

10 tips to prepare for a night out

If you are planning on a night out (or even attending an event during the day) here are some simple tips may help you and your friends have a safer and an enjoyable time:

1. Find out as much as you can about where you're going
2. Make sure you have the address of where you're going stored on your phone or on a piece of paper in your pocket
3. Plan how you're getting where you're going and how you're getting home
4. Keep the money you need to get home separate, so that you don't spend it
5. Have your ICE (In Case of Emergency) number stored on your phone
6. Choose a 'buddy' for the night and make sure that they know where you are at all times
7. Ensure that your 'buddy' knows your expectations of what to do if there's an emergency
8. Make sure you've eaten something and be well hydrated
9. Avoid taking valuables with you
10. Ensure your mobile phone is charged and is in credit

It is important to remember that if you intend to drink alcohol or take other drugs, there are additional risks to consider.

People affected by alcohol or other drugs can be dangerous, whether you know them or not. If you are trying to assist a drunk or a drug-affected friend, always remember your first priority must always be your personal safety. If in doubt, call 000.

ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU ARE A FRIEND, NOT A DOCTOR

If you are planning to go for a night out with friends, whether it is to a party or gathering or a music or dance event, there are a number of things you can do to make sure that you and your friends keep as safe as possible. If you are planning to drink alcohol or take other drugs, or attend a music festival overnight, there are additional risks to consider.

1. Find out as much as you can about where you're going

If you're going to a party or gathering, or even to your best friend's house for a sleepover, it is important to get as much information as you can about what will be happening. If it is a party, find out how many people are going. Do you know many of the people invited and where it is being held? If it's a music or dance event, is it an all ages event, will there be police and drug detection dogs present and have the promoters outlined any special rules or regulations? Just turning up without getting this information can be risky as you may not be fully prepared and find yourself at an event where you really don't feel comfortable and safe.

2. Make sure you have the address of where you're going stored on your phone or on a piece of paper in your pocket

If something goes wrong and you need to call for help, whether it be for you, a friend or even a stranger, it is extremely important that you know exactly where you are when you make that call. Too often people have no idea of their actual location when they call 000 and they waste time trying to find out the details. Having the address in your phone or on a piece of paper could be the difference between life and death.

3. Plan how you're getting where you're going and how you're getting home

Once you know where you're going, plan exactly how you and your friends are going to get there. Do this well ahead of time to ensure that the details are locked in. This will reduce the risk of something going wrong and potentially missing out on a fun time. Unfortunately, some young people do not put a great deal of effort into working out how to get

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home, preferring to 'see what happens on the night'. If you want to stay as safe as possible, however, it is best to make sure you know when you are planning to leave the event and how you're going to get home.

Sometimes even the best plans don't work out and you may need to find an alternative way of getting home. Calling a parent or another responsible adult is always the best option but if that isn't going to work for you, call a taxi or use an Uber if you have an account. Know the locations of the official taxi ranks and keep the telephone numbers of two or three licensed taxi companies stored in your phone.

You are going to need cash for a taxi. Just to be sure you have enough money, you can always call a taxi company and find out approximately how much the trip would cost, but make sure you tell them that it is a night trip as they are always a little more expensive.

4. Keep the money you need to get home separate, so that you don't spend it

Even if you have an Uber account or you think you would never have to use a cab, it's better to be safe than sorry. It is always wise to make sure that you put some money away, just in case of an emergency. Keep this money in a separate place, away from the rest of your cash, to ensure you don't spend it. This can also be useful if you lose your wallet or purse during the night.

5. Have your ICE (In Case of Emergency) number stored on your phone

Enter the acronym ICE into your phone's address book and list the name and number of the person you want to be contacted in an emergency. It doesn't really matter who it is but it would be wise to let them know that they are your ICE contact. It is also recommended that you store your blood type and other relevant information under your ICE entry if your phone allows notes in the contacts section. Unfortunately, many people lock their phones and so it isn't always easy to access this number – that is why it is also important to give your ICE contact to your 'buddy'.

6. Choose a 'buddy' for the night and make sure that they know where you are at all times

A 'buddy' is someone that you know you can trust to be there for you for the whole evening. You don't necessarily have to be with them the whole time but you need to ensure that, whatever you do and wherever you go, they know about it, particularly if you change any of your plans, e.g., you meet someone special or you get invited to another party.

Regardless of what happens, it is important to remember that you should never leave a party or any event alone.

7. Ensure that your 'buddy' knows your expectations of what to do if there's an emergency

You and your buddy need to discuss what would happen if something was to go wrong – both of you need to have total clarity about what you expect the other to do in case of an emergency. Sometimes friends don't contact parents or friends when something goes wrong for fear of getting them into trouble. You need to make clear to your buddy that if your life is at risk, you want them to call whoever it takes and you're not worried about getting into trouble!

8. Make sure you've eaten something and be well hydrated

Even if you're not drinking alcohol, it is important to never go out without eating something. A 'fistful of food' (the size of your fist, which is roughly the size of your empty stomach) is the perfect amount of food to have and won't make you feel bloated or uncomfortable. This will provide you with some important energy for the night ahead, particularly if you have some carbs like a small bowl of pasta or a sandwich.

Once again, even if you're not planning to drink alcohol during the night ahead, it is a good idea to make sure you are well hydrated, particularly if you are attending a music or dance event. Having a glass of water just before you go out and at regular intervals throughout the evening is a smart move.

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9. Avoid taking valuables with you

Even though you may want to look your best, it is important to remember that, depending on where you are going, wearing expensive jewellery or the latest pair of sneakers can attract unwanted attention. Of course, if you're only with your friends and you have a safe way of getting to and from where you're going, then that shouldn't be an issue. If that isn't the case, be smart and minimise the risk. Even when it comes to mobile phones, if you have an older model that you have in your drawer, take that one to a party, rather than the latest one you just bought.

10. Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged and is in credit

Keeping in touch with friends, taking photos and videos and sharing your experiences via social media can make the night out more enjoyable. It can also mean that your phone runs out of power just when you need to call a taxi or Uber, or even make an emergency call.

Keep an eye on the battery level through the night, particularly if you are regularly using your phone. Following some simple steps can also extend your battery life. These include shutting down location services; turning off push notifications; closing apps you have open; and swiping the button in settings to stop them from running in the background.