From an older student who left a previous career to follow their dream of being a doctor:

First of all, congratulations on taking the brave step into the unknown! Whether you have taken the scenic route to medical school or only recently discovered medicine to be your true passion, leaving the comfort of steady income and security to follow your dream is to be commended. It is one of the qualities that will ensure your excellence as a physician.

Prior to medical school, I completed a post-bac degree, so I did not jump head-first into medical school. I had some time to adjust to the new realities of returning to academic life. Technology has really changed the nature of the classroom with Powerpoints replacing transparencies and laptops replacing hand written notes frantically scribbled in a spiral notebook.

As a student who learned how to learn in the age of transparencies and hand-written notes, it was somewhat difficult to adjust, but with time, I found methods that worked for me. You should use your judgment to design an approach that suits you. Also, I studied most days, but not every day. Some days I chose to do nothing...at all, and the world is still turning. So, if you need a day, take it! Everything will be fine.

Finally, I would encourage you not to be a wallflower. You may feel a bit out of place as an older student, and you may be dismayed by the perceived immaturity. But if you get involved, invest yourself in the medical school, share your knowledge and wisdom with your classmates, and be yourself, you’re equally likely to be impressed by the intelligence, drive, and in fact, maturity of many of your classmates. So, go to the parties, participate in community service, undertake appropriate leadership roles, and enjoy ... no ... relish the experience, because you, perhaps much more pointedly than some of your classmates, are following your dream!

GOOD LUCK!