know websites.

Simple but tasty student meals

[bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/student](https://bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/student)

Food to share

[goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/g605/family-style-recipes](https://goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/g605/family-style-recipes)

The NHS website

[nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well](https://nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well)







## 7. Keeping safe

In any new situation it is important to pay attention to what is happening around you. There are things you can do to avoid danger and keep yourself safe.

### Top tips to stay safe:

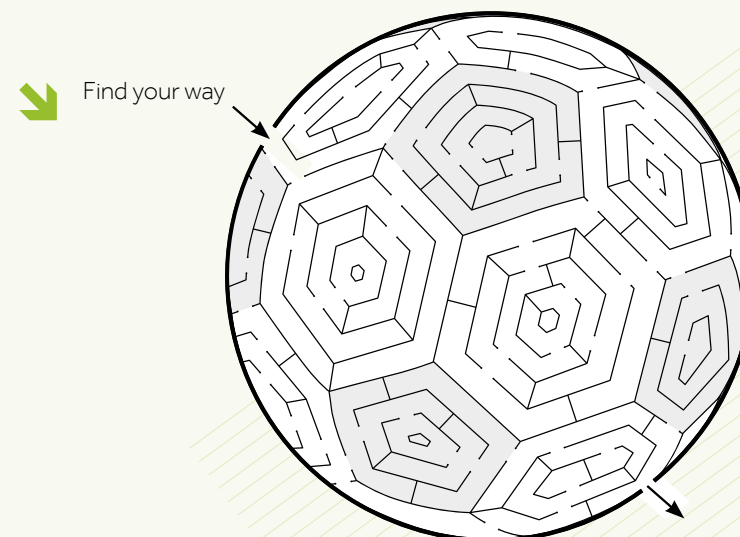
- ✓ Always ensure your phone is charged when you go out, and **do not** have it on display.
- ✓ Put key numbers on speed dial for quick access.
- ✓ Avoid pressurised situations where you feel the need to 'fit in' – if someone is pressuring you into a situation you do not want to be in, say no thank you. **A friend will not pressurise you** – a friend will be supportive of you.
- ✓ Know your alcohol limits. If you have not had experience of drinking you may find that you cannot drink as much as others, which is fine – everyone is different.
- ✓ When out keep an eye on your drink. It's also best not to accept drinks from strangers. Drinks can easily be spiked. If you think you have been spiked, always alert Security and they can assist you.
- ✓ Stick to pathways which are well-lit and have paving.
- ✓ **Plan your evening.** Watch out for your friends, walk together and take public transport or taxis together.
- ✓ If you think someone is behaving in an odd manner or think they are vulnerable, alert Security.

Whilst the University employs a dedicated security team to patrol University property and create a safer environment, the campus is open to the public so it is important that you take steps to ensure your own safety. **Each autumn during the first week of term we hold a Security and Safety Awareness exhibition which we strongly recommend you visit: [reading.ac.uk/getting-about](https://reading.ac.uk/getting-about)**

### If you spot danger

If you need urgent assistance on campus, call university Security on **0118 378 6300** or to report an incident call **0118 378 7799** or visit [reading.ac.uk/security](https://reading.ac.uk/security)

In an emergency, always call **999** first.





## 8. Relationships and socialising

University can be a time for establishing relationships that have the potential to last a long time. Healthy relationships can take time to develop. If you have left home those relationships can also alter.

The key is good communication with the people you meet at university and those back home.

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### In accommodation

- ✓ Pick an evening where you get together with just your flat/house mates and it becomes a stay at home event.
- ✓ The Home at Halls mobile app is dedicated to improving your student experience and time in halls. View and register for events, access useful info and more: [reading.ac.uk/essentials/student-events](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/student-events)
- ✓ Divide up responsibilities - an equal share of chores will make things more manageable and reduce stress.
- ✓ Share your cooking space and respect those with specific needs.
- ✓ **Plan a monthly flat meeting** to review how things are going and to help reduce tensions if they arise.
- ✓ If you have an issue with someone discuss it as soon as possible. Let each other speak, stick to the topic at hand and stay calm.
- ✓ **Think about each other's needs:** if someone has an early lecture it is inconsiderate to play loud music into the early hours.

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### Living off campus

*If you are commuting please attend the Commuter Welcome Event during Welcome week and join the official Facebook group for commuter students: [facebook.com/groups/uorcommutingstudents](https://facebook.com/groups/uorcommutingstudents)*  
*It is a great way to meet other students and get to know all the services available at the University of Reading.*

- ✓ Make sure you know the best way to travel to university. You might want to think about a backup plan should your usual routes have traffic or other issues.
- ✓ You can access information and university maps at [reading.ac.uk/about/visit-us.aspx](https://reading.ac.uk/about/visit-us.aspx)
- ✓ If you are planning to drive, ensure you have a space to park: [reading.ac.uk/parking](https://reading.ac.uk/parking)
- ✓ A 16-25 Railcard will save you 1/3 on rail fares for a year: [16-25railcard.co.uk](https://16-25railcard.co.uk)
- ✓ Reading Buses, run from Whiteknights to London Road campuses to town, as well as many routes serving the popular student areas. The Claret bus (**number 21/21a**) travels from Reading train station and town centre past the London Road campus and onto Whiteknights campus every 7 minutes during the day in term time. It also runs all through the night, so you will never miss the last bus! Check their timetable here. [reading-buses.co.uk/services/rbus/21](https://reading-buses.co.uk/services/rbus/21)
- ✓ If you can cycle onto campus we have various cycle ports – please ensure you lock your bike safely.

- ✓ Use your commuting time (if you are not driving) to listen to our podcasts, review your notes and catchup on key course details:  
[reading.ac.uk/essentials/blogs-and-channels](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/blogs-and-channels)
- ✓ We have lockers placed around the campus – use these to aid your journey.

You can make friends even if you choose to live off campus. There are many events during the year to help all feel a part of this community. You can check Get Together Apart or Chill and Chat on the Essential pages for information on activities. You can also check RUSU's website for information on events run by them, as well as see what societies are available that you could try out.

Make the most of your time on campus. If you have a space in-between lectures, meet up with friends on campus. Perhaps there is something on offer to interest you at the Sports Park:

[sport.reading.ac.uk](https://sport.reading.ac.uk)

For further information about commuting to university, visit:

[reading.ac.uk/living-at-home](https://reading.ac.uk/living-at-home)



## Around campus

*RUSU have a variety of societies: see what you think fits with you and join them, and it may open up more friendship groups. For information go to [rusu.co.uk/student-activities/societies](https://rusu.co.uk/student-activities/societies)*

- ✓ Create a **study group** with fellow students to create a sense of community while developing your studying skills.
- ✓ Have regular meet ups for to get to know other students.
- ✓ The Chaplaincy Centre is open for walk-ins Monday-Friday 9am-6pm. They help connect people with each other, with local projects and supportive ventures visit [reading.ac.uk/chaplaincy](https://reading.ac.uk/chaplaincy)

## Home relationships

*Homesickness is very common: be honest about it, others will understand.*

- ✓ It is normal to miss family and friends at home when in a new environment. Give yourself a bit of time to adjust.
- ✓ Work out what is the right frequency of visits home for you. **Give yourself time** to be on campus to meet other students and make connections at university while maintaining existing ones at home.
- ✓ Try to make your bedroom your own – personalise it so it feels more homely.
- ✓ It is a good idea to tell your family about your course and what activities you are exploring to meet other students.
- ✓ Gather some recipes from home: sometimes it is nice to have an old favourite meal at university when you can't have it with your family.
- ✓ Maybe schedule some time for a videochat – you can even cook a meal together virtually.

## Settling in – making friends

*Being at university provides a wonderful opportunity to meet people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Give yourself time to get used to being in a new setting. And, if you are an international student, give yourself time to learn about the culture and the different academic systems. Making friends takes time. Usually, friendships develop through shared experiences.*

- ✓ Find out about your course and explore what activities are available so you can meet new people. You may feel a bit apprehensive at first, and this is normal - many feel this to some degree.
- ✓ Try to talk with other students in your hall, on your course, or those you meet on campus. You can ask them about their course and what they are interested in.
- ✓ It is best not to compare with your friends back home. You have known them for a while, so it is easier to communicate with them. As you **get to know other students** better, you will find those you share common interests and with whom you can establish friendships.

- ✓ For the Life Tools blog post on settling in: [blogs.reading.ac.uk/life-tools-programme/settling-in](https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/life-tools-programme/settling-in)



## Romantic relationships

*Romantic relationships can be very rewarding provided they involve mutual trust and respect. At times feelings change and break ups can happen. It can be a distressing time and you may experience mixed feelings.*

- ✓ **Talk** to or go out with loved ones regularly.
- ✓ Practice self-care: do something nice for yourself, or maybe start a new hobby.
- ✓ Every time you have a negative thought think about something good that has happened.
- ✓ Put the relationship in perspective - from every experience we learn something.
- ✓ Treat yourself as you would support your best friend. Be kind and understanding.
- ✓ Do not wait for 'closure': closure after a loss is a good way to overcome the issue but forcing it does not work, try to concentrate on new things and closure will naturally come over time.
- ✓ Assigning blame does not help recovery. Similarly, feeling guilty over a breakup can hinder your ability to move on.
- ✓ At times when you would have seen the person, plan another activity or spend time with those you trust and who can be supportive.





## Sexual Health and Relationships

*Romantic and sexual relationships can be a major part of being a student. You may already be in a relationship, perhaps they came with you or perhaps they are at home. Perhaps you have never been in a romantic relationship. Or you may be getting into a relationship here - whatever the set up, the following information is designed to help you to make healthy relationship choices.*

### Consent - Ask First

- ✓ Sexual consent is a voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity, having the freedom and capacity to make the choice.
- ✓ Sex without consent is a crime; known as rape and sexual assault.
- ✓ It's OK to consent to one form of sexual activity but not to another.
- ✓ Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- ✓ It is not enough to assume someone wants sex, consent should be sought and freely given with no coercion.
- ✓ If you are worried about a friend who may not have consented to sex or have concerns about yourself, we are here to listen and guide you to the right support. Come and see your Welfare team [reading.ac.uk/welfare-team](https://reading.ac.uk/welfare-team)
- ✓ Take the course Consent Matters: [reading.ac.uk/consent-matters](https://reading.ac.uk/consent-matters)



## Contraception

- ✓ Contraception is available for free from all GPs and nurses, as well as The Florey Unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital [safesexberkshire.com/local-services/florey-clinic/](https://safesexberkshire.com/local-services/florey-clinic/)
- ✓ There are many different methods of contraception available, and your doctor, nurse, or sexual health clinic can provide more information and advice. Contraception can also be purchased from a pharmacy.
- ✓ Emergency contraception is also available via your GP, or the Florey Unit. Or can be purchased at a pharmacy. If you have any concerns, please contact a health professional for confidential advice.



## Pregnancy

- ✓ Home pregnancy tests can be bought at any pharmacy. Your GP can also provide pregnancy testing.
- ✓ If your pregnancy was unplanned, you can contact your GP who will offer non-judgmental advice about the choices you have. Alternatively you can contact the university Welfare team.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

- ✓ If you are concerned that you have a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), or have recently had unprotected sex, contact your GP who can screen for STIs such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea. It is important to note that chlamydia is the most common STI in the UK. Many of those who have chlamydia have no symptoms.
- ✓ For medical advice contact your GP, The University Medical Practice, or The Florey Unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital



## 9. Alcohol

If you are over 18 years old you are legally free to consume alcohol in the UK if you choose.

Our advice is drink sensibly – know when to stop and let your friends know when they need to stop. You should never feel pressured to drink if you do not want to. It is your choice. You should also be respectful of fellow students who choose not to consume alcohol and mindful not to disturb flatmates or neighbours when celebrating.

### Did you know?

*Your body treats alcohol as a poison. It takes one hour for a healthy liver to get rid of one unit of alcohol. Drinking coffee, fresh air or cold showers do nothing to remove alcohol from your system. Alcohol is a depressant, it can instigate irrational behaviour and carries with it some risks.*

- ✓ Accidents resulting in injury and death, misjudging risky situations.
- ✓ Losing self-control/ inhibitions e.g. engaging in unprotected sex.
- ✓ Being banned from campus or 360 bar.
- ✓ **Alcohol can interfere with medication.**
- ✓ Depression, aggressive behaviour, relationship breakdowns.
- ✓ Sleep problems, memory difficulties.
- ✓ Diabetes in heavy drinkers
- ✓ Premature ageing, increased risk of illness and infection.
- ✓ Some alcoholic drinks are very high in calories.

### How much is too much?

The NHS recommends adults should consume no more than 14 'units' of alcohol per week on a regular basis. The NHS provides more guidance on how many units of alcohol are in some common drinks, follow this link

[nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units](https://nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units)

### Number of alcohol units by type of drink



\*ABV = Alcohol by Volume. This is used to measure the alcohol content in different alcoholic drinks.

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## How I can reduce my alcohol intake

- ✓ When pouring spirits at home, use a lined glass or shot glass to **measure your portion**.
- ✓ Keep track of how many units you're drinking and set aside 'drink free days' each week.
- ✓ Consider swapping your usual drink for a smaller or lower strength option.
- ✓ Try an alcohol-free beer or 0% spirit (available in campus bars and in most supermarkets).
- ✓ Alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks while out.
- ✓ Stop drinking when starting to feel dizzy. The body metabolises alcohol faster than we notice.

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## Where I can find support

If you are concerned about how much you are drinking, or worried for a friend, contact Change grow live [changegrowlive.org](https://www.changegrowlive.org) Or contact our Welfare team, which will be able to provide further advice about where to access specific support. RUSU's Advice Service also offer free and confidential support for all students.

You can use the Wellness checker to get information on resources available at the university [wellness.reading.ac.uk](https://wellness.reading.ac.uk)

Use a drink app to measure your intake more accurately: [drinkaware.co.uk/tools/app](https://drinkaware.co.uk/tools/app)

- ✓ Accident & emergency
- ✓ Local GP's



## 10. Drugs

People take drugs for many reasons, some to have fun and socialise, some to fit in, some to experiment and others to 'escape' their feelings. People can become addicted to drugs very easily in some cases. Some drugs are not illegal but are still highly addictive, pain killers and alcohol are examples of these. For more information check the NHS website [nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/drugs-and-drug-use](https://nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/drugs-and-drug-use)

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## Signs of someone using drugs

- ✓ Experiencing mood swings.
- ✓ Behaving differently to the norm.
- ✓ Poor sleep quality.
- ✓ Secrecy and evasiveness.
- ✓ Poor performance on the course, higher absence rates.
- ✓ Poor hygiene or appearance.
- ✓ Sudden change of friendship group.
- ✓ Loss of appetite.
- ✓ Drowsiness.
- ✓ Red-rimmed eyes and/or a runny nose.
- ✓ Loss of interest in previous hobbies.
- ✓ Foil, torn cigarette packets or small plastic bags.
- ✓ Money/property going missing regularly for no apparent reason.

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## The effects of using drugs

*This depends on the type of drug being used, the frequency, the person's state of mind, and if they have other health conditions. Prescription drugs can also be addictive. Be aware that illegal drugs can be mixed with other products which can cause other difficulties and can sometimes be fatal.*

## Physical effects

- ✓ More spots, more colds and feeling run down.
- ✓ **Poor cognition**, loss of memory.
- ✓ Longer term organ damage and other health problems.
- ✓ Personal safety, unprotected sex (STI's, unplanned pregnancy), risk of abuse from others.
- ✓ Overdose and death – even healthy people can overdose and die from taking drugs.

## Mental health effects

- ✓ **Depression** and mood swings.
- ✓ Addiction and dependency.
- ✓ Some serious long term mental health illnesses i.e., psychotic episodes and hallucinations.

## Impact on your studies and life at university

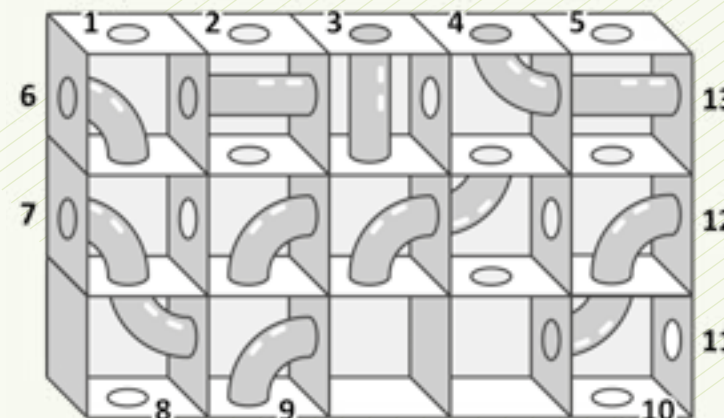
- ✓ Drugs impact the part of the brain we use for learning and remembering, regular use can therefore impact academic results.
- ✓ If found with drugs you can be fined and removed from the University or Hall of residence.
- ✓ Misuse can result in disciplinary action.
- ✓ Anyone found in possession of drugs will be banned from all University and RUSU bars. This will affect your ability to attend RUSU and other events.
- ✓ **Students on some degree courses will be reported to the professional accreditation body** as the use of drugs demonstrates that a person is unfit to work in the profession.

## Impact on life outside of university

- ✓ You may be arrested and charged which runs the risk of a criminal record and may impact future employment.
- ✓ You may also get into debt which will affect your credit rating which can impact any future plans associated with money.



The front side of this tank is solid and transparent. Where will the liquid pour out if it is poured through the hole: 1? 2? 3? 4? 5?





## Ways to reduce and stop drug use

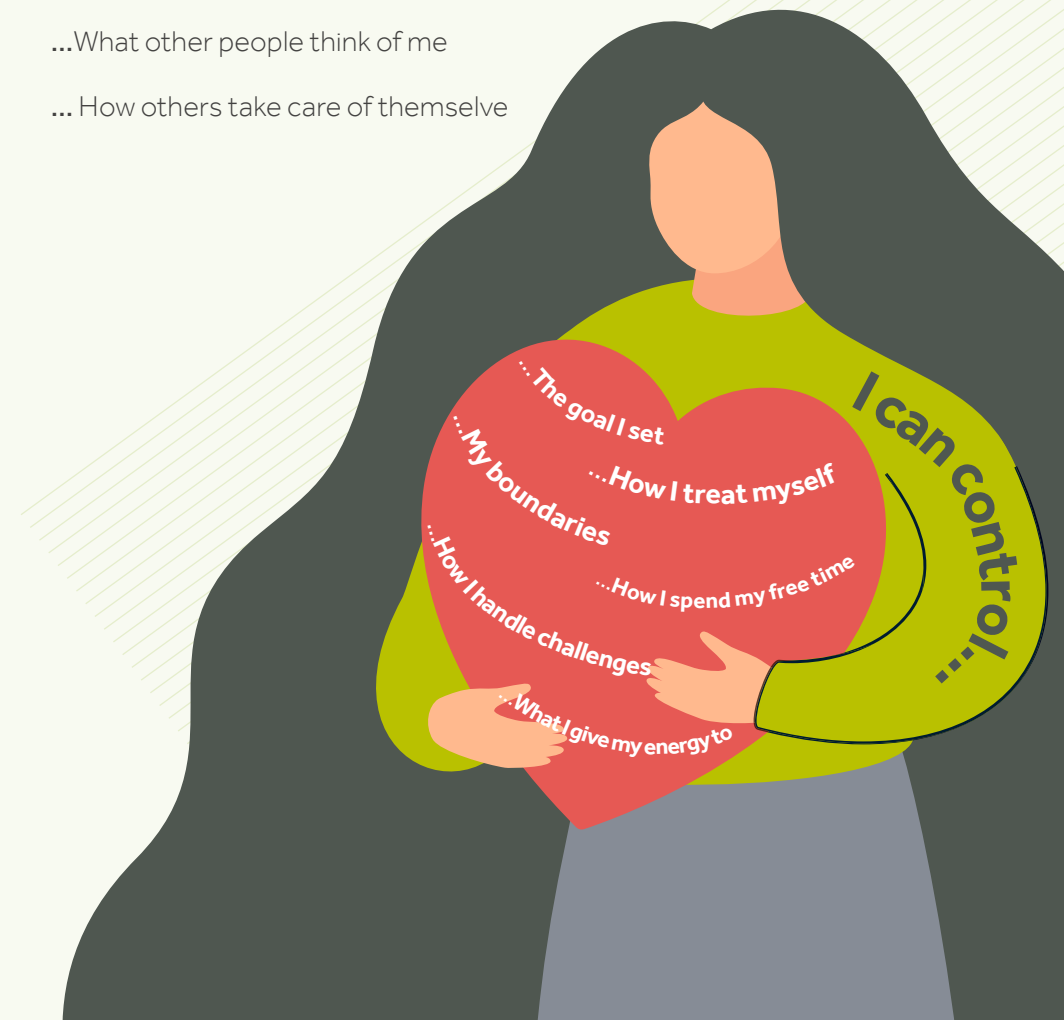
- ✓ Seek some help. You can contact Change grow live [changegrowlive.org](https://www.changegrowlive.org) Remember that you are not alone, we can direct you to the right support.
- ✓ **Think about the times when you want to take drugs** – is it after an upsetting event, is it before an anxiety provoking time? Are you pressured into taking them? Can you say no without friends commenting?
- ✓ Prepare yourself, think about what you could say to stop pressure.
- ✓ Try to understand why that person is offering you drugs. Friends will accept 'no' as an answer.
- ✓ Be firm about your choice not to take drugs.
- ✓ Use distraction techniques. Can you do something else? Watch a film, go for a walk, talk to someone etc.
- ✓ Stay away from those friends who are drug users.
- ✓ For support come and see the Counselling & Wellbeing team or your GP.



NHS drug addiction help page:  
[reading.ac.uk/essentials/Support-And-Wellbeing/  
Medical-and-General-Health-Support/Drugs-  
and-alcohol](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/Support-And-Wellbeing/Medical-and-General-Health-Support/Drugs-and-alcohol)

## I cannot control...

- ... The actions of others
- ... The past
- ... The opinions of others
- ... What other people think of me
- ... How others take care of themselves





## 11. Returning after a period of absence

If you have had time out from study for any reason, planning your return can help to reduce your anxiety. Making a list of your practical needs and adding things to consider is a good start. If you paused your studies due to ill health, consider:

Do I need to transfer my local support, so I have access to it in case of need?

Do I have care needs?  
Who should I talk to about this?

Have I told the Student Services team I am coming back?

Do I feel safe? Who can I talk to about this?

Have I shared my medical information to the right people prior to my return?

Do I feel ok moving into university accommodation?

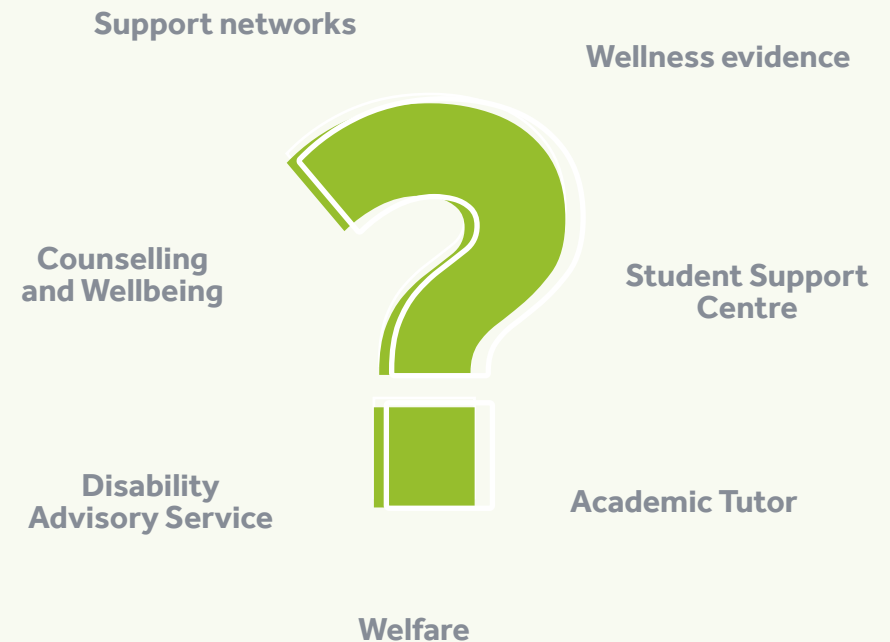
Am I going to be okay for money?



## Think about who you need to talk to before your return...

The Student Support Centre, your Academic Tutor, the Disability Advisory Service etc. Sometimes you may be asked to complete a study support plan with the Counselling & Wellbeing team, ensure you register with them to book this appointment on arrival.

These teams are there for you and are specifically focused on making your return to study easier.



# Healthy Student Checklist!

Completing the checklist can help us understand the areas where we are taking care of ourselves. Take a few moments to complete the table on the following page. Using the scale, rate the ways you look after yourself.

5 = Almost Always    4 = Often    3 = Sometimes    2 = Rarely    1 = Never



## Complete the scale that follows, how did you do?

If you scored 2 or less on one of these, consider changing that activity so that you can increase that number. It is not important to always score highly on this list, but it is important to notice when an activity becomes less regular.

*Looking after our mental wellness is an exercise you need to do every day.  
You are important, mind and body!*

5	4	3	2	1
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### Thinking about food:

Do you eat breakfast?				
Do you take a lunch break?				
Do you eat an evening meal?				
Do you eat a balanced diet?				
Do you drink lots of water?				

### Sleeping routine:

Do you have regular sleep and wake times?				
Do you do something relaxing before bed like yoga or reading a book?				
Do you have time off screens before bed?				
Do you take a nap if you need too?				

### Your environment:

Did you work at a desk?				
Is your working space decluttered?				
Do you spend time outdoors in the fresh air and nature?				
Do you listen to music regularly?				

### Your physical health:

Do you walk/cycle regularly?				
Do you do other forms of exercise?				
Do you take part in a team sport?				

### Self-Care routine:

Do you unplug from technology every day?				
Do you unfollow negative people on social media?				
Do you connect with a friend daily?				
Do you get ready slowly/calmly in the mornings?				
Do you keep up with household chores?				
Do you say no to extra responsibilities?				
Do you ask for support when you need it?				

## External support available

For emergencies, contact **999** (police, fire, ambulance)

For non-emergencies, contact **101** (police, report a crime)

For urgent mental health support,  
contact Berkshire Mental Health on **0800 129 9999**

For medical advice, contact **111**

## Keeping up to date:

All essential information you need to know during the academic year is on the university's Essentials pages. Here you will find information about the different services and updates on Covid-19, events, activities, and much more.

**Visit [reading.ac.uk/essentials](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials)**

**Download the UoR student app**

**Follow us on Instagram @uor-student**

To find out about your course and department information, for example, lectures being cancelled, check the department's timetable and Blackboard.

## University of Reading useful contacts

### SECURITY

[reading.ac.uk/security](https://reading.ac.uk/security)

General security enquiries 0118 378 7799

Security emergencies only 0118 378 6300

### HALLS HOTLINE

[reading.ac.uk/accommodation](https://reading.ac.uk/accommodation)

0800 029 1984

### COUNSELLING & WELLBEING

[reading.ac.uk/counselling-and-wellbeing](https://reading.ac.uk/counselling-and-wellbeing)

0118 378 4216

### LIFE TOOLS

[reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)

### WELFARE TEAM

[reading.ac.uk/welfare-team](https://reading.ac.uk/welfare-team)

0118 378 4777

### REPORT & SUPPORT

[reportandsupport.reading.ac.uk](https://reportandsupport.reading.ac.uk)

### SUPPORT CENTRES

[reportandsupport.reading.ac.uk](https://reportandsupport.reading.ac.uk)

### LIBRARY

[reading.ac.uk/library](https://reading.ac.uk/library)

### STUDY ADVICE

[reading.ac.uk/study-advice](https://reading.ac.uk/study-advice)

### FINANCE TEAM

[reading.ac.uk/money](https://reading.ac.uk/money)

### Reading Student Union

<https://readingsu.co.uk/>

### 24/hour Student Support

0800 023 2466

website <https://www.reading.ac.uk/essentials>

### Wardens and Hall mentors

[wardens@reading.ac.uk](mailto:wardens@reading.ac.uk)

visit <https://www.reading.ac.uk>

We wish you  
well in your  
studies and life  
here with us at  
the **University  
of Reading.**





# Looking After Yourself

 For more information,  
[reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing)

 @UoR\_student

 @UoR\_LifeTools

