

The Summer after Graduation: 7 Must-Do Activities

Along with backyard barbeques, pool parties, and outdoor festivals, the transition from spring to summer also marks the season for graduations. Whether you're celebrating the culmination of your high-school years or winding down your college career, receiving that long-awaited diploma marks not just the end of an educational vocation, but the beginning of a whole new chapter of your life.

Each spring, graduating students are immersed in preparations for the big milestone: ordering their caps and gowns, cramming for final exams, and bidding farewell to favorite teachers and fellow classmates. But after the tassels have been turned and the textbooks have been stored away, the summer after commencement can loom long and uncertain. After so many months of bustling activity, too much downtime can be disconcerting. Below, we've compiled some suggestions for fun and productive things you can do during the summer months after graduation.

#1: Throw a party. It may go without saying, but your years of hard work have earned you the right to celebrate. Even if it's just a relaxed, intimate barbeque with close family and friends, your accomplishment deserves to be recognized. For added festivity, consider commemorating the event by throwing a combined graduation party along with some of your fellow classmates. Dress up your venue with graduation party decorations in your school colors and old pictures from grade-school and junior-high. For a refreshing twist, consider a themed party, such as a disco or '80s party, where everyone is encouraged to dress in a certain style of clothing. Don't forget the music!

#2: Create a scrapbook. For a lasting memento of your high-school or college years, flex your creative muscles and create a graduation scrapbook of photos, cards, important papers, and other keepsakes that mark milestones of your educational career. Include papers or report cards of which you're particularly proud, notes from favorite teachers, tickets to school sporting events or performances and, of course, your hard-earned diploma. Accent the pages with graduation cutouts and party favors.

#3: Decorate your dorm. If this summer marks a transition from high-school to college, focus on creating your new home away from home. If you'll be living in a college dorm or campus apartment, you should start making

lists of what you need, what you already have, and things that need to be done to prepare your new space. If you'll be dorming with one or more roommates, keep the lines of communication open to ensure you're all on the same page as far as decorating themes and sleeping arrangements. Browse home décor websites to get a feel for the styles you prefer. Be sure to check your school's guidelines for what types of appliances and furnishings are permitted in your dorm room.

#4: Work. If you're graduating from college and have already secured your first "real job," you may be transitioning immediately into the corporate world. After four or more years in a comfortable college environment, being thrust into a more rigid, structured setting can be a culture shock for many new professionals. To help ease the transition, consider seeking out a mentor at your new place of employment who can help get you acclimated. For more support, stay in touch with former classmates who are also forging their place in the working world.

#5: Travel. Take advantage of your break to visit places you've always wanted to see. Select a locale that matches your objective. If your goal is relaxation, you may want to book a trip to the beach for a week of sunbathing. For a dose of culture or to supplement your chosen area of study, you might prefer to travel abroad to a more exotic location. To use your time to help those in need, consider joining an international volunteer program. Whatever destination you choose, the summer after graduation affords a unique opportunity for an enlightening excursion.

#6: Intern. Enterprising graduates often use the summer after commencement as an opportunity to secure an internship to help them prepare for their chosen area of study or as a transition into their selected vocation. Many internships are either unpaid or offer very modest salaries, but their resume-building capabilities are priceless.

#7: Relax. Above all, the summer after graduation should be a time to celebrate your achievements, enjoy summer parties with family and friends, and take a much-deserved respite from all of your hard work.