



VARSITY

COLLEGE CHEERLEADING

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# BEING A COLLEGE CHEERLEADER

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The transition from high school cheerleading to college cheerleading can be a challenge. There are many different aspects of being a college cheerleader compared to the good ole high school days. Know exactly what changes to expect with our college cheer guide that covers it all!

## TRYOUTS

First things first... you have to try out for the team! Every school will have a scheduled tryout each year, which is usually held in the spring. Be prepared for an entire weekend to be taken up, as most colleges hold tryouts on both Saturday and Sunday. Obviously, it takes more than just one day to decide who is “college material.”

Expect tryouts in college to be much different than in high school. Depending on what school you will be trying out for, the tryout procedure and difficulty levels will change. In college, instead of performing the typical cheer, dance, and toe touch in front of a panel of judges like you would in high school, skills will be a main focus. Most colleges require certain stunts to be performed as well as tumbling. College tryouts are less about a performance and more about being observed in a practice environment.

Last but certainly not least, be ready to meet new people and make friends at tryouts. After all, the people you meet could be your best friends for the next four years.

## CAMP

The camp experience in college will be a big change from high school in many ways. You will first notice a change in the camp atmosphere. Where chanting and hoping to be the “most spirited” team at camp are important in high school, college camp is more laid back and casual.

Second, a main focus of college camp is preparing for upcoming games. Cheering at football and basketball games are one of the most important parts of being a cheerleader in college, and the staff will concentrate on teaching you to how to be interactive with the crowd, continue university traditions, and how to make dedicated alumni proud.

Finally, whether you are a competitive team or not, you will be joining camp with several top competitive teams in the college cheerleading world. The skill level of camp will be exceptional, and you will come face-to-face with talent from all over the country. With so many different collegiate programs attending,

you will get to experience different school’s traditions, how their squad practices, and how they plan for a successful season.

## PRACTICES

Practices in college are usually run much differently than in high school. Many coaches will take teammates class schedules into consideration; therefore, instead of a regular “after-school practice,” you could have one in the morning, the middle of the day, or at night.



Aside from regularly scheduled practices, if you’re on a team that attends national competition, you can usually bet on occasional two-a-day practices, conditioning practices, and sometimes even weekend and holiday practices. Because of the goals that you must accomplish, competition team practices can often be seen as more of a responsibility or job.

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## **GAMES**

For most new college cheerleaders, the first game day will be the day you look most forward to. A larger crowd, more spirit, and fans that genuinely care if the team wins the game are just a few things that make a difference when cheering in college. As a cheerleader and large representative of your school, it's necessary to be a big of a fan as well. Why? Because as a college cheerleader, when the team travels, you travel. Whether the game is a van, car, or plane ride away, it will be your responsibility to travel and cheer at all or most of the games, no matter what the distance may be.

Because you will be dealing with a large and spirited crowd, you will want them to participate as much as possible. In college, the cheers will be less "cutesy" and "sassy" and more professional and casual. As a college cheerleader, you will learn that the crowd reacts best to fight songs, traditional cheers, and simple chants that they can catch onto quickly. Signs and poms are used a great deal in college to lead the crowd, and stunts and tumbling are usually only performed to lead the crowd, not to show off skills.

## **SCHOOL**

As a college cheerleader, your schedule will not be as simple as others. It's hard enough attending college and not having anything planned after class, but imagine class throughout the day, papers to write and homework to do at night, and somewhere in between, you will have two hour to three hour long practices, all while trying to have the best college experience of your life. This routine can get stressful for many, but it's important to stay on the right track. Most coaches require their cheerleaders to obtain a certain grade point average to stay a member of the squad, and skipping class is never an option. Many coaches will only allow team members to miss a certain amount of days, and don't think they won't find out if you skip class. Because you are a cheerleader, you stand out, therefore, your teachers will notice if you are in class or not and will have no problem reporting it back to your coach or advisor. You must be responsible for yourself, no matter how hectic your schedule may get.

## **SOCIAL SITUATIONS**

Like it was stated before: because you are a college cheerleader you stand out... no matter where you go. You will be making appearances and performing at pep rallies, games, and local events, so be prepared for people to recognize you on campus, in the community, and out at night. It will always be expected of you to present yourself in a very professional manner. Once named a college cheerleader, you are put on a higher level and the standards are raised, so you must act like an adult with and without your cheerleading uniform on.