

Stress of Moving to a New Country

Linh Truong

We all experience difficult moments in our lives. For me, one of the most stressful times was when I arrived in the U.S. I was shocked by how hard it was to adapt to so many changes.

Probably the hardest change was that I could not understand native speakers. I had studied English in my country, but most of the teachers in my country are British, so I have a British accent. When I talked to native speakers, they did not understand me. And I could not understand them. This made me hesitate to speak to anyone.

Another change that was hard for me was the weather. The average temperature in Vietnam is 82 in winter. Meanwhile, in Portland, the average winter temperature is in the 40s. I felt so cold!

Furthermore, I could not sleep at night in the first three months because of the time difference. The food did not taste right, so I just ate bananas and drank milk for a month. I always had an allergic reaction when I left the house.

When I came to the United States, I could not drive. If I wanted to go somewhere, my sister would take me. I was totally dependent on her. In addition, the people here drive very fast, and this scared me.

Then I registered for the ESOL program at Portland Community College. This gave me more structure to my day. I tried to wake up early in the morning, and I exercised every day. When I had free time, I listened to music, watched action movies, called relatives, and visited my nephew on the weekend.

I tried to remember that many people who immigrate to the United States feel disappointed at first, but they learn to make it work. This thought encouraged me very much. After that, I learned to drive a car. I was scared at first, but then I got used to it.

Now everything is better. I can speak to and understand native speakers. Regular exercise makes me feel much better. I don't feel cold anymore, and I can sleep well at night. I got a driver's license and I bought a car, so I can go anywhere I want. I have learned a valuable lesson: When we are in trouble, we can be patient and persist, and things will get better.

AFTER YOU READ: What routines make you feel better? Read the box on the left and check the source. Is it credible? Why or why not?



Routine Helps?

Yes! Research shows that you can improve your physical and mental health by having regular routines for sleeping, eating, and exercising. Start small and see what works for you. Remember that it takes an average of 3 months to change a habit. So...give it time, and don't try to be perfect. One day at a time!

Source: <https://www.mhanational.org/creating-healthy-routines>

Linh Truong is an ESOL student at Portland Community College. He is from VietNam and has been in the United States for 1 year. He likes walking around the park, listening to music, and talking to his friends. He says, "When we face tragic moments in our lives, we should not give up. I hope that when people read this article, they will get some motivation to overcome their obstacles."