



- Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we are going to be discussing the logistics of getting yourself set up for life at law school. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.
- Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about life logistics as you prepare to start law school. Well, Lee, this is a topic I will admit we've talked about several times. But why do you think it's so important?
- Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh, it is just so important because time and time again, we hear from, especially first year or sometimes second year law students, that getting things wrong can really derail your experience even before it starts, and that some of these life things that come up in that first year, if they can be avoided... But some of these things that come up can really cause you to not be able to study, not be able to get great grades, not be able to enjoy your experience. It can really derail you.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think it can just really detract from the focus of what you actually want and need to be focusing on, which is your academics, like settling into this new life, making friends, all these things. If you don't have a place to live and you don't have a way to get to school, these things really can cause some serious problems. And the other part of this, I think, is sometimes setting all this stuff up. I will admit I'm very, very guilty of this as a life pattern – sometimes things take longer than you think they're going to.
- Lee Burgess: No, it's true. Like Internet.
- Alison Monahan: Well, I'm just notorious for putting myself in these situations, where I'm massively over-optimistic about how long some type of logistical thing is going to take me. And then rather than being kind of a pain but something you can sort of deal with, it becomes an absolute mess and very stressful and usually very expensive. I want to help people avoid that.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's true. Especially relocating. Oh my gosh, moving, it doesn't matter how copious of an organizer you are, it doesn't matter how many lists you have, you're always, the night before, still putting stuff in boxes in some sort of chaotic way.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think some of that is normal, but there's also a certain extreme you can take that to, that I'm notorious for doing, of just really underestimating the time and energy that it's going to take me to get settled and get set up and be ready to go. And I think that is the goal here – you want to be settled and ready when school is starting.

Lee Burgess: Yes, I agree. So, I think our plan today is to talk through some of the things that people need to think about. And whenever you think about setting yourself up to go to school, definitely the first thing that comes to mind is always housing, like where are you going to live? What's your life setup? I did have a friend our second year of law school who slept on the floor of my apartment for weeks, because his lease didn't start when school started. I lived in a very tiny apartment, and he slept on the floor of my living room for three weeks.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that definitely happened. My second year, we had an empty room in my apartment because our third roommate had transferred, and that room was just standing empty because of course, the Housing Department doesn't really tell anyone anything, and then one day someone just opened the door with a key and I was sort of like, "Um, who are you?" And it was a very small person, she's very short actually, with a very small suitcase standing on our doorstep being, "Well, I live here now. They told me this is my new apartment." And she had come in as a first year and had been basically couch surfing for three or four weeks with friends, because they didn't have a place to put her until they realized that this person wasn't in our apartment anymore. That was obviously not a great situation for her to start law school in.

Lee Burgess: Right, because it's overwhelming in the best of situations. So all this additional stress and exhaustion just makes it more difficult to focus on what you need to be focusing on.

Alison Monahan: So I think obviously, one of the very, very first things you've got to sort out is your housing. Is your school providing it? Are you getting it? Where is it? What is it? Can you work there or not? Is it safe? Are you going to feel safe walking around? Not every law school is in the very best location, so that's definitely something to think about. If you're not used to living in a city, what is that going to feel like? If you're moving to New York, do you want a doorman building? Definitely going to pay extra for that, but maybe it's what you need to feel safe. I think you've just got to think about all these options and really not wait until the last minute, which I definitely did when I went to Berkeley for grad school, and I ended up living in one of the student co-ops. And that was not a great start to school either.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, you also want to think about your roommate situation, do you want to live with people, do you not want to live with people? Are you coming by yourself, or do you come with a partner or children or pets? The more



complicated your life is, the more I think you need to think ahead about housing. But even if it's just you as an individual person, making sure that your housing setup means that you're going to be able to get some solid sleep, have a good place to study. You don't really want home drama that can be avoided, and so you want to set yourself up as well as you can. Stuff is still going to happen, but you just do what you can. I also think one of the things you have to realize too is that with the delays in the supply chain, getting new stuff for an apartment could be challenging right now. I joke I have these 10-month couches that were supposed to take eight weeks, and they took 10 months. Which is great – they have finally arrived, they were a Thanksgiving miracle. But that was just a small example. And a lot of law students aren't necessarily going to go out and buy a lot of furniture, but sometimes getting the things that you need in the timeline that you think you used to be able to get them doesn't exist anymore. So, making sure that you know if you're not renting some place furnished, and if you're not coming with furniture, if you're just showing up with a suitcase or a couple of boxes, making sure you know where your bed's going to come from. Are you going to have living room furniture? Are you going to be able to buy some things second-hand to save money? All of that stuff is doable, but you need to have a plan. It's not as easy as it used to be to just get everything you need. I just ordered spatulas and I got a note they would be here on June 15th. I ordered them in March.

Alison Monahan: I read that IKEA's having some big supply chain issues too. I remember we went over from New York, I think to New Jersey to pick up some stuff at IKEA, and that might not necessarily be feasible these days. So I think that's a great point – you've got to really think ahead about what you're going to do and be flexible in terms of maybe if your favorite color couch is not available, you might have to pick something else.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, you don't want to wait 10 months for your couch. I'm sure you can go on Craigslist and find a couch, but that also comes with its own logistics. How are you going to pick up the couch? Do you have a pickup truck? Do you have to rent a car? Do you have a friend with a pickup? All of this stuff, like you were saying earlier, sounds so simple, and then when you start to break down all of these little barriers to entry to get some of this stuff done, it can get overwhelming really fast.

Alison Monahan: Right. Because just picking up a couch that you found on Craigslist could be an entire afternoon project, by the time you coordinate with the person and you go and find a get around and you go and get it, and you get the couch and then you bring it back, and then you return the car and then you find somebody to help you carry it. It's not going to be like, "Oh, that'll take an hour." I would think it would take an hour in my mind, but I know it will take probably three to four.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I had a friend, we were done with our baby glider, and I had a pregnant friend, and so I said, "Why don't she come take our baby glider?" And then she sends me this text that she's like, "These are the dimensions of my boyfriend's car. Do you think the glider will fit in it?" And I'm like, "I don't know. What do you want me to do, you want me to go and measure the glider?" I was like, "Here are the specs online. I don't have time to go measure the glider." But we're all having to get creative to get stuff done.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, so I think you've just got to think about all this stuff. And then moving, obviously, is another big thing. If you are moving to a different city, what are you bringing with you? Are you going to pay to ship it? How are you going to ship it? All this stuff has to be sorted out, there's a process and it's probably going to take a while and it's going to be expensive. You end up weighing all of these things about, "Should I pack my spatulas and pay to move them, or would it be better just to buy new ones when I get there? But wait, how long is it going to take?"
- Lee Burgess: Right. Be careful, you may not be able to get the silicon spatulas from Williams Sonoma that you thought you could get before. You just never know.
- Alison Monahan: I will say I got two very acceptable spatulas recently when mine broke, from Target, that I went into the store and I bought them. So, you'll probably be able to get something, but I will say they're not the high heat version. They don't go to 550 degrees or whatever, but I decided I could live with them for the time being because I needed some spatulas.
- Lee Burgess: At this point, I went ahead and we went to the store, got new spatulas, but still left the order because I'm like, I feel like I need to stock-pile spatulas now. Next to my KN95 stash are new spatulas, just because who knows when the spatula restock will happen. I think the other thing that a lot of times people don't think about when they're moving is getting rid of the stuff at your old place. So let's say you decide you don't want to take your furniture across country, or you don't want to move certain things. You do need to have a plan to get rid of stuff.
- Alison Monahan: Right, which also will not be quick or easy.
- Lee Burgess: No. And depending on where you live, there can be great ways and organizations that you can hand stuff off to, but a lot of times that takes organization. There's an organization in the county where I live that collects furniture in good condition for foster youth. So, children and young families who have come out of the foster care system and are setting up their first homes, they let them basically come to this warehouse and shop for furniture for free to set up these homes. It's really amazing.
- Alison Monahan: That's great.



- Lee Burgess: I love it. I love sending items that are not needed anymore. However, they don't have unlimited space, so they don't take every item, and they will only do drop off on two days a week, so you have to plan ahead if you want your items to go there. If they just need to go to the junk place or they just need to be thrown out, that's another thing, but you still probably have to hire somebody to come haul them away. None of this stuff happens on a 24-hour notice.
- Alison Monahan: Right. No, I like to do Craigslist free stuff to give things away. But even then, maybe somebody will come that day, maybe not, who knows.
- Lee Burgess: I know, it took me two days to give my blender away on Nextdoor, because people just didn't come to take my blender.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, that can also be a frustration. Maybe you want to have a free sidewalk sale or something, but again, you've got to plan around that. None of these things are insurmountable, but I think people do underestimate... I've watched a documentary recently, and apparently the average house in America has something like 300,000 items in it.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's horrifying.
- Alison Monahan: That's a lot of stuff.
- Lee Burgess: That's a lot of stuff.
- Alison Monahan: And like everything in your house, you have to do something with it. Obviously, if you're in a small one-bedroom, you probably don't have that many things, but you may still have literally 50,000 things.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's really... That's like anxiety-inducing right now for me.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I know. This documentary was called The Minimalist, it definitely made me want to throw some stuff away.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I did actually just clean out a drawer of stuff that I hadn't opened or gone through in the 18 months that I've lived in my house. I was like, "Maybe I don't need anything in that drawer if I haven't opened it in 18 months."
- Alison Monahan: I'll admit I have moved boxes back and forth across the country, unopened, some of which may still be in my garage. I think I've gotten all of them at this point, but they may still be there that I've literally paid to ship back and forth across the country and never opened.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.



- Alison Monahan: So, just think about this, really. I think give yourself a little time and actually try to be deliberate, and it will probably be in the long run a much better process.
- Lee Burgess: Yes. Another thing that folks need to think about is transportation wherever they're going to live. So, are you going to bring your car? If so, how do you get it registered if you're moving to a new state? Do you have to change your driver's license? What's your parking situation like?
- Alison Monahan: You need an appointment to do all of these things.
- Lee Burgess: That's true. In San Francisco, you have to get these parking permit stickers that go on the back of your car if you don't have a parking spot.
- Alison Monahan: Oh, Lee, guess what?
- Lee Burgess: What?
- Alison Monahan: Actually, I just renewed my permit yesterday in the mail. I got a letter saying that they're doing it by license plate now.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's so amazing. Wow, what a big leap!
- Alison Monahan: And it won't have the stupid sticker.
- Lee Burgess: That's nice. I hated those stickers. I really hated those stickers.
- Alison Monahan: I know. Anyway, the thing is, in San Francisco you cannot get a residential parking permit unless you have registered your car to that address. They will not do it.
- Lee Burgess: Right. Yes.
- Alison Monahan: And I would have to imagine changing your car registration to California right now is probably not a one-day process.
- Lee Burgess: That's true, but I did used to work at AAA. Yes, yes, I know, I know, it's hard to believe. One of my former jobs. I worked for corporate AAA, and one of the things that I learned was that at most AAA offices around the country – at least in California and Nevada and one other state, but you should check – you could often do DMV things like change your car registration at a AAA office and not have to go to the DMV. So you should Google that.
- Alison Monahan: That would be a huge benefit.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Google it, find out what office is close enough, what DMV services they offer, and that can be a very fast way around. Great little tidbit back from my year that I worked at AAA corporate in San Francisco.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, because I think too with COVID, more and more... I'm pretty sure you have to have essentially an appointment for almost anything with the California DMVs at this point. When I was trying to get my REAL ID or whatever, they were booking up months ahead of time.
- Lee Burgess: I know. Yeah, it's not fun. And you can also look around and see, sometimes if you're moving to an urban area, if a DMV office outside of that city is going to be less crowded.
- Alison Monahan: Didn't you go to Sacramento or Fresno or something for yours?
- Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh, I went to Sacramento once for my REAL ID, because I could not get an appointment anywhere. And it was actually going to be faster to drive two hours to Sacramento and get taken to the appointment than it was going to be to spend half of the day in the DMV. At least I got to listen to audio books on the way. Maybe it wasn't the best for the environment.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, but these things take time. I'm pretty sure California at one point gave me a ticket because I didn't register my car soon enough when I moved to LA. So again, you just need to think about these things. They also impact things like voting – if you change your license, is that changing your voter registration? All these things have consequences. And with transportation, maybe you don't need a car, and that's great, and you can get by with transit or bike share. But again, you probably want to set up either some type of auto pay for your transit so that you're not constantly looking for money, or make sure you have that bike share, or if you want a bike, guess what else is also back-ordered?
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's so true. I know.
- Alison Monahan: Bikes.
- Lee Burgess: Bikes.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, so think about where you might be able to get that, because I think this idea that you can just walk into a store and buy whatever you want or order whatever you want on Amazon, is not necessarily true right now.
- Lee Burgess: Not for a lot of these bigger ticket items, it really isn't. Or my spatulas, which were not a big ticket item.
- Alison Monahan: I think you'd really enjoy them.



- Lee Burgess: And for some reason that just really floored me. I know, I know. But I bought some pans too, the pans came yesterday, and the spatulas are just... And I love it, they send you the email with, "Your pans will be there next week, but your spatulas will be there in June." You're like, "What?"
- Alison Monahan: Also, you're like, "Are you sure about that? Are you positive that by the time you make them and ship them that that's going to be our date?" Because that seems a little far in advance to be able to predict.
- Lee Burgess: I know. And really, Williams Sonoma, do you really not have any spatulas, anywhere in the country? That's it? I don't know, I don't know. I didn't do a deep dive into them; I went to Crate & Barrel and they had some, and I just bought them there.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I'm happy with the OXO ones I got from Target. They have a nice feel in the hand, even if they might melt if I leave them on the stove.
- Lee Burgess: Then just don't let them melt.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly, I'm just going to be careful with them. I try to put them on a little spoon holder on the side, instead of resting them on the pan, because I know they might actually catch on fire.
- Lee Burgess: And this conversation is a total example of how you can get caught in the minutiae of the items for when you are moving and setting up a home.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly, yeah.
- Lee Burgess: Other things, utilities and Internet.
- Alison Monahan: Oh God. Do we have to talk about this?
- Lee Burgess: That's always a huge pain. Oh my gosh, yesterday... Let's just talk about Internet failures. Yesterday, I was teaching a group of students and Zoom crashed on me multiple times because my Internet was unstable. I am so paranoid about my Internet at my office that I run two types of Internet – I have DSL and I have cable. The cable went down first, and then I switched over to the DSL. It was a nightmare. And it took me a while to get even that set up. So, Internet is just problematic. Sometimes you need repeaters in your house or your apartment to make sure that your bedroom gets good, solid Internet. It takes some time. But yeah, Internet right now, I'm not pleased with my Internet router.
- Alison Monahan: Also, you might need to upgrade your router, because the newer ones do work better.



- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's true.
- Alison Monahan: So, if you've been using one for like five years and bring it with you, that might not be the best one. You might want to spend the, I don't know, \$100 or whatever a router costs these days to actually upgrade to one that works. But yeah, Internet, notorious nightmare. Utilities, generally also a nightmare. You may just move into something run by your school where none of this is an issue, but if you're going to be living off-campus, you're going to have to set all this stuff up.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And if you're going to be living with roommates, you need to make sure that you go in understanding how you guys are going to divide up all of your utilities and what everybody's paying, and how everybody's going to pay each other, and are you using Venmo, whose name is going to be on the utilities? All of that stuff, you're going to have to do a wide committee.
- Alison Monahan: Right, yeah. So probably best if every person in the apartment has one set of utilities or something, rather than one person having all. Just speaking from experience on that one. Probably don't want to be the person who pays for everything if you can avoid it.
- Lee Burgess: Yes. Also, cell phones. Usually now you can move with your cell phone, unless you're going abroad or coming from abroad or something like that.
- Alison Monahan: Right, but it may not work.
- Lee Burgess: That's also not cheap. Oh, that's a fair point.
- Alison Monahan: I mean, that's the thing, each location... I know that all the ads try to make it sound like, "Oh, we all cover all the whole country", but that's just not true. Even in Tahoe or something, basically, there's only one cell phone provider that works most places. When I was in New York, there were known dead zones around Columbia. Certain companies literally didn't work, because their towers had been on the World Trade Center. So, you've got to figure this stuff out and look at it. Hopefully that's become easier, but again, you've got to make sure that you have a working cellphone or you're going to be in a world of trouble.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. You also probably want to check out any kind of community activities that you want to take part in, whether they're religious activities, do you want to join a book club, do you want to do some sort of sports social club, do you do a certain type of exercise, do you need to join a tennis league or a CrossFit gym or any of that kind of stuff? You want to research that beforehand, so you can have all of that set up and figure out how you're going to balance that with school.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think that's a great thing to do, is figure out what is going to be your outside of school activity zone or social area. If you are religiously active, I think that's a great place to look to be hooked up with the community, because you're going to need community for various things, whether it's just for social reasons, or even for help. A lot of communities are willing to invite you to do things or help you out if you have kids. What if you have pets – your pet needs a dog walker. So, all these things, anything that you're kind of interested in. With the exercise stuff, are you going to use your school's gym, are you going to join a different gym? There was someone at one point, it was a law student, I think in New York, who was blogging her way through all the free exercise gym passes in New York City.

Lee Burgess: I like that.

Alison Monahan: Which, more power to her. She never paid for anything and every week she went a different place. But all these things that can make you feel at home, I think are worth spending a little bit of time, at least looking at some options, maybe reaching out to some places. Is it a yoga studio, whatever it might be that you're into – definitely worth doing.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. You also want to think about how you're going to feed yourself. It's always good to plan, of course, what your food plan is going to be, but especially if you eat a certain diet or you're really passionate about how some of your food is sourced. I know you have a fish CSA.

Alison Monahan: Well, I'm disappointed with them these days and I'm actually canceling.

Lee Burgess: Uh oh. Oh dear.

Alison Monahan: But I have had it for a number of years, and I'm kind of sad to lose it. But yeah, we had a CSA in law school that brought us vegetables until I think the second winter where we're just like, "I can't possibly face another turnip." But anything you can do to kind of streamline your intake of relatively healthy, not super expensive food, I think is worth doing.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Different farmers' markets, depending on where you live can be a great way to shop. And even in different urban areas, some farmers' markets are notoriously more expensive than others, so finding out where are the more affordable farmers' markets. If you are gluten-free, make sure you know where you can get whatever your individual needs are for that, if there's a gluten-free bakery or if you have certain specific dietary needs. Just doing a little research is going to make it so that you have access to whatever you need. But like most things, you have to do a little leg work.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, and probably just eating the pizza that you get for free every lunch is not going to end up in the best place.

Lee Burgess: So much pizza, so much pizza.

Alison Monahan: I'm sorry, that's not really that good for you. Every now and then, totally fine. Every day, maybe not.

Lee Burgess: Oh, so much pizza.

Alison Monahan: And I think along with that, while you're looking at your food options, you can also look for good cafes where maybe you want to be able to do your work, because that's a great question to ask yourself: Where are you going to work?

Lee Burgess: Yes. Are you going to do it at the school? Cafe? Co-working space?

Alison Monahan: Library.

Lee Burgess: Offices?

Alison Monahan: Your own desk? Who knows? But you need an answer to that question – probably several answers – because you're going to be spending multiple hours every single day doing some type of academic work. Sorry to tell you that, if that's a surprise.

Lee Burgess: It's true. And as you age, because you're not going to be necessarily 18 starting this experience like you did when you were in undergrad, it does matter sometimes under the conditions in which you are working.

Alison Monahan: Oh, absolutely.

Lee Burgess: Ergonomics start to mean more, and you need a laptop riser. My desk right now, I've got the tray and I've got a second monitor that's up on books, so it could be at the same height as my laptop riser so everything's kind of at the right height. There are a lot of things you start to consider the more you work for longer periods of time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Things like your chair and your desk setup become really critical, because otherwise your body is just not going to be functional, and that's not going to be great.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And then of course we have all the academic logistics, like when do you do your course registration? Where do you get your books? Are there options for getting your books that are at different price points? How are you going to keep track of all these things, like when you're going to get your loan



disbursements? You want to make sure that you are reading all of the communications coming from the school. I know that during these times of transition, your paperwork and emails can get lost in the shuffle, so you really want to make sure that you're staying on top of things so you know what you need to do to be ready to get started.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. I think those are so important to read, and people don't necessarily read them or they skim over them. But anything the school is sending you about what you need to do to be registered, what you need to be doing to get your financial aid, how all that's going to work – you want to make sure you're paying attention to it, and also probably have some system for tracking it, whether that's a label in your email or you're sending it to somewhere else or whatever it is, because ultimately, you want to be able to go back in time and make sure you actually got the money you were supposed to be getting, or when you're getting tax records and stuff. All this stuff actually matters. And obviously, you don't want to not end up being registered for classes because you didn't pick a password on a website or whatever it is they've asked you to do, because people just expect that you're paying attention, so there's not going to be a ton probably of sympathy when you go in and you're like, "Oh my gosh, I didn't see this". And they're like, "Well, we sent it to you. Did you not read that?"

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Let's just talk about the beauty of the Dropbox scan functionality on your phone for stuff like this. Yes, this is my basically new obsession as I try and go paperless, because I just find that life drowns you in paper and then you can't find anything. And so, I've become pretty copious about keeping all of my personal stuff organized in Dropbox. And if you have Dropbox on your phone, if you open it up, it'll basically scan a document for you directly into Dropbox and that you save it to whatever file folder it is. So you could have a law school orientation file folder, and every single piece of mail, if they're still sending paper mail, you can just snap a picture with your phone, press "Save" and it just files it into your Dropbox. Poof! You don't have to open your computer.

Alison Monahan: That is a great idea.

Lee Burgess: It is just so magical, it works for so many things. And then you can just tear up the paper, put it in the recycling, and you don't have to worry about it. And then when you're like, "Where was that thing?" – it's safe in the Cloud. It's magic. But I really love it, that's one of my favorite things now. It's just so fast. You're just like, boom, done. You don't have to worry about it.

Alison Monahan: No, this is great information, because this morning, I got an invoice for something; somebody came and did some work on something on my water heater, and I got this invoice that I need to save for tax purposes, and I took a



picture of it in my phone, but I did nothing with it yet, because I just hadn't gotten around to it. I could have just sent that right to Dropbox.

Lee Burgess: Yes, you could have taken the picture in Dropbox.

Alison Monahan: We're not even being paid to say this.

Lee Burgess: I know. You can just be in your Dropbox app on your phone and can just snap a picture through Dropbox. It has a "Scan a document" little thing.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, yeah, I've seen that. I just never thought about what it was.

Lee Burgess: And then you go "Click", and then it asks you where to save it. You pick your file and then when you do your taxes, ta-da! They're all there.

Alison Monahan: Wow, that sounds great.

Lee Burgess: It's really magical. So, starting to create these tasks now... We also use Trello boards to track things, or the labels in your email. But really, the Dropbox "Snap a scan" – I don't even know what they call it, but stuff like that will just keep you organized in a very easy way.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and speaking of laptops and backups – obviously, you need some type of laptop. You probably don't need to buy a new one if you have one that's kind of reasonably functional, because you can always buy another one in a couple of years, and then it would be fresher to take the bar and things. I would say if you have a functional laptop, I probably wouldn't upgrade right now, but I would make sure you back up your work.

Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh.

Alison Monahan: And not manually. Just go ahead and install Dropbox or something else and make sure that your work is backed up. We cannot tell you how many times we've had people lose stuff because they weren't backing anything up.

Lee Burgess: I know, it's just please...

Alison Monahan: It's so bad.

Lee Burgess: So bad, so bad. Just do it, just figure... Whatever you do, and it's just got to be automatic, on a regular basis. Save to the Cloud, save to the Cloud, save to the Cloud.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and also never just have one... Sometimes people, I don't even know why they do this, they've told me they open a Word document and they make every edit in it, and in one case, this person had not saved it the entire time.
- Lee Burgess: Oh gosh.
- Alison Monahan: I know. Don't do that. If you have an important document, go ahead and save it and then save Draft v2 a day or two later, so that worst case scenario, you're going to lose a little bit of work. There are all these processes you can think about, but just please think about it. We are running way over time on this, so let's keep going down our list.
- Lee Burgess: We are very passionate about our spatulas and our documents and our invoices, I know. It's been one of those days.
- Alison Monahan: Well, speaking of money, I think money is another area people should spend some time thinking about just to say, "Okay, what can I automate here?" And also, this is a great time to cancel anything that you might not need.
- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: Because if you've been working and you have a really nice cable plan and all this stuff, maybe you don't really need that in school; maybe you can get by with just nothing, or Netflix, or whatever. But for anything that you have to pay, I would say just automate that, because you're going to be busy, you don't want to be paying late fees for things you've missed, and it's not something you need to be spending time on.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I would also say another thing that if you can't automate certain things, make sure you set calendar reminders. If you do have to send a physical payment on a certain day, whether through Venmo or whatever it might be – just set a reminder because you're not going to have the mental space to be like, "Oh, it's the 15th." No. So just automate as much of that stuff as you can.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely.
- Lee Burgess: But renters insurance could be pretty important, because maybe you haven't been renting for a while. Sometimes people have been homeowners and then switch back to being renters, but you want to have something in place in case something happens to your stuff.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I was just thinking, all these natural disasters, like tornados and fires and all this stuff, these things could happen to you. And the great thing about having renters insurance is it's pretty cheap and it will actually help you find other places to live and pay for it, and things like that if anything were to happen.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's so true. You also want to make sure that your healthcare is set up. That can be any physical providers you need, and this includes eye doctors, dentist – a long list of this stuff that we kind of need to do to keep ourselves going. But I will say that I know that a lot of people right now are having trouble finding therapists, because there's a mental health crisis going on right now, which I don't think is news to anybody. But if you do need mental health providers, you should talk to either your school, and see if your school is going to provide you with those resources, or start looking early to try and get on a wait list if it's important to meet with somebody in-person, or talk to your current providers and see if they can provide any sort of remote services. But you don't want to let that stuff lapse, especially because law school is a really challenging time, and if you have the scaffolding around you to help you kind of cope with the ups and downs of life, you don't want to lose all that scaffolding when you go do something very challenging.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And I think sometimes people who struggle with things like depression or anxiety, that idea of, "Oh, I have to find a whole new person and this is going to be so overwhelming" – that can itself become a problem. So, the sooner the better on this.
- Lee Burgess: Yes. I was just listening to a podcast about mental health Instagram, that there are these mental health influencers where a lot of people are getting their mental health help. And I found that really disturbing and sad. I mean, I'm glad that some people are finding influencers that help them feel better, but if you really need mental health services, I really hope you can find someone to talk to.
- Alison Monahan: True. I follow some therapists and things on Instagram, and yeah, most of them are putting out pretty solid stuff. So, I guess they're being helpful, but obviously it's not the same thing as actually having a therapist.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think it's more that people can't find a therapist, so they're like, "Well, I will turn to the faceless". Or I guess it's like, "I'm faceless on Instagram."
- Alison Monahan: I think it's probably better than nothing.
- Lee Burgess: It's probably better than nothing. But it just made me sad that people are looking for support, and we as a community and a culture don't have the people and the services in place to get that support. But your school probably will.
- Alison Monahan: Very true.
- Lee Burgess: Your school should have student services to help with things like that. So just make sure that you figure it out, how to get access to that help.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. And I think at the school themselves can't help you, they can often do a referral or something that might get you ahead of the line. None of this is guaranteed, but they do have more resources than just an average person walking down the street.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, if you've got kids and pets, they take a lot...
- Alison Monahan: Ooh, fun!
- Lee Burgess: Oh, my gosh.
- Alison Monahan: Talk about logistics.
- Lee Burgess: Talk about logistics. So, where are they going to go to school, or are they going to have some sort of childcare, day care, pre-school? Are you going to have a nanny part-time, babysitters? Whatever you need for your kids' lives set up, that usually doesn't happen fast. Even if you have a pup, like a puppy dog, they also sometimes need daycares, especially if you're going to be gone for long stretches of time. So they might need a dog walker or somebody to check on them. And you oftentimes need backup plans, because if COVID has taught us anything, it's that sometimes life happens and then you're out of commission for a week or two, or the people who take care of your kids are out of commission for a week or two, or your kids got a COVID exposure and they can't go to school. There are lots of things that happen, and so you have to have kind of plan B, C, D, E, F.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. I think if we learned nothing, I think plan A is not really the only plan anyone should have about much of anything at this point.
- Lee Burgess: No, no. We have talked about this on other podcasts, but you need to make sure you have the clothing that you need. And although you can wear whatever you basically want to school, you are going to need clothing to go to professional events, so you need to make sure you have a professional wardrobe. And we can link to some of those podcasts where we talk about what to wear in greater detail.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely. And also, think about seasonality, what clothes you need now, what are you going to need for the winter, because I learned, when January came and I didn't have any warm clothes in New York City, and it was below freezing all the time, they'd already moved onto spring clothes at that point. I think that's becoming less of an issue, but it is definitely somebody to think about, because you don't want to be the one who can't buy a jacket in New York City in the middle of a blizzard because they've already sold them all.



- Lee Burgess: That's true. I did once have to Amazon Prime some snow boots in New York in April, because nobody was selling snow boots anymore, and it was snowing.
- Alison Monahan: Oh God, by April, they are fully into fall, basically.
- Lee Burgess: Right. And I was like, "But I didn't know it was going to snow and I don't have snow boots", and they were like, "Sorry".
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. So I think, just think ahead around that a little bit. I think the key takeaway here is just, any time you can set up a system to make your life easier, that is probably something you want to do. But setting up that system beforehand usually takes a bit of time and effort. Lee, do you have any final thoughts?
- Lee Burgess: No. I'm a big fan of the systems. As my life has gotten more and more complicated over the years, I rely more and more on systems. And I think that anything that you can automate... So, other things to consider would be, depending on whether or not you want to use Amazon, but subscribe and save, or if you use a specific type of product that you can just have delivered on a regular basis. Anything that you can do to kind of lighten your load on these little life tasks, I think will just allow you to be more focused and have less of that busy work anxiety. So, I'm a big fan of the systems.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. The other thing I would say, I'm becoming more and more a fan of setting the appointment for something and then forgetting about it. So this morning, I went to the eye doctor, which was an appointment I set up probably a month ago. And at that time, I didn't really feel like going to the eye doctor, but I was like, "Well, I'll just set it up for a few weeks from now." And then it showed up on my calendar and I went. But having taken that first step is what made me get new contacts that now I'm pretty impressed with.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. That might make your life better. And if you were reading all day at a desk because you were reading chapters and chapters of cases, it would be even more critical.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I know I have a hair cut in a couple weeks that I think I set up six... a long time ago. But I think that, for me at least, that makes it easier to do things that I kind of know I should do but I'm not really in the mood for – just like, "Well, I'll just set the appointment".
- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: And then it comes and I'm like, Oh, right, okay. I'm doing that thing. Great". Whatever.



Lee Burgess: "If it's on my calendar, it must get done."

Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. There's a reason the dentist sets you up for six months from then when you leave.

Lee Burgess: It's true.

Alison Monahan: Alright. Well, 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 incoming law students. It's on our website, it's on demand, and it includes feedback from one of our awesome tutors. So you can check it out, you can feel free to contact us if you have any questions. And it's done at your convenience, so you can fit it in around your packing. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolBox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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[Podcast Episode 198: Pre-1L Life Logistics](#)

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