Tip for Freshmen

Go to orientation.
Orientation activities are the best way for you to meet your new classmates, and possibly your new best friends. You’ll also become more comfortable with the campus, and you will become better prepared should any issues arise.

If you’re a residential student, get to know your roommate (and everyone else in your residence hall).
Your roommate can be a good friend, and someone you can go to if you need advice. Most of the people you live with are in the same situation as you are, and they can be a resource and a safety net for you during your time at Columbia College.

Get organized.
In high school teachers lead students through homework, and give reminders of test dates and due dates. In college, professors will pass out a syllabus outlining the entire semester, and expect you to be prepared and complete assignments by the dates given in the syllabus. Use a planner or anything else you need to stay organized and know when assignments are due.

Go to class.
This might seem obvious, but sleeping in and skipping your 8 am class can be tempting, especially if you stayed up late the night before. Avoid missing class, so you can learn what you can’t learn from just copying notes from a friend.

Work hard for good grades.
This one sounds obvious too, but it’s important. Some students get good grades with little effort in high school, but it takes more work in college. Set goals for yourself and work hard to reach them. Also remember that your grade point average doesn’t reset every year like in high school; in college your GPA sticks with you. If your grades are low your first semester, it will be harder for you to pull your GPA up the next semester.

Read the syllabus.
The syllabus for your class lets you know what is expected of you in the class, and when. Due dates, assignments, and test dates are all listed in the syllabus, so you can never use the excuse that you “didn’t know it was due today”. Professors expect you to keep your syllabus, and often instructors won’t give reminders for you to complete assignments.

Get to know your academic advisor.
Your advisor is the person who will help you when it comes to scheduling classes, adding or dropping courses, and deciding on majors or minors. Your advisor is a resource for you, and if you have any academic issues or questions about course scheduling, they’re the person you should go to for help.

Don’t feel pressured to select a major right away.
College is a time to discover who you are and who you want to be. If it seems like everyone else already knows what they want to do with their lives but you still haven’t decided, don’t feel bad. Don’t rush to declare a major as soon as you get to school, take your time and explore your options.

Stay on campus as much as possible.
It’s only natural for there to be times when you miss your family. You may be tempted to leave campus often, but try not to leave too often. The more time you spend here getting to know the campus and your new friends, the more at home you’ll feel at school.
Get involved on campus.
One of the best ways to get over homesickness and feeling like you don’t belong is to get involved on campus. Columbia College has over forty clubs and organizations to get involved in. Joining clubs and orgs is a great way for you to make new friends, learn new skills, and feel more connected.

Balance your time.
A big challenge for new college students is trying to balance academics and social lives. You want to have fun and hang out with your friends, but keep in mind that you’re here to learn, so be sure not to neglect your studies while you’re having fun.

Set aside time for yourself.
Make sure you find time to relax and de-stress after a long week of classes and studying. Whether it’s going to yoga in the Froman Studio, hanging out on Miller Lawn, or just relaxing in your room, take time to be good to yourself.

Connect with classmates.
Get to know your classmates. They can be a great resource for you in case you have to miss a class, and need to get notes from someone, not to mention they will probably be your classmates your entire time at CC.

Beware of Facebook.
Facebook is an excellent way to keep up with friends from high school. But it is so easy to spend too much time on Facebook, and it is a major distraction from studying. Use the site in moderation, especially around midterms and final exams.

Take advantage of study resources on campus.
CC has lots of resources to use if you need study help. The Seabrook Writing Center can help you with papers, the Bruce Math Center offers tutoring for math classes. Tutors are available for other subjects as well not just math. You can also use the computer and printer lab in Buchanan Hall or the computers and study areas in Stafford Library.

Don’t procrastinate!
In high school you may have had no problem at all waiting until the last minute to finish homework assignments or study for tests and still getting good grades. This is not the case in college. Set deadlines and stick to them, and prioritize your time to complete everything on time.

Stay healthy and eat right.
In college it’s up to you to make the right choices when it comes to what you eat. It is easy to be tempted by the many choices at Dulany, and to skip over the salad bar. If you make the decision to eat healthfully, you can avoid the dreaded "Freshman 15".

You’re going to feel overwhelmed.
There is a lot happening right now, and there will be moments where it gets overwhelming. You will feel unprepared and even a little afraid, but don’t forget that you’re not the only one feeling that way.