

THE TATTOO

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P.E. stands for 'painful experience'

By **KATIE JORDAN** and **KATE HAIRE**
The Tattoo

The perils of gym class have haunted students for generations. And Generation Y is no exception.

In fact, with all the horrors you will soon experience in gym class, you incoming freshmen may be tempted to call yourselves Generation "Y me?"

Listen up, freshmen-to-be! Gone are the days of jump ropes and Nerf balls. Wake up and smell the sweat! Prepare to be incarcerated, annihilated, and humiliated in the no-pain-no-gain world of high school gym class.

"Gym isn't so bad," some people claim. Others even go so far as to call it "fun."

But you know the truth: physical education is literally a school of hard knocks, a crash course in injury.

A little known fact is that PE was originally created just to give school nurses something more exciting to do than telling sick kids to go back to class. (The emotional scarring and self-loathing students end up with was an unforeseen bonus.)

Yes, there are plenty of ways to hurt yourself in good old gym class.

When the teacher says, "Keep your eye on the ball," he means it — even after the ball's lodged in the tangled mess of metal beams that make up the ceiling. You never know when one of those puppies is going to come crashing down on your vulnerable cranium.

And the ball is no less dangerous in its natural habitat, flying back and forth over some kind of court or field, as in soccer. In

this game, the opposing team will try to make a goal. Their goal, as you know, is to humiliate and hurt you as much as possible.

Basketballs ricochet like bullets, so the skill you'll need, contrary to popular belief, is not "dunking." It's ducking.

Spherical projectiles aren't the only thing you have to worry about. No, there are also a wide variety of large sticks which students are



Katie Jordan / The Tattoo

encouraged to swing around violently.

If the stick doesn't get you, remember, the objective of the game is to smack one of those dangerous balls across the gym, often into the face of a classmate. Namely, you.

Back in the good old days, when archery was still a part of the curriculum, students in gym

had the privilege to shoot sharp, pointy arrows across the field outside. They aimed at colorful, ringed targets — theoretically.

Sadly for you future generations, school officials finally figured out that maybe, just maybe, adolescent boys and sharp objects weren't a good mix (although, ironically, pencils have never caused this much trouble. Wonder why...)

But even if you manage

to avoid breaking, bruising, scraping, or spraining some part of your body, beware — gym can do a number on your mental well being as well.

The problem won't always be the impossible physical demands. More often than not, it will be your fellow students. Don't worry, you'll recognize them. They'll be the ones pointing at you and laughing.

Most often, the ones laughing will be Jocks. The Jocks are the ones who always seem to have the song "We are the Champions" playing in their heads. They yearn for the glory of the title "Top Gym Student." And in the fight for the prize, things may get ugly.

Jocks compete so hard in gym to make up for inadequacies they feel in other areas. Which, incidentally, is the same reason they treat you like crap.

They can be merciless ball-hogs and really bad sports. You've probably had a volleyball spiked straight into your face by one, or at the very least you've had a Jock sigh in a pained way when he

Physical education is literally a school of hard knocks, a crash course in injury.

Five survival tips

By **CHRISTINE FRENCH**
The Tattoo

Yup, I know what you're thinking: Back to school, back to homework, teachers, tests and more. It really does stink to go back, but here are five tips to help make it go easier:

Be prepared

Most teachers are going to expect a lot of you. In order to be ready for whatever your teachers throw your way, get yourself prepared mentally, not just physically.

High school is like a job, except you don't get paid. But, fundamentally, it's just like middle school with a little extra work.

Check it out

Most schools have a web site and it is usually easy to access. To find the site, you can always Google the school's name.

School sites typically tell you about clubs, sports, after school programs and other activities that may appeal to you.

The more you know, the less scared you will be.

Map it out

You don't want to get lost on the first day of school and be late

to all of your classes. You want your first day to go as smooth as pie.

You can obtain a map from the office or your school's guidance office.

Talk to your friends

Your friends may be going to the same high school as you and they probably have the same fears.

If you happen to be on a team for freshman year, I suggest you talk to some of your friends to see if they will also play on the team with you.

Friends are great to talk with — so don't be afraid and talk to them.

Remain calm

Don't panic. You won't get lost. You won't forget to do your homework. You won't forget to study for your test or quiz.

You will be the best student you can be if you try at all, and you know that is all that really matters.

If you do your best, nobody, including your teachers and your peers, will judge you harshly.

So don't be nervous. School can be fun — and will be — if you keep these tips in mind.

Freshmen, have no fear

The Insider's Guide to High School is back

This is only the tip of the iceberg for back-to-school advice from *The Tattoo*.

Check us out online at www.ReadTheTattoo.com to find the comprehensive Insider's Guide to High School that *Tattoo* writers have been working on for years, providing the low-down on everything from guidance counselors to dating.

With humor and a commitment to telling it straight, *The Tattoo* can help unlock the mysteries and miseries of high school life.

The best advice from *The Tattoo*, though, is to join us! The *Tattoo* is heading into its 11th year of providing the best teen journalism in the world, opening doors for young writers in Bristol and surrounding towns as well as budding reporters from across the globe.

Over the years, *The Tattoo's* young writers have soared in balloons, chatted with skateboard legend Tony Hawk and baseball superstar Derek Jeter, interviewed politicians, petted penguins and had movie stars hang on them.

They've captured scores of journalism awards, including some that required nudging aside professionals, and claimed quite a few college scholarships along the way.

There's no better way for a young writer to learn the craft, get published and get a foot in the door in a field that's tough to crack. If you're a teen with an interest in writing, photography, cartooning or journalism, come join us at the Press on Monday evenings or online.



Monica Gleberman / The Tattoo

Dave Addiss, Drew Bieber, Anna Rodriguez and Joanna Beilman, then seniors, painted a truck for a homecoming parade float outside Consekowogue High School in Port Jefferson Station, NY, last fall.

Tell a friend or a relative about us if you think this might be something they'd like.

We're eager to find new recruits anywhere in the world, but especially in our own neighborhood, to continue a great tradition. Contact *The Tattoo's* volunteer advisers, veteran Press reporters Jackie Majerus or Steve Collins, for more information. They can be reached at (860)523-9632 or at thetattoo@gmail.com.

The Tattoo is fun, challenging and may prove one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do.

Leaving high school behind? How to cope at college

By **SARAH JORDAN**
The Tattoo

From beyond the swirling drifts of college propaganda and admissions essays rings out a voice: "Hear me, for I have crossed this river of confusion and been delivered to the land beyond."

Yeah, right. I am just trying to pass on some of the experience from my first few months as a college student at the University of Connecticut. With any luck it might be general enough to help you out if you are heading off to college, and maybe it will dispel any holy grail delusion you might be harboring.

As a high school student, you are probably used to getting up at the same ungodly hour every day of the week and taking some form of transport to your school. There are a lot of differences between a day at high school and a day at college.

First, you're on your own to wake up at that potentially ungodly hour. I say potentially ungodly hour because the time you have to get up on a given day isn't set in stone like it is in

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considering how to get to school. In college, you consider how to get to class. For me in the first few weeks this involved always carrying a campus map and my schedule — where I had to be and when I had to be there.

Colleges aren't simple neat buildings like most high schools. Buildings are scattered over the campus, with extension and renovations and new ones all jumbled together in organic fashion. Trust me: it may have been organized once, but it isn't now.

Inside the buildings, you have to navigate through the often maze-like corridors to find your room. Hope and pray that your classes don't get moved around — I was late to one class because it was moved before the first meeting. Apparently the room it was

supposed to be in had no seats... Don't picture a little square classroom like you're used to when you think of college classes. At a big university, many of your classes will take place in lecture halls.

You'll find tiers of seats with fold-out writing surfaces, just big enough to support a single notebook, all facing a desk and blackboard. There are times when you will be in a "classroom" like you're used to, but they are rare. If you take certain courses you may also find

yourself in a computer lab. Those are what you'd think — a room, computer, chairs.

When you're in class, there's little attention paid to you individually. You're on your own to take notes and study them. Most of your homework will not be collected. Much of it will be readings from various textbooks. You shell out for these, so there is little limit on the number of books for a given course. Homework assignments may well be written out and attached to your class syllabus.

You know those useless lists of competencies you receive each year courtesy of the Board of Education? In college they are vital resources containing your homework and ways to contact professors and their assistants if you should need help. I didn't know one of my professors names for a week because he hadn't handed out the syllabus yet.

Are you hungry from all that brain work and the workout from running around campus? Just to bum you out, let me tell you there is no lunch time and no main cafeteria. Various residence halls have built-in eateries, mostly buffet style, where

you can go to eat. Every so often they will have something which you can have prepared fresh the way you want it, like omelets or other single serving things.

There are also the various pseudo-commercial vendors and restaurants that seem to have some relationship with the college. Either they have permission to be there or they are renting facilities. You eat when you can and what you can. If you can't stomach the cafeteria food, you find something else somewhere else.

It's the same as it was in high school — cafeteria food isn't always edible. After three months I still had no idea why my residence hall chefs think they can cook Chinese...

So it's noon and you're finished with classes for the day. Yes I said noon, I might also have said 8 p.m. You can finish up any time in between or earlier.

What do you do now? Whatever you want. You can study — there are plenty of places to do that, it is a school after all — or you can relax and have fun. You might even want to nap, especially if you're not

quite used to not having a curfew yet. I can tell you that whatever you do, someone else is probably doing the same thing someplace else on campus. There is never a shortage of people to do things with around campus.

If you want to have fun but avoid the keggers, there are still plenty of options, even at UConn. There are rec centers and some are even housed in the dorms.

I was lucky to have a rec room in my dorm freshman year. I never had to brave the weather to go play pool or darts. Every so often you may want to venture out to forage for supplies. For some reason, possibly because college kids are a captive audience, there are always stores and sales persons around campus. If nothing else, there's the bookstore, where eventually you will have to go to get your textbooks.

You can party or study all night if you want to, but if you decide not to, you have a place to crash. The bed may not be made, but it's your fault if it isn't. Anyway, it's a place to sleep. Unless your roommate snores.

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The best teen journalism in the world. For questions, comments or to join, contact advisors Steve Collins and Jackie Majerus at 523-9632.