



Alison Monahan: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about ways to minimize the hassle of moving and handling other life logistics as you get ready to start law school. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, that's me, and Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and the early legal career experience so that you will be the best law student and lawyer you can be.

Together we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy this show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about ways to minimize the hassle of moving and handling other life logistics as you get ready to start law school. So this can be a big one for people because a lot of people relocate to go to law school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean this one, it depends. Some people, it's going to be simple. You just stay in the same city, you stay in the same house. You're good to go. For a lot of people though... I definitely moved across the country. You may be handling end of work situations, that kind of thing. So there is definitely a lot to think about. And once school starts and orientation even starts, you're not going to have a lot of time. So I think the more of these things that you can handle sooner, the better you're going to be. I think you have to be realistic about your timeframe here. I also just executed a move from a different country, and I can tell you things take longer than you think. And the one thing I've been surprised about, I have to say, is it actually can be harder to unpack and settle in, than to pack.

Lee Burgess: I think that's totally true.

Alison Monahan: Everybody focuses on packing and moving. What are you going to do? All of which are important. But then you don't give yourself enough time on the other end to get settled. And I think that's where a lot of people's first semester problems can start.

Lee Burgess: And there are all these little expenses for re-setting up a home.

Alison Monahan: So expensive.

Lee Burgess: Like just what's in your kitchen. It's very expensive to restock a kitchen.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think that's one of the questions you have to ask yourself up front is, what are you going to move with you and how much is it going to cost you to



move these things, and how are you going to move them? Because once you start shipping your Instapot FedEx across the country, that's going to be pretty pricey, but it's also going to be pricey to get rid of it and buy a new one. So you've really got to kind of think through some options here. So I think the first thing – the major, major piece, which if it is not set up properly is going to cause you problems, which I can say from my first graduate school experience, is housing. There I had a very unrealistic idea of how long it would take to find housing in Berkeley. And I showed up for the weekend thinking, "Oh, I'll just find an apartment. No problem."

Lee Burgess: Not so much.

Alison Monahan: No, not so much. And the school didn't really provide options. And so I ended up living the first semester in a co-op – in fact, one of the largest co-ops on campus. Which, if you don't know what a co-op is, basically the students run the asylum. And it was horrible. I had a terrible room, I had a terrible roommate, and it was just a situation that was not conducive to me doing well in school, because it was just such a horrible living situation. So I think you've got to figure out your housing.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I did have a friend sleep on my floor in my living room for like a month.

Alison Monahan: I ended up doing that by the end of the semester. I literally moved into a friend's couch.

Lee Burgess: I had a tiny apartment, and he was a very tall person. It was a lot of person to have in my tiny apartment.

Alison Monahan: One of my roommates, my second year of law school, because our third roommate had transferred and they finally realized that and wanted to move someone else in. But she showed up a few weeks into the year with a suitcase, totally unannounced. Just knocked on the door and it was like, "Hi, I'm living here." And I'm like, "Where's your stuff?" And she says, "Well, I've been couch surfing for the last three weeks because I don't have a place to live. And finally they found me a place." I'm like, "What? How has this been working?" She's like, "Not very well." She was literally living out of a tiny suitcase. So that is not a great option if you can avoid it.

Lee Burgess: No. So, when you are trying to make a decision about housing, probably the first step is, especially if you're relocating, does your school provide any sort of housing?

Alison Monahan: Yeah. What options, if any, does your school provide? And if you're still deciding even which school to attend, this can be a deciding factor.



- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: For me housing was one of the reasons that I went to Columbia over NYU, because Columbia is the second largest landlord in New York City.
- Lee Burgess: I didn't know that actually.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, after Catholic charities apparently. They've bought up literally every apartment around the school, and so they provide fairly... They're not cheap, but fairly decent for New York City housing options. Whereas NYU, you were living in a dorm and it was just like, "I'm a grownup. I can't do this."
- Lee Burgess: I just could not live in a dorm.
- Alison Monahan: No, you can't. And then you're in that area of the city and it's very expensive to find other options. So, for me that was a deciding factor.
- Lee Burgess: That's interesting. Sometimes schools may also have postings or ways that they can help facilitate people finding housing. But I think that's, again, something you have to research.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, if your school doesn't have housing options, you're going to need to do a deep dive into what the other options are, and where do you find these options? And it's going to vary by city. If you're in New York and you're looking for an apartment, you might need a broker. That doesn't exist in San Francisco really. I moved from New York to San Francisco. I was like, "What do you mean you don't have a broker I can just pay to find me an apartment?" People are like, "Yeah, that's not really how this works."
- Lee Burgess: It's called Craigslist.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. That's going to take time, and if you're not there that's going to be a problem. If you're relocating and you don't have school options, I think you're going to have to plan some sort of trip. And it's going to need to be more than a few days, based on my experience.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think for a lot of students that are starting in law school, like you mentioned you didn't want to live in a dorm because you were a grown up. I think sometimes you may have been living on your own and then you all of a sudden need to live with roommates.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I was willing to do roommates. I just wasn't willing to do in the same room roommates.
- Lee Burgess: You were like, "I need a door."



Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think realistically financially a lot of people are going to have roommates. Obviously it depends where you're in school, but if you're in school in a major city, I think a lot of people are going to. You lived alone though.

Lee Burgess: I did, but I had already been in the Bay Area, and I had kind of set myself up. I had been living with roommates. I moved from a house with three guys into this place by myself, and I moved there while I was still working. I decided I was going to stay in San Francisco for school. So I was in a unique situation. I wasn't relocating and I kind of needed that sanity. Now, my apartment was not very big.

Alison Monahan: Right. There are going to be tradeoffs here for sure. The one person I knew who had student housing that did not have a roommate – his apartment was literally big enough for a bed and a tiny kitchen and a bath. It was the smallest space I've ever seen anyone live in. But he didn't have roommates.

Lee Burgess: I loved my tiny apartment, but it was tiny. What did I do there? I sat on the couch, I made some food, I showered, and I slept. It wasn't like I did a whole bunch of stuff in that apartment.

Alison Monahan: I had two roommates and so we actually ended up with a pretty big apartment. So we actually did a lot there. We studied, we had a separate dining room where we could work and eat. We had friends over, we had parties. We were kind of like a social hub because we had a really large apartment.

Lee Burgess: But that's something to think about. If you like living as the social hub, maybe it's worth it to get roommates, so you can get a bigger place, so you can have people over.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think you just need to figure this out as soon as possible.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think the other thing to look at is the commute.

Alison Monahan: Yes, definitely. You might think, "Oh, I'll save so much money by living in a different neighborhood" or whatever, but you've really got to think seriously about what that's going to do to your life. Is that going to make it so that you need a car? Are you going to spend time every single day commuting? Is it going to limit your social opportunities? There's no right or wrong answer here. These are just things you need to consider.

Lee Burgess: I think one of the things that was kind of a surprise to me in law school was, I lived, not as the crow flies very far from school. But I couldn't take one bus. I'd have to take two buses, which is fine. But it was near Golden Gate Park. I'm like, "I'll walk. It's gorgeous." I didn't think about what books weigh. And this was a few years ago, our laptops weighed more. I had a big laptop; you have multiple



case books usually. I was trying to bring my lunch, and I literally couldn't carry everything. And now I think now with e-readers and even, we have a podcast on the [connected casebook](#), where you can have your casebook on your computer. Maybe that's not as big of a consideration, but I think that you do want to think about what you're schlepping to school.

Alison Monahan: One of the things I liked about... I literally lived one block from law school in student housing and I hated carrying around huge sacks of casebooks and for whatever reason I refused to use a locker. So I would literally run back and forth between the law school building and my apartment to get my books between classes. And it was close enough I could do that. And that was a huge benefit, particularly on days when it was snowing.

Lee Burgess: Right. Yeah, that's true. It was really a wonderful thing when I got an office as an editor of The Law Review, because then I had a place to put all that stuff. It was great. Loved it.

Alison Monahan: I think you might not ever think about these logistics, but I think generally speaking, if you have to make choices, it might be worth paying a little bit more to have a more convenient location.

Lee Burgess: Or you might be spending that money on Ubers or sometimes that money, it's a wash.

Alison Monahan: Or if it forces you to have a car or something like that. Because I think the transit or car, this is another huge issue that can really just destroy your life basically. Even little things like, are you going to need a parking permit? And do you need a city parking permit, do you need a school parking permit? How are you going to get these? What information do they need? San Francisco, for example, is extremely strict on city parking permits, and you basically have to have your car proof of registration at an address. And so you think, "Okay, now that means I need to register my car at this address. Okay, how am I going to do that? Am I going to have to go to the DMV? What do I need?" I don't even think you can register certain cars in California. If you can, you're going to need to get a smog check, all these things. Suddenly, that's days of your life basically.

Lee Burgess: But a little pro tip – you can use AAA to change your address on your registration. You can go to a AAA office.

Alison Monahan: But I'm not sure you could register an out of state car there.

Lee Burgess: I would look it up. Maybe, maybe not.

Alison Monahan: Maybe you can.



- Lee Burgess: Yes, you can. Yes, I think you can. Our sound engineer is saying yes. Yes, you can. I used to work for corporate AAA and I was amazed of what I could get done at the AAA office. But anyway.
- Alison Monahan: It is actually good. You can get a lot done.
- Lee Burgess: You can get a lot done.
- Alison Monahan: Probably if you needed, for example, a driver's license.
- Lee Burgess: I don't think they can do a driver's license or any of this REAL ID nonsense that we have in California right now.
- Alison Monahan: Well, everywhere. It's nationwide. I think it's worse in California.
- Lee Burgess: Do you know how I learned about the REAL ID? I was sitting in the DMV for three hours while super pregnant, trying to fix the registration on my car. It was awful.
- Alison Monahan: So, point being if you need to deal with your driver's license situation, if you need to deal with a car situation, these are things that you've got to allow time for. And if you know you're going to need to deal with them, you might need to try to make an appointment. Because I knew California schedules three or four months out for DMV appointments.
- Lee Burgess: And it's very tedious. For instance, if you don't have a copy of your social security card, which many people do not...
- Alison Monahan: Which I do not.
- Lee Burgess: Well, I now know how you can get one. So, offline I can tell you how to get a new one because I had to get a new one. Then you have to have all this other paperwork. And we don't have a typical job, so it's not like we have typical W-2s and stuff like that. So they just rejected me. I was like nine months pregnant and they were like, "Sorry, go home." And I was like, "Please make this happen before the baby comes." And even though I had all this other documentation, it didn't check the boxes, so go home. So I still don't have my REAL ID.
- Alison Monahan: Some states require that you register your car in a certain amount of time. I think I got fined once because I didn't register mine in time. These are the things that you can't really ignore.
- Lee Burgess: That is shocking to me, by the way.



- Alison Monahan: You cannot necessarily just ignore things like this if you're going to have a car, if you're going to have a driver's license, that kind of thing. Also, if you're switching your driver's license, you'll learn about this in Civ Pro for jurisdiction basically. But you want to be careful about where you're making yourself be resident for tax purposes and things like that. So, these are all things to think about. Even something as simple as FasTrak – if you're going to have to cross a bridge or use a paid lane, you want to get that set up. And the same thing with transit passes. If you're going to be taking the subway or a bus, you need to figure out how to pay for that.
- Lee Burgess: Do you buy a monthly pass, or how do you do that?
- Alison Monahan: Right. Does it auto renew so that you don't have to deal with this over and over again? One good feature if you register a lot of these cards is that if you lose them, they will actually give you the money back.
- Lee Burgess: That's kind of nifty.
- Alison Monahan: I had three cards registered online. I only had one of them in my physical possession, and so they were like, "Oh, no problem. We'll just charge you \$5 to transfer the balance to the new one." So stuff like that, just go ahead and set it up.
- Lee Burgess: I think the one nice thing that a lot of cities are starting to have now that people can look at is bike share memberships or the... I don't know, what would you call the city bikes, I guess?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, like shared bike. You can even use those stupid scooters if you want. Wear a helmet.
- Lee Burgess: Those scooters freak me out. I just cannot do it.
- Alison Monahan: But if you're thinking about your commute options and you're thinking, "Well, this car sounds kind of a hassle, it's super expensive. Maybe I'll just get a bike" – that's great, get your bike now. Or think about, is the bike sharing going to make more sense? But again, you've got some safety issues there, let's be honest. You probably should be wearing a helmet and most people don't.
- Lee Burgess: I just saw that they now make foldable bike helmets.
- Alison Monahan: Really?
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I saw this on my Lawyer Mama Facebook group, which is a fountain of knowledge. But somebody was trying to find the best laptop bag that would fit



her foldable bike helmet. And I'm like, that's magic, because I think that's why a lot of people don't wear a helmet.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's a hassle to carry around. So if you are going to be biking, maybe a bike share, then go ahead and get yourself a foldable helmet.

Lee Burgess: I'm sure it's on Amazon.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. So all of these things, you just have to kind of think through your own logistics. And as we said, a lot of it comes down to housing. Where you live determines how you're going to get to school. Those two things in conjunction, I feel like those are the logistics that can really, really mess up people's first semester if you get it wrong.

Lee Burgess: One thing that we didn't talk about in here that I think is also worth discussing is safety. If you don't know a city, then you probably want to visit, talk to some people, find some people who know something about the city and make sure that where you're moving is safe for however safe you want to be. San Francisco as an example, and I think New York is like this as well – cities can change block to block.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and some of the law schools are not really in the best area. That's the reality.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So oftentimes they're like, "Oh, I got into UC Hastings. I should go live right next to campus." Well, you should go visit that part of the city and see...

Alison Monahan: Preferably at night.

Lee Burgess: What that part of the campus is like.

Alison Monahan: I know they do have dorms.

Lee Burgess: They do. But you need to understand the realities of urban living, especially maybe you didn't go to college in an urban setting if you're going to law school in an urban setting. But I think safety is something that you should look into because if you don't feel safe, that's just an added stressor that maybe you don't want to take on in your law school experience.

Alison Monahan: Absolutely. And the same with roommates. You want to make sure you've met these people, you've vetted these people. You're not just moving in with someone. I've had some terrible roommate situations where I was kind of in that desperate situation. I just need a place to live. And then you make bad choices and you end up having to take them to small claims court to get your deposit back and things like that. So, whatever you can do to kind of vet those



people, do that. Also think about whether you want law school roommates, not law school roommates. There are pros and cons. Maybe a different graduate program might be a little less stressful. But whatever it is, I agree, you've got to think about being safe and at least feeling safe too.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, being comfortable. I was just watching the new Amy Schumer Netflix special, and she has a really funny bit. I guess the thing women worry the most about is being some sort of victim of violence, and men worry the most about ridicule. So she had a really funny bit about how women think about safety. So maybe think about the safety. It's a good special, if you haven't checked it out.

Alison Monahan: And I think even thinking about, do you need a building with a doorman to feel secure? That kind of thing. That's going to cost you, but maybe it's worth it.

Lee Burgess: Alright. So, since you are a master mover at this point, why don't you share some wisdom about how to actually execute the move?

Alison Monahan: Well, I think you definitely want to start planning early. And I think the key question here is, what can you get rid of?

Lee Burgess: [Marie Kondo](#), what gives you joy?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Marie Kondo this – there's Netflix on it, there are books on it. Don't buy the book, read it online, because you'll just have to get rid of it.

Lee Burgess: Because then if it's not going to bring you joy, you have to get rid of it.

Alison Monahan: She will tell you to get rid of it. I'm definitely a person who at various points has moved, say, boxes of papers across the country, and back across the country. Just don't do that. I think that that happens often times when you don't give yourself enough time, because you get in a situation where you're just like, "Oh my gosh, I just have to get this out the door." And then you end up paying \$100 to ship this huge box of papers that turn out to be complete junk when you finally open them a year later.

Lee Burgess: I just moved a heavy box back into my garage, and I don't even know what's in it. It's taped shut. I was just like, "I can't open it." I just moved it. It had made itself into the house. I was just like, "You have to leave the house."

Alison Monahan: So I think when you are trying to figure out on a student budget, "How do I move myself and the things I really need?" – just get rid of things that you don't truly, really need. As we talked about before, you may have to make a cost-benefit analysis of, does it make sense to pay to ship this thing across the country? And maybe there are ways you can do it on the plane, although I just paid \$600 for excess baggage fees leaving my last place, because that was



basically how I moved. And in the end I sat down and calculated that was actually the cheapest way to do it, but it was not cheap.

Lee Burgess: Exactly. You don't want a surprise \$600 credit card charge.

Alison Monahan: I actually didn't know it was going to be quite that much, but you when you're at the airport with your three oversized bags and they're saying, "Okay, it's \$600", you're like, "Great, here's my credit card."

Lee Burgess: What are you going to do? Leave it in Mexico? So, you definitely want to do those do those analyses of how you're going to carry things on. And maybe you're traveling with someone and they can help you bring stuff.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and this is one of those where it maybe actually makes sense to buy the more expensive ticket because you get a bigger baggage allowance. You can bring 70 pounds instead of 50 pounds before you pay the overweight fees. You've got to get strategic here. And maybe there are ways that you can do some clothing staging and things like that. You've got to think about what you're going to need in this new climate, but maybe you don't need it all now. So maybe you ship that slow boat, basically, to your family's house or something, and then they bring it to you later. There are ways to get creative about this.

Lee Burgess: I remember moving even away to college and I took summer clothes, and then when I went home for Thanksgiving I brought winter clothes.

Alison Monahan: My first winter in New York I had to buy all new clothes in January when I arrived and it didn't get above freezing for three weeks. Unfortunately they had their spring collections out, most places.

Lee Burgess: That's the problem if you wait.

Alison Monahan: So, you've really got to plan ahead on this one. But if you are going to be moving to a winter climate, maybe you can get some off-season sales now or something like that.

Lee Burgess: Thankfully Amazon will send you... That's what happened to me last time I was in New York. It started to snow in April, and I had Amazon prime me some snow boots, because nobody had snow boots. There were no snow boots.

Alison Monahan: Even in January, almost no one did. I remember I finally found one pair of Vans. I had to walk around in these Vans snow boots because they were literally the only ones I could find. I think that was before Amazon delivered everything. So you've just got to think about this. And also, how are you going to pay for this? It's going to be expensive. So you might just have to Marie Kondo some stuff and let it go.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, let it go. You were talking about how it takes a while to settle in and unpack and things like that. I think maybe you even want to think about who might come with you and help you through that process, so you don't have to do it all alone.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. There's a great story in [Michelle Obama's book](#) about her going to Princeton with her father and her boyfriend and how awkward it was with the boyfriend.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that was pretty funny.
- Alison Monahan: But it was sweet. She had support. I do think ideally you probably want to have some sort of support if you can, although maybe there are situations where you're better off doing it on your own. You have to know yourself too. If it's going to be like fundamentally depressing to you to try to unpack on your own, then bring someone. If you're like, "I don't want other people bothering me while I do this", then go by yourself.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's a good point. So what about people who are working when you went to law school? That's what I did. I went from a job to law school. Were you working right before law school?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I was a programmer.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's right.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. In fact, they tried to fire me when I quit.
- Lee Burgess: That's right, I forgot about that story.
- Alison Monahan: It's a funny story.
- Lee Burgess: It's a great story.
- Alison Monahan: So my job did not take the fact that I was leaving very well. It's a long story. Did the company you were working for, were they aware that you were applying to law school?
- Lee Burgess: To circle back, I was at AAA. That's what I was doing. But I did corporate strategic. Basically they had an in-house corporate strategic strategy team. So I had the most un-AAA AAA job, because I had been a consultant before that. But they knew I was studying for the LSAT. It was very clear that I was not there for the long term, and I think my boss was pretty understanding about it. He didn't necessarily know that I was taking the LSAT to go to school immediately. But it was a project-based job, so I did want to tell them so they didn't count on me



for different projects. So they knew I was leaving to go to school. I gave them a few months' notice once I decided I was going to go to school. But then I also kind of talked to them about what was the best way to leave. So instead of for instance traveling... I wanted to take a trip before school, so instead of taking a trip right before school, I took the trip in June and worked until early August or something like that, because they wanted me to deliver a project. So I was pretty lucky that I had some understanding bosses who weren't particularly mad. Not all jobs are like that. You've got to read the room.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. So if you think there's any possibility that your job might try to fire you or something if you give notice, I would give as little notice as possible – a couple of weeks max. If you have an understanding, a supportive environment and you think they would be supportive of this and reasonable people, then sure – it's better for everyone if you can tell them earlier and kind of stage your departure. But you definitely don't want to end up with a situation where you think that everyone's going to be cool, and then you suddenly get fired three months early.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, we've got to be thoughtful about it, but I think most people can tell whether it's going to go well or go poorly.

Alison Monahan: And it also depends on the type of job. If you have a very high powered job with a lot of responsibility, you're probably going to need to manage that process a little more than if you're just working as a barista and someone else can be hired in a few weeks.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's true. Now, what about computers? I think a lot of people feel like they have to go out and buy a brand new computer. I think we have other [podcasts](#) on what to shop for, what to buy.

Alison Monahan: I think this is one of these, again, where it kind of depends on your personal situation. But if you have a perfectly functioning laptop, you probably don't need to rush out and buy one just for the sake of doing it. And there can be benefits to waiting.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, like the bar exam, which will also be taken on that laptop. It's not necessarily great to have an older laptop by then. So maybe you want to invest in one, but not immediately in law school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think if you have one that's basically functional and it's fine, maybe there's a newer version and it's a little lighter, you want it but you don't need it – this might be a place where you can save a few thousand dollars and get that laptop two years from now, one year from now, when it's actually going to be cheaper to buy the same machine or you can get a better quality. And as you



said, when you go to take the bar, you're not going to be dealing with a four-year-old machine.

Lee Burgess: Right. What about cell phones?

Alison Monahan: Another nightmare.

Lee Burgess: I feel like this was like a cathartic list for you to write.

Alison Monahan: I was like, "I will definitely do this list." Well, when I moved to New York City, it wasn't that long after the 9-11 attacks. It was a few years, but they had not replaced all of the cell phone towers. And so, Columbia was in a known cell phone dead zone.

Lee Burgess: Oh, weird.

Alison Monahan: Totally weird. And literally my provider did not have coverage. So I had to switch providers, which you can imagine, it was actually much more of a hassle then, but it's a total nightmare. Even last week I was up in Tahoe and my cell phone doesn't work in Tahoe because I switched to a different company. If I want to ski, I'm going to have to switch back, because it's kind of unsafe to be skiing with no cell phone coverage. So you think now, "Oh, cell phones. Those are everywhere." But they're actually not. And if you are at a point where you think you might switch companies, you want to basically test out the service where you're going to be.

Lee Burgess: And maybe even you're like, "Well, whatever about my cell phone." But especially if you're in a new city, how are you going to get from point A to point B if you don't have Google Maps?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you need to be able to navigate, you need to be able to communicate. We're not saying you have a talk on the phone. I mean, come on.

Lee Burgess: I only get robocalls to my phone basically.

Alison Monahan: But all the other features of your cell phone.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And aren't you currently fighting with your Internet provider as well?

Alison Monahan: Oh yeah, I am actually. Yeah, just a long list of things to deal with when you move back some place and they suddenly triple your rates. Yeah, so Internet – again, if you're in student housing, probably they will just provide it for you. But if not, you're going to have to get this set up and you need to know how long is it going to take, what's required, are they going to run a credit check, what if you don't have any credit, what if you're an international student? All these



kinds of things just to make sure you have basic Internet. None of this happens quickly, so if you think you're going to show up two days before class and kind of settle in in two days, that is probably unlikely to happen.

Lee Burgess: Sometimes they can take some time to get people out to your house.

Alison Monahan: Oh, I'd say minimum a few days if you're lucky, and it could take way longer.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think you also want to figure out what sort of exercise, take care of your body type thing that you like to do. If you're a jogger, you probably want to be somewhere near a place where you can jog.

Alison Monahan: And these may sound trivial, but I think for wellbeing, stuff like this is actually really critical.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, do you want to join a gym? Do you want a yoga studio? Do you do CrossFit? Do you do other sorts of classes? Do you do boxing, and where can you find that in your new city? And then also, how can you shop around? Some of these places will have student rates or introductory rates. Maybe you can prepay and it'll be a lot cheaper. There are a lot of different things you can do, but again, it's going to take some time to find.

Alison Monahan: And the school may have it as well.

Lee Burgess: That's true.

Alison Monahan: They may have cheap classes, they may have a pool, they may have whatever it is. Basically look first to the resources you're already paying for, and then figure out what, if anything, you want to supplement. But I think having something to go to is definitely going to be good for your mental health, maybe a way to meet people, and this is worth asking around what's good, doing some research, going on Yelp, whatever, trying some places. As you said, most of them have a free day or a free week. In fact, at one point I think there was a Columbia law student who was blogging her way through all the free gym memberships in New York.

Lee Burgess: That's really amazing.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so totally possible if you're willing to really commit to it.

Lee Burgess: Now they have something called [ClassPass](#), where you can go try a bunch of different classes at different studios and stuff like that. There are lots of options; you've just got to get creative.



Alison Monahan: Yeah. Again, it's just something to think about. You don't want to be two months in and saying, "Wow, I haven't done any exercise. I'm totally out of the habit now, feeling like I'm not very healthy." Because it's only going to get harder.

Lee Burgess: And then you get sick and then it's just downhill.

Alison Monahan: Bad news.

Lee Burgess: You also mentioned on the list if you are looking for a religious space or a religious community or any sort of an affinity group or anything that you want to engage with to have your own personal sense of community. You probably want to try and reach out and find out what's the best place for you to do that as well.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, this can be anything from church, temple, mosque, to even say you need an AA group or something. These are all things that are worth lining up and trying out and maybe... Or a therapist for example. Maybe the very contact you make doesn't work out that well, so you've got to allow yourself the time and energy. Or if you need a doctor, if that's something that you need to do on an ongoing basis, whatever it is – these are all things that logistically you just want to give yourself the time to work out.

Lee Burgess: And transitions are hard. If some of this is your support network, make sure that the support network is somewhat in place, because everybody stumbles a little bit when they are going through a transition.

Alison Monahan: Reach out to friends who might be in this area that you haven't talked to for a while, all those kinds of things like, "Hey, I'm going to be starting law school next month. I'd love to catch coffee and whatever." They might have stuff from their house they can give you.

Lee Burgess: That's true. You never know. Or somebody else is moving and they will... That's what happened to me once when I was setting up my tiny apartment. Someone was moving to Boston simultaneously to go to graduate school, and she basically asked me to come over and she filled my car with all of her cleaning supplies in her kitchen.

Alison Monahan: Actually with people moving in and out, this is worth looking at. Even something like free cycle or something along those lines, or just asking people you know at the school. When my sister started grad school, she happened to be going to Columbia at the same year that my old law school roommate with leaving. Lots of free stuff, some of which I think I had passed along to the roommate and then the roommate passed to my sister. There's just a chain of these things and if you can get in on that, that can be awesome, particularly if you can figure it



out before, so that you can gift all of your stuff that you don't need when you're moving and then just pick up all these other things for free on the other end. That can be amazing.

Lee Burgess: So how about how you feed yourself?

Alison Monahan: Well, that's always a big one.

Lee Burgess: That is always a big one because groceries, especially if you're in an urban environment, can be tricky if you don't have a car. You may want to explore different grocery delivery options.

Alison Monahan: Also fighting with a grocery delivery service here. So, don't think these are going to be perfect always.

Lee Burgess: And if you only live next to a very shishi, expensive grocery store, that may not be financially where you can do the majority of your shopping. So you might need to learn about your different food options. You want to think about your supplies for the kitchen. We do love our Instapots.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, love them.

Lee Burgess: But you decided to get a new Instapot and leave your other one in Mexico.

Alison Monahan: Well, it was not feasible to ship it.

Lee Burgess: It was not feasible to make it come back.

Alison Monahan: There was not a good cost-benefit analysis. Yeah, and even just cheap healthy restaurants that are nearby. Some towns are great for this. Like in Berkeley they were so student-focused, it was amazing. You can still, I think to this day eat really well in Berkeley for very little money. Other places like New York City, not so much. So, depending on where you are, you might need to be cooking more. You want to have some sort of plan. If you are going to be cost conscious, you might want to think about going to some specialty groceries in different areas and things like that, that are going to be less expensive.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And you might consider getting a [CSA](#) or even a [ButcherBox](#) if you like to make a lot of meats. It can be a more inexpensive way to get a variety of vegetables and fruits. Didn't you and your roommates share a CSA?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, we did. We usually cancelled it in the winter, because it was pretty terrible.

Lee Burgess: It's like potatoes.



- Alison Monahan: Exactly. You're like, "I can't face another rutabaga." But it can be good, because you learn to cook different things. I mean, I'd never had rutabaga before.
- Lee Burgess: I don't think I've ever eaten rutabaga.
- Alison Monahan: I think you roast it as I recall, but it's actually a fun way to do some bonding. Everybody has to eat and you end up eating healthier. So yeah, just worth considering. You don't want to survive on Ramen noodles and think that you're going to be okay.
- Lee Burgess: Or order pizza.
- Alison Monahan: Or pizza. Probably not. And think about what you need for your living space. You can go to our ["What to Buy" episode](#) on that, but really thinking about these things and giving yourself some time to get set up, I think is just going to really improve your experience.
- Lee Burgess: What you were mentioning about your sister getting the next round of handoffs – before you go out and spend a lot of money, it's worth just reaching out to your network. Social media gets a bad rap for a lot of things, but you can talk to a lot of people really quickly and putting out a Facebook post like, "Hey, does everybody know I'm moving to New York? I have an empty apartment. Help me! Do you know anybody who's unloading stuff?" And I think that that is a great place to start. Just using your own network and asking for very specific things. You never know.
- Alison Monahan: You might get totally hooked up. It happens. One final thought. Sometimes people ask what if they think they're going to get in off a waitlist? And this is a really hard question, because you might have already set up a whole life in one place and then you get the call and they're like, "Okay, you can start tomorrow", in a different city. I think you just have to be prepared for that uncertainty and just deal with it.
- Lee Burgess: And it is another cost-benefit analysis – is that other school situation that much better?
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think sometimes people too might say "No" because they don't want to deal with the hassle, but if you really looked at it objectively, they would actually say "Yes". Like, "If I didn't have to do this move, it would totally be worth it long term." So it's a balance. But if you do think there's a decent possibility you might get in, then think about what that might look like if you had to execute that move at the last second.
- Lee Burgess: It can be tricky, but 15 years down the line, you might be glad you sucked it up and did it.



Alison Monahan: Exactly. Alright, with that, we are unfortunately out of time. Before we finish up, we wanted to take a second to let you know you can check out our [Start Law School Right course](#) for new incoming law students on our website. It's an on-demand course. It includes feedback from one of our awesome tutors, and you can check it out and feel free to contact us if you have any questions. It's done at your convenience so you can fit it in around that packing.

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