

4 TIPS FOR BECOMING AN ADULT BEFORE GOING BACK TO SCHOOL



In a previous U.S. Census Bureau report, it showed that around 3 million students over the age of 35 were enrolled in college courses back in 2009. If you are hoping to return back to school as an adult, then get ready to join a large and growing trend, but also be sure that you are armed with a few key skills to help you succeed. Here are 4 tips to help you transform into an adult before schools starts back. Tip 1: Create a support network For Karen Southall Watts, who is a mother of two, and who had to make the tough decision to go back to school to earn a master's degree in management while having to deal with the separation from her partner, self-motivation and a good support network were the keys to her success. "I recommend adult students build their support network and then jump in with as much confidence as they can muster," she says. Some of the school, like California State University Fullerton, offers cohort programs where the students progress through the program together-- automatically building in a support network. If the school of your dreams does not offer such a program, one thing that adult learners can do is look for other students who share the same class schedule or have similar interests, and suggest that they meet up to study together. Tip 2: Make education a family affair In Karen's experience, including her family as an active part of her education made it easier for her to balance everything out. She made sure to also include her kids in her learning process, and made sure to tell them her available hours were going to shift while taking courses from home. If you have younger kids, then set a study time where the whole family gets together and studies for a few hours everyday. Tip 3: Conquer your high-tech fears "Most returning/adult students are concerned about the things like any rusty skills and lack of technological savvy." says Karen. "Both of these are manageable, but sometimes the anxiety of getting started can be overwhelming." Support systems in some of the school will stay on the phone with the students when they speak with tech support representatives, making sure all of the tech issues are understood and solved Tip 4: Get real about a budget Adult student Laura Mokeike left the school for the first time in 2003 for health reasons. She returned shortly because she needed to support herself and pay for her medical bills. While Karen used student loans to cover the cost of her education , Laura chose to balance school with a full-time job. "As an adult, you have larger financial responsibilities," she said. "The standard of living is increased, as are the pressures of a real job during the day." Budgeting for education is very serious business. Online budget programs like Mint.com, can help you to visualize where your spending habits can be found. Creating a strong budget does not mean that you have to cut out of all of the fun in your life, but it might mean a few less gadgets or vacations each year.