And now, you are a new freshman settling into the dorms and starting classes. Now what? How are you going to be successful and figure this all out? Here is some advice on transitioning to a new routine (less class), a new team and new housing.

1. Academics are your TOP priority!

Go to class and sit in the front of the room and make yourself noticeable. Chances are that you will have to miss some classes and make up exams so make sure the professor knows you. Introduce yourself at office hours and let the professor know that you want to do well in their class (even invite them to a meet). As soon as you have it, provide them with your competition schedule. Dress respectably – avoid wearing all those new sweatshirts and team t-shirts you just got. Yes, you are proud to be an athlete but your job for the next four years is STUDENT-athlete. Study! Putting yourself in a hole first semester is incredibly hard to climb out of. Rather than play catch up, give yourself some wiggle room.
Make a positive impression on the academic staff, not all are supportive of athletics!

2. Get organized.

Give yourself time to move in and get things set up like you want them. Take a dry run and walk across campus to find your classrooms before the first day of class. Make sure you have all your books and supplies that are required.

3. Roommate bliss requires some compromise by BOTH of you.

No matter how much you believe you and your roomie are going to stand up in each other's wedding, this usually doesn't happen. You will have your differences and probably vocalize them loudly at some point. You will have to work together to communicate effectively with one another. I think being mindful and respectful of each other's needs and difference's is paramount. Also, don't be afraid to plan in some alone time, for each of you, in the room. If you are teammates with your roommate, you will likely spend 2/3 of your day together! Many roommates make contracts for certain key things ie quiet hours, visiting hours, etc. Be a respectful roommate and don't harbor feelings. Express them tactfully before letting them fester.

4. Communicate.

No one can read your mind so you have to verbalize your thoughts/ needs. Unlike your mom, dad, siblings, coach and teammates that you've grown up with, these NEW teammates, coaches and roomies are just learning who you are and what makes you tick (or explode!).

You have to engage in the communication process by expressing yourself. Be prepared for these relationships, especially with your coach, to be different than the ones you had with your club coach and teammates…different is just different..not necessarily bad.

5. Make good choices.

Know who you are and be confident in it. You may have the opportunity to make choices you might not even have been faced with before: drinking, drugs, sex, skipping class…remember who you are and don't feel pressured to do anything you don't want. There is a good chance some of your other freshman teammates are worrying about making those same choices! Be smart and safe. A good measuring stick is…"Would my mom and dad be proud of me right now?" Good choices also apply to RECOVERY! Recovery includes sleep and fueling. Eat nutritiously – if you have the opportunity to meet with a nutritionist DO IT! Start learning about how to fuel your body best. Your body needs sleep to recover so close your Facebook page, twitter account and even the books at a reasonable hour and get some straight sleep.

6. Set and maintain good habits.

Schedule yourself for study time, practice time, fun time, sleep time and even the times spent at meals as one can tend to linger for a long time in the cafeteria…try to get in a good routine and then stick to it as best as possible. If it is written down, it is more likely to happen. Don't procrastinate.

7. Ask for advice.

If you are confused, lost, worried, overwhelmed…ask for help! There are so many people on a college campus that can help you navigate… you really aren't ever alone and can start with your captains, mentors, RAs, coaches. But learn to problem solve yourself too.

8. Take pride in problem solving.

Things are going to go wrong. For example, you will most likely get sick at some point. Try to take a deep breath and figure out how to best solve it. It is perfectly fine to confide in someone and ask for advice but YOU need to learn/practice solving your own problems. Avoid calling your parents to get you out of a bind – try to solve it first and then fill them in. No coach or professor wants to hear from your parents about a problem you are having and how they should fix it…they much more receptive to hearing from you though. That is a start to relationship building.

9. Don't be afraid to be the hardest worker.

Each year is a new year and you have the ability to re-invent yourself or step things up to a new level both academically and athletically.

Some freshmen are afraid to be the best in workout and may hold back as they were afraid of what the older kids would think. Don't worry about that – they will learn to respect your work ethic, value your abilities (and points you score) and may even be motivated by your attitude.

10. Ditch the t-shirts from other schools.

You now are a part of a new family…own it! Represent your "family" with pride, loyalty and enthusiasm!