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# MEDICAL SCHOOL SURVIVAL GUIDE

The best-kept secrets  
to succeed in school

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# Prologue



*The expert in anything was once a beginner.*

Helen Hayes

Becoming a physician is arguably the most gratifying and fulfilling profession. As a physician, you dedicate your life to serving humanity. You will work with people in their times of greatest need, and the impact you can have on someone's life is immeasurable. The practice of medicine itself is dynamic and is always changing. The road from college to attending physician is a long and sometimes torturous one, with many road blocks and hurdles. However, if you stay true to your deep desire to help others and serve humanity, you will sail through these years and enjoy the process of becoming a physician. This eBook is designed to guide you through the logistical and strategic portions of the process of becoming a physician.

Yes, you will have to learn a lot of science and medicine and you will spend countless hours studying. However, just as important will be making the right connections, talking to the right people, developing good study techniques, having great mentors, and learning how to strategically plan your residency application to match into your dream residency program. Join us on this exciting journey and let me guide you down the path of success and achieving your dreams.



**Mohammad  
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MD, MBA

After graduating Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, Dr. Ossareh obtained his Doctorate of Medicine (M.D.) at the University of California, Irvine in 2016. Dr. Ossareh is currently completing his Neurology residency at the LAC+USC Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.

Throughout his years of academic and clinical training, Dr. Ossareh has created and continues to operate the original YouTube Channel for pre-med and medical students with more than 90,000 subscribers and more than 5 million views. Given Dr. Ossareh's years of experience in medical education, viewers will benefit from his practical knowledge base, obtain unique insights into the life of a medical student, and receive priceless pearls of wisdom.



# Presented by **Lecturio**

The all-in-one resource for med school and boards

USMLE® Step 1 & 2 CK, COMLEX® Level 1 & 2



## **Comprehensive Video Library**

Master important concepts with short, concise, and easy-to-follow video lessons taught by teaching experts.



## **Smart Recall Quizzes (Spaced Repetition)**

Retain key information quickly and improve your ability to recall key concepts using our adaptive algorithm, so you know exactly what you need to repeat and when.



## **Clinical Case Questions (Qbank)**

Apply key concepts with clinical case questions and improve your confidence in actual test situations. Review concepts using in-depth text explanations, linked video lectures, and First Aid® references.




## **Medical Concept Pages**

Reinforce your knowledge on challenging concepts using Lecturio's comprehensive Concept Pages including high-quality illustrations, video lessons, and Qbank questions – created and peer-reviewed by U.S.-trained physicians.

02

# PRE-MED SCHOOL

Plan your college years to ensure admission into medical school.



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# Painting a Desirable Portrait of Yourself

Getting into medical school is tougher now than it has ever been in the past. Traditionally, students would spent four years in college and during that time perform some volunteer work and maybe some shadowing. Nowadays, most students spend four years in college while performing countless volunteer, research, and shadowing activities. Then students take one to two years off to do extensive research or community service work, with the hope that all this work permits them acceptance into medical school.

This chapter will discuss the necessary steps to take while in college to strategically design your time so that you can create the most competitive application to medical school. Going from a pre-med student to a medical student is a big transition. Once you have been accepted into medical school, the strategic planning process doesn't stop. Here you learn the necessary academic and logistical parts of life to have in order to reduce distractions while in medical school. You are most likely excited about starting medical school, so let's focus that energy, plan for success, and enjoy the time you have available before medical school starts.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be able to answer the question, "Who am I?"</li><li>• Be able to demonstrate leadership traits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know yourself</li><li>• Learn how to be a leader</li></ul>

## How to get your med school application accepted

- 1

**Self-analyze**  
List all of your personal qualities that you believe make you unique. Next, list all of your accomplishments that you believe show you are creative.



TIP

Present yourself as **thoroughly and interestingly** as possible in order to improve your chances of being accepted into medical school.

- 2

**Demonstrate leadership by engaging in community service**  
Engaging in community service shows you've been an active supporter of your community. But don't participate in community service activities just to impress the medical school admissions committee – they'll see through any such ruse.

# Ace the MCAT®

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Earn an excellent score on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT®)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate your potential to earn an excellent score on the MCAT®</li><li>• Prepare yourself to take the MCAT®</li></ul>



## TIP

There is no official passing score, but it appears that most medical schools admit test-takers who earn a **score of at least 508 or 509** out of a possible 528 total points (they give you 472 points just for showing up).

## Three steps to achieve impressive marks on the performance component

1

### Understand and appreciate why schools depend on the MCAT

Schools have limited seats available in each starting-year's class. This limitation means only those who performed well as an undergraduate get in. In addition, the MCAT® identifies which students are brainy enough to succeed in med school – your undergrad GPA isn't a reliable gauge.

2

### Develop a plan to study for the MCAT®

Search online using the phrase “How to study for MCAT®” to find websites and blogs offering study advice and aids, such as Khan Academy or Lecturio. Include designated time for study in your plan and gradually increase the pace and intensity of study as you get closer to exam day. Expect to spend at least **two months** rigorously studying for the MCAT®.

3

### Show up at the testing center ready to dominate the MCAT®

Be well rested and properly nourished. Therefore, do not study on the day prior to the exam and eat only light meals on test day.



# MCAT® Prep:

## 33-Day Schedule

### 33-day study schedule

This learning path was specifically designed to offer you an effective, concise, and simplified tool to adequately prepare for the MCAT® exam. Each step of this learning path is composed of two parts: a video lecture component and a Qbank component. Our video lectures will give you a walkthrough of the most important topics for the MCAT®. These are followed by tests populated by questions on the topics discussed in the video lectures. You can think of these tests as open-book-style exams, where you will receive immediate feedback on your answers to leverage the “testing effect” as much as possible.



**TIP**

Lecturio provides five distinct learning paths designed to assist you in your preparation to tackle each section of the MCAT® examination.

**Over the course of the 33-day study schedule, you will:**

- Encounter an initial self-assessment to test your capabilities going into the learning path
- Actively watch up to 80 hours of high-yield video lectures
- Test your knowledge with over 2,600 recall questions
- Complete over 1,500 challenging MCAT® questions in a simulated testing environment
- Study 5-6 hours every day
- Take on a final assessment to fully appreciate your development in relation to your initial assessment.

### MCAT® section-specific Qbank training

If you'd like to take on a more focused approach at each section of the exam by only tackling Qbank questions, we've created four learning paths populated with questions on exam-relevant topics for each question, staying true to the actual topic density seen in the MCAT®.

- [Biological and Biochemical Foundations >](#)
- [Chemical and Physical Foundations >](#)
- [Psychological and Social Foundations >](#)
- [Critical Analysis and Reasoning >](#)

# Tout Your Medical Experience

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain meaningful medical experience</li><li>• Obtain a physician written letter of recommendation, endorsing you as deserving to be in medical school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Search for opportunities to be mentored by a physician</li><li>• Search for opportunities to volunteer your time and labor in a clinical setting</li><li>• Do good work so that you'll be rewarded with a good reference letter</li></ul>

## Three steps to show the medical school admissions committee that you have the makings to be a great doctor

1

### **Ask a physician to be your mentor or to allow you to volunteer your services**

You are more likely to gain admission to medical school if you can point to past medical experiences.

2

### **Ask to “shadow” your physician-mentor**

Shadowing means you are at the physician's side while he or she engages in routine daily activities in the office, clinic, or hospital. Shadowing usually results in you receiving a strong letter attesting to your suitability for medical schooling.

3

### **Make a plan to get letters of recommendation from six people**

- Two from people in areas of science
- Two from people in areas away from science
- Two from people in areas related to medicine (at least one should be a physician)

# The Importance of Showing Leadership

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exhibit leadership qualities</li><li>• Exhibit strong core values</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know your leadership strengths and weaknesses</li><li>• Become involved with one or more campus and/or community organizations</li></ul>



## TRUE STORY

Medical schools want to enroll leaders. They don't want to enroll future doctors who will buckle under the pressure and possibly perform unethical, unlawful, or patient-harming behaviors.

## Two steps to exhibit leadership qualities

1

### Self-analyze

Assess your strengths and weaknesses as a leader by taking an online test:

[Forbes magazine](#) >

[Website Mindtools](#) >

More tests can be found via Google search using the phrase “how to know if you have leadership skills.”

2

### Actively work to improve your leadership skills

To improve leadership skills, you can run for an elected position in a campus or community organization, or search for leadership skills/development tips online.

# Be an **Applicant** Who Stands Out

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce a distinctive, powerful, compelling, genuinely impressive personal statement to accompany your application paperwork</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equip yourself to write creatively</li><li>• Improve your analytical thinking ability</li><li>• Be able to answer the question “Who am I?”</li></ul>

## Three steps to produce a personal statement that dazzles the admissions committee

1

### **Take at least one creative writing class**

Creative writing skills will help you answer the core question “Who am I?”. Take creative writing before your junior year of college. Actively work to improve your leadership skills.

2

### **Take at least one philosophy class**

A philosophy class helps you think analytically as you answer the question “Who am I?” Take philosophy before your junior year of college.

3

### **Review your completed personal statement**

Re-read the statement a few days after writing it. Look for and correct weaknesses in logic, construction, tone, pacing, and message. Consider other ways to sharpen and improve your personal statement. Ask others whose opinions you value to read and critique it. Before submitting, thoroughly check your final draft for spelling and grammar errors.

## Example of a well-written personal statement

**By an applicant that made it into med school. Take it as an inspiration but do not copy it! Only a statement that reflects YOU will open the doors of med school to you.**

If I'm being honest with myself, my interest in the human body was largely narcissistic at first. For most of my childhood I had always been "husky" - at least that's the term the sales associates used to describe my body type when I went back-to-school clothes shopping. I wasn't fat, but at some point, like many self-conscious adolescents, I learned what a paunch was and realized that I didn't like having one. Naturally, science, and in particular human anatomy and physiology, became my favorite subjects. Fortunately, over time this interest in biology transcended mere vanity as I learned how impactful nutrition and lifestyle could be on one's well-being. I became ensconced in the ancestral health movement which stresses sleep, stress management, functional fitness, and a diet devoid of processed foods as the keys to reversing and preventing modern, chronic disease. And while university dining halls are certainly not Paleo diet-friendly, simple dietary changes transformed my life.

More importantly, however, this evangelism rubbed off on friends and family, and seeing their blood lipids, energy levels, and general quality of life improve gave me a sense of pride that I had never felt before. I didn't yet want to be a doctor per se, but I knew that I had to find a career that enabled me to do what I had discovered that I loved - helping others recover their health. Body image issues long resolved, my focus shifted so that by the end of my freshman year I was a full-fledged Paleo crusader, ready to save the world one grass-fed rib-eye at a time.

Around this time my best friend and roommate (we'll call him Ryan) began to spiral out of control. He became depressed and withdrawn, stopped going to class, and started doing hard drugs. Over the course of a semester, he unraveled completely—ultimately resorting to credit card fraud in order to support his self-destructive habits. In a matter of weeks, he had become a stranger and a shadow of his former self. My friends and I tried to help, but we were woefully unequipped to deal with this kind of mental health crisis and could not attenuate his precipitous fall. He would eventually reach a breaking point, drop out of school, and move back home.

Though it feels uncomfortable to even discuss myself vis-a-vis his deteriorating psychology, Ryan's tribulations forced me to confront assumptions that I had made about myself. When I discovered the ancestral health movement's emphasis on diet and lifestyle I characteristically dove in headfirst, enthusiastically embracing its tenets and ethos. However, that semester with Ryan forced me to reevaluate my dreams as it became clear that whereas this enthusiasm was the galvanizing force behind my personal and educational pursuits, it also blinded me to my true aspirations. I saw that as a nutritionist the inability to help the patients whose illnesses demanded therapies that I could not provide would ultimately leave me unfulfilled. Watching Ryan's fight confirmed my desire to work on health-care's front lines, but it also opened my eyes to something bigger. I needed more.

So while I still wholeheartedly believe the maxim “let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food,” it was now plain to me that any reticence to pursue a career as a physician had been the result of a failure to see the broader scope of my desire to treat disease. For some, the source of their infirmity may be dietary, but for so many more it may be cancer, or heart disease, or depression. I don't say this to disparage the great work of nutritionists, but to express that I now realized the limited purview of that profession doesn't encompass all my ambitions. As a result, I decided to work at Children's Hospital Los Angeles to see if I was truly ready to commit myself to medicine.

One afternoon, a little boy who had split his scalp jumping off a bunk-bed came into the ED. He was hysterical, frightened by the needle of lidocaine the resident was trying to administer. Nevertheless, the attending adroitly orchestrated the scene, distracting the child while he injected the anesthetic and sutured the laceration. I was hooked. The procedure didn't save that boy's life, in fact it was quite mundane, but that's exactly the point; the attending didn't need to perform an emergency coronary bypass to affect a life. Whether it's administering albuterol to an asthmatic, reinserting a displaced G-tube, or asking about a favorite sports team while one repairs a laceration, this was what I had been looking for, a career helping people in ways both large and small.

My interest in the human body took on new meaning and purpose when it outgrew its self-absorbed origins. Similarly, Ryan and his struggle, and seeing the little ways in which a physician could make an impact, proved to be pivotal crossroads in my path to medical school, as it is now clear to me that only as a doctor will I be truly fulfilled, having earned the charter and privilege to treat every patient that I encounter. Though I have little doubt that there will be more inflection points along the way, I am driven by the profound sense of pride that I get in helping others regain their health. It is this indescribable feeling of gratification that ultimately guides my aspirations as a future clinician.

# Ace the Admissions Interview

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be awesome in your interview with the admissions committee</li><li>• Give the committee abundant good reasons to approve your application</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn how to be interviewed</li><li>• Be ready to answer questions likely to be asked</li><li>• Become adept at using body language to reinforce your spoken words</li></ul>



## TRUE STORY

You go into the interview with a starting advantage: the committee already likes you. But now they have to be persuaded to like you even more.

## Eight steps to clear the final hurdle to getting into medical school

1

### Arrive for the interview exuding confidence

Be the first to extend a firm handshake in greeting.

2

### Show you are mature

Demonstrate inner strength, wisdom, solid core values, and an individualistic nature. Emphasize your life experiences from adulthood rather than those from childhood.

3

### **Answer the questions honestly**

Truthfulness is absolutely essential. Reflect for a few seconds before answering a question. Remember, it's okay to admit you don't know the answer to a question. In case you didn't understand a question, simply ask the interviewer to restate.

4

### **Answer the questions directly**

Don't try to mask gaps in your knowledge or deflect from embarrassing aspects of your life's story. Don't respond in a way that causes the interviewer to ask the same question twice. Don't turn what should be a short answer into a longwinded speech.



**TIP**

Mentally take charge of the interview. Don't let the fact that the interviewers are important people who are a lot older intimidate you. Try to **see them as colleagues**, and interact with them on that basis.

5

### **Anticipate the questions you'll be asked**

Do a Google search for commonly asked interview questions, but don't overrehearse your answers – you'll sound robotic and insincere if you just recite answers during the interview.

6

### **Smile, smile, smile**

Smiling shows you are confident and friendly and also helps you overcome nervousness. But never force a smile.

7

### **Never fold your arms across your chest**

Folded arms signals closed-mindedness, combativeness, and/or cockiness.

8

### **Be ready for this maturity-testing question**

"Tell me about your family?" The best way to answer is to credit your family for having made you the person you are today with regard to the values, views, and beliefs you hold.



# Tips on Housing, Transportation, Food, Exercise, Physical and Mental Health

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fully plan the logistics of daily attending medical school</li><li>• Do a good job executing that plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decide where to live</li><li>• Figure out how to get to and from campus</li><li>• Know what you're going to eat</li><li>• Address baseline health issues</li><li>• Cultivate an exercise habit</li><li>• Deal with emotional issues</li></ul>



## TRUE STORY

Your housing, transportation, meals, and other aspects of daily living won't fall into place on their own. You need to plan for them before you start med school.

Follow these six steps to become worry-free by the first day of medical school

1

**Secure your housing**

Look for a location on or close to campus and choose a quiet home or apartment. If you share a place, give preference to living with other students. Make sure you pick a home or apartment offering ample space for dedicated studying as well as ample good lighting for reading.

**TIP**

You'll spend a lot of time studying. So make sure you get a comfortable desk and chair for your dedicated study space.

2

**Arrange for reliable transportation**

The transportation options to consider are bicycle, car, or public transit. Even if you plan to live on campus, you'll still need reliable transportation for off-campus travel.

3

**Eat the right foods**

Avoid fast-foods or frozen convenience foods.  
Prepare and store meals up to a full week in advance.  
Simplify food preparation as much as possible.

4

**See your regular physician**

Get baseline health issues addressed before you start medical school (this includes dental and vision problems).

5

**Engage in physical exercise on a regular basis**

Plan to devote an hour daily to exercise. If possible, sign up to use the fitness facilities your school offers. If there are none, consider signing up at an off-campus gym.

6

**Don't leave depression, anxiety, grief, or guilt untreated**

Seek care for any baseline mental health problems you have. Develop the skill of introspection to allow you to periodically take stock of yourself. If possible, stay in touch with family and friends from before medical school in order to maintain your social networks. In case you begin to develop desires to harm yourself or others, seek professional help immediately.

# What to Study – and What **NOT** to Study

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study everything that will help you succeed in your courses</li><li>• Avoid wasting time on studies not useful at this stage of your schooling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know what courses will be taught in the first year</li><li>• Fill in any substantive gaps in your knowledge relative to those first-year courses</li><li>• Work only with high-yield materials when filling knowledge gaps</li></ul>

## Five tips for studying before med school

1

### **Resist the temptation to give yourself a head-start on the first-year basic-science courses**

You're likely to study the wrong material anyway.

2

### **Resist the temptation to give yourself a head-start on the second-year courses**

Again, you're likely to study the wrong material. And, even if study the right material, you'll lack the first-year foundation required to truly comprehend it.

3

### **If you feel you must study, limit yourself to material you never studied in college**

Only use that studying to fill in any gaps in your pre-med schooling.

4

**If you feel you must study, use only high-yield materials**

Don't grab a random textbook and start reading. Instead, use high-yield material such as Lecturio's videos.

5

**Do not study for USMLE® before med school (or even during the first year)**

USMLE® prepping at this stage of your schooling is a distraction. It will rob you of precious time to really learn first-year material.



**TRUE STORY**

Anatomy is a course I didn't take in college, which made my first-year of med school more challenging than it needed to be. In first year, I had to learn the major concepts of anatomy AND at the same time focus on the subject's fine details. Had I learned those major concepts before med school started, I would have been able to totally focus on the fine details.

# Get Ready to Enter Med School

Be sociable with your peers

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize that your success and survival in medical school depends on having a social network</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make the effort to get to know your classmates</li><li>• Look for opportunities to engage with your classmates on an ongoing basis</li><li>• Keep in regular contact with not only classmates but also family and friends</li></ul>

## Five steps to be on top of your game, going into medical school

1

### **Avoid becoming isolated**

Having a social support network will help you succeed in medical school and throughout your career as a physician.

2

### **Cultivate an academic support network**

Joining a study group will help you retain more of what you learn and will increase your satisfaction with studying in general. If none meet your needs start a study group of your own.

3

### **Join a Facebook or WhatsApp group that shares your interests**

Look for a group related to what you're learning in class and initiate Facebook or WhatsApp conversations. Give serious considerations to the advice and recommendations offered by participating upperclassmen.

4

### **Don't immediately leave class after the lecture**

Hang around and talk to classmates.

5

### **Keep in touch with your friends outside of school**

Med school is a big part of your life, but not the only one.

03

# MED SCHOOL: 1st YEAR

Learn how to study and manage being  
a medical student.

# MS1:

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# How to Be a Successful Learner



Congratulations, you have been accepted into medical school and you are taking the first official steps to becoming a full-fledged physician! Some days are going to be exciting, filled with first time experiences and ah-ha moments. Other days will be tough, studying for board exams and managing a busy academic schedule.

The classic saying is that learning in medical school is like drinking water from a fire hydrant. While this saying is somewhat dramatic, it is generally true that you will be expected to learn a tremendous amount of information in a very short period of time. The key to the first year of medical school is going to be developing a solid study strategy and learning how to manage the stress of being in medical school. However, don't worry, you will be guided through these important processes and get help to dominate the first year of medical school.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study strategically</li><li>• Strive to recall 90 percent of what you study</li><li>• Get adequate sleep</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acquire the skills required to be an effective learner</li><li>• Master the techniques required to remember more of what you learn</li><li>• Create conditions for seven to eight hours of sound sleep nightly</li></ul>

## Seven steps to study, read and memorize like a top student



### Set up a manageable study schedule

Devote enough daily study hours to let you complete all assigned texts and view related learning videos... but keep it realistic to avoid study burnout. Better not to cram for exams – what you learn by cramming won't be remembered days later.



2

## Develop skills and habits that support effective studying

Time-management skills are essential. Wait at least one hour after waking up in the morning before sitting down to study. Begin by reviewing materials related to the lecture you'll hear in class later that day. Study in blocks of 30 minutes with a 5-minute relaxation break between blocks. After class, review lecture slides and read texts recommended by your professor or watch relevant learning videos (such as Lecturio's). Always review new material the same day it was lectured, then again every two to three days thereafter. Make the completion of a non-study activity (such as jogging) that you do daily to serve as a psychological cue that it's time to begin studying. You should give yourself a reward for completing that day's studying.

**TIP**

Following the Three-Review Rule will help improve your retention of new material. Review it the first time before class, the second time in class, and the third time after class.

3

## Learn to speed read

Speed reading lets you study more material in the limited time you have available. A few hours invested into learning how to speed read will pay off big-time. You can look for online resources that teach you how to do so.

4

## Engage with the materials you're studying

Read aloud to stop yourself from daydreaming. Use (but don't overuse) a highlighter and a regular pen in hand to mark key words or phrases and to make notes. Explain to someone the material you've just read. Playing the role of the teacher incentivizes you to mentally work hard and fully comprehend what you're reading.

5

## Enhance your memory recall

Use Lecturio's high-yield videos and books to reinforce classroom learning. Make sure you have access to a medical reference book, either a hardbound or online version. Create flashcards and test yourself with them daily.

6

## Set a daily time limit for studying

A daily limit is important so you also get enough sleep.

7

## Strive to achieve and maintain "perfect sleep hygiene"

Stop drinking caffeinated beverages five hours before bedtime. Put away or shut off your phone at least five minutes before bedtime. Turn off all lights and light sources and keep your room comfortably cool and quiet.

# Using Resources the Right Way

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Effectively and efficiently use multiple resources to supplement your classroom learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify and acquire the resources that will be most helpful to you</li><li>Learn to maximize your use of those acquired resources</li></ul>

## How to make resources work hard for you, not the other way around

1

### Choose high-yield resources

High-yield means the material is exactly what you must know to pass your medical school exams and the upcoming USMLE® Step exams. Perform a Google search to identify the high-yield resources generally accepted as most valuable to first-year medical students, e.g. BRS book series, Lecturio, FirstAid®.

2

### Choose resources that will help enhance your power of recall

For many people, audio-video resources are best for this purpose, as the stimulation of multiple senses enhances retention. Videos available from Lecturio are the best of breed.

3

### Don't use too many resources

Limit yourself to those you'll actually use. The ideal number for you will be found through trial and error. Keep only those resources that work for you.



**TIP**

Having too many resources is unhelpful because the sheer number will cause you to become befuddled as to which resources should be used for which purposes.

4

## Have a reference book handy

Reference books, such as Guyton & Hall's Textbook of Medical Physiology or Robbins & Cotran's Pathologic Basis of Disease, will give you deeper understanding of concepts covered in class and in your high-yield materials. Read only the applicable sections of this book, not the entire text.

5

## Use question banks (Qbanks)

Qbanks such as Uworld's are a tool to let you test and enhance your knowledge. **Lecturio's Qbanks**, however, are rated exceptionally high in usefulness and ease, too.

Question 27 of 40  
10:42:08 Mark

Auto Translate Lab Values Notes Calculator Reverse color

A researcher is studying the effects of two drugs, drug X and drug Y. She is trying to measure the potential of each drug to achieve a certain response. The graphs in the images show some of his observations. She observes that when drug X acts on its own, it produces a much higher response compared to drug Y. When drug Y is added to the reaction, the maximum efficacy ( $E_{max}$ ) is lower than expected. She decides to add more drug X to increase the  $E_{max}$ , but the efficacy remains low. Which of the following best describes drug Y?

A. Antagonist	24%
B. Full agonist	3%
C. Inverse agonist	6%
D. Competitive antagonist	24%
E. Partial agonist	41%

Next

Result:

Incorrect

Explanation:

Book References:

- First Aid for the USMLE Step 1 (2023, 33rd ed): 233
- First Aid for the USMLE Step 1 (2022, 32nd ed): 235
- First Aid for the USMLE Step 1 (2021, 31st ed): 237, 236
- First Aid for the USMLE Step 1 (2020, 30th ed): 234

Lecturio Feedback End



TIP

Be aware that question banks usually focus on USMLE®, not medical school exams. However, Lecturio gives you both.

# Upperclassmen as a Resource

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tap into the knowledge and experience of upperclassmen</li><li>• Tap into the knowledge and experience of mentors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look for opportunities to engage with upperclassmen</li><li>• Seek mentors</li><li>• Understand how upperclassmen and mentors can help you succeed in med school and beyond</li></ul>

## Three steps to produce a personal statement that dazzles the admissions committee



Realize that you need the wisdom of others who have already walked the path upon which you now tread.

- 1 Introduce yourself to upperclassmen**  
The best way to meet upperclassmen is through school-sponsored social events. Facebook and other social networking sites are also good places to meet them.
- 2 Talk to many upperclassmen, not just a few**  
Gravitate toward those upperclassmen known to be reliable sources of information. Seek input from as many upperclassmen as you can about what to expect on each professor's exams and the USMLE®. Also, ask upperclassmen about the study techniques and resources they found most effective and efficient.
- 3 Find at least one mentor**  
A mentor can be a practicing physician (preferred), a resident, or an upperclassman. Choose mentors who will become invested in your success. Therefore, ask upperclassmen or knowledgeable others to recommend a mentor. Once you found one, ask your prospective mentor if you can shadow him or her during the course of the next few weekends. This helps you determine how well his or her mentoring and style of mentoring aligns with your needs.

# How to Spend Your Summer Vacation

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get the most benefit of your vacation time between the first and second years of school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decide before the end of first year how you will spend those vacation months</li><li>• Strive to use this vacation time strategically</li></ul>

## Three tips on how to have the most personally and professionally meaningful summer vacation ever

1

### **Research the opportunities for how you can spend summer vacation**

Do this in the middle of the first year, not at the end. Ask your mentors to help you identify opportunities that can advance your residency, career, and your life goals. Once identified, learn as much as you can about each opportunity – including requirements, costs, and availability.

2

### **Choose a summer vacation plan that offers you immediate benefits plus future rewards**

Apply for a position helping out at a research lab in order to get your name attached to research publications. This can help when you apply for residency. Alternatively, apply for clinical work locally or abroad. In addition to giving you hands-on experience, this is a great way to build a network of professional contacts.

3

### **Pursue non-academic interests**

Spend at least some time traveling, adventuring, or simply hanging out at the beach and idling away the days can refresh and re-energize you. This helps you enter your second year with enthusiasm and a clear head.



#### **TIP**

Until retirement, you'll never have another summer offering you as much freedom, so plan to make the most of it.

Don't attempt to get a jump on the 2nd-year courses during your summer vacation. This has the fewest immediate benefits and future rewards.

04

# MED SCHOOL: 2nd YEAR

Study efficiently and dominate the  
USMLE® Step 1 exam.

# MS2:

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# USMLE® Step 1:

## Introduction



The second year of medical school has become synonymous with the USMLE® Step 1 exam. All medical students think about is doing well on the Step 1. While this exam is important, the second year of medical school covers information that will be the basis of your knowledge base in your clinical practice.

You will learn how to balance learning the material during the second year of medical school and also how to focus on the high-yield material for USMLE® Step 1. You will learn how to create a USMLE® Step 1 study plan, which resources to use, and how to effectively study with a question bank. These skills are going to be vital for your success in the future as you take future board and medical licensing exams. Grab your notebooks and highlighters, it's time to dominate the boards!

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a study strategy</li><li>• Acquire the best possible resources from which to study</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand what you need to study</li><li>• Identify the resources you need to use</li></ul>

## Two tips on getting started to prepare for the USMLE® Step 1

1

### Adopt a two-stage study strategy

**Stage One:** Review all the basic science topics you studied in first and second year.

**Stage Two:** Practice with USMLE®-style questions in blocks of 40 at a time.

2

### Obtain the right high-yield study resources

The must-have book is **First Aid® for USMLE® Step 1**. Lecturio videos are a great way to review the basic science topics (you can watch at up to 2x speed). You can also use the **Lecturio Bookmatcher**, in both apps for iOS and Android. The Bookmatcher finds Lecturio videos that correlate to whatever you're reading about in First Aid® for USMLE® Step 1 (and most other test-prep books). Acquire USMLE®-style questions from a question bank (also known as a Qbank). Lecturio also has a Qbank that meets the highest quality standards



# How to Study From a Question Bank

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be intimately familiar with how questions are structured and written</li><li>• Be able to answer each question in approx. 90 seconds</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose a question bank (Qbank) that offers questions very similar to those you'll encounter on the USMLE® itself</li><li>• Practice as long until you are able to answer a question in 90 seconds</li></ul>

## Seven tips to get the biggest benefit from practicing with USMLE®-style Qbanks

1

### Set the size of the question block to 40

Why 40? This is the number of questions per block on the USMLE® Step 1 exam, and it's worth getting accustomed to sitting for full blocks of questions. Only practice with questions when you have time to do the full 40.

2

### Choose the options for timed mode and test mode

Timed mode means you will be shown an onscreen countdown timer. The clock will help you monitor your speed in answering each question. Test mode means you must finish all 40 questions before you get to see the answers.



**TIP**

Always try to replicate actual test conditions when you study with Qbank questions. You will build false confidence if you work with only a few questions at a time.

3

### Read the last sentence or two of the question first

This allows you to know what the question will be asking you to do.

4

### Quickly scan the answer choices before reading the entire vignette

This helps you to categorize the question faster.

5

### Carefully read the entire question and then carefully re-read the answer choices

This helps you to eliminate any choices that are obviously wrong or irrelevant. Often, you will be able to instantly eliminate at least one bad answer choice, if it seems very dissimilar to the others.

6

### After completing a block, carefully read each question's supplied answer explanation

This will show you why the answer you chose was right or wrong and it will also show you where your knowledge is lacking. Supplement this review with your study materials and resources.

7

### Get good at spotting "test craft"

The test writers craft some incorrect answers to look like right answers. Watch out for these. They're meant to trick you into choosing them.



Watch our tutorials for

Qbank Walkthrough USMLE® Step 2 >

#### Question Review

A previously healthy 25-year-old woman is brought to the emergency department by her boyfriend for progressive blurred vision. Examination of the eyes reveals loss of horizontal gaze, intact convergence, and nystagmus. A clinical diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) is made, and the patient is started on a course of corticosteroids.

What is the most likely etiology for her eye examination findings?

- Loss of reticular formation
- Loss of frontal eye fields
- Loss of bilateral medial longitudinal fasciculus (MLF)
- Loss of cranial nerve (CN) III
- Loss of cranial nerve (CN) VI

#### Characteristics

Neurology question  
2-step approach  
Stem is required

#### Walkthrough

**Step 1**  
Determine the type of eye disorder

- Abnormal eye findings are **blurred gaze**, and **nystagmus**.
- Blurred vision combined with **loss of misalignment of the eyes** at certain times.
- Intact **convergence** – **adduction** – confirms that the medial rectus and not paralyzed (no CN III palsy).
- A combination of intact convergence suggests that the disorder is related to **convergence movement of the eyes**, with **internuclear ophthalmoplegia** as the most likely diagnosis.

As MS causes generalized demyelination of white matter tracts, internuclear ophthalmoplegia is **usually bilateral** in patients with MS.

#### Question Review

**6**  
Loss of bilateral medial longitudinal fasciculus (MLF)

#### High-yield Facts

MS  
Internuclear ophthalmoplegia  
MLF

# How to Create a Study Schedule for USMLE® Step 1

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carve out as much time as possible for daily USMLE® Step 1 study beginning at the end of your second year</li><li>• Stay sane while studying</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know exactly how many days of dedicated study you have available</li><li>• Know exactly how many hours of each day you can devote to dedicated study</li><li>• Condition yourself to the rigors of taking USMLE® Step 1</li><li>• Avoid burning out during the long weeks of study ahead</li></ul>

## Five steps to learn everything you need to know in time for USMLE® Step 1

1

### Note the key dates to determine how much time you have for dedicated study

These are the dates of your second-year final exams and the USMLE® Step 1. The number of days between those two dates will typically be 45 to 90. That's how many days you have available for dedicated, pedal-to-the-metal USMLE® study.

2

### Line up your study resources

Use a question bank that offers USMLE®-style questions. Refer often to high-yield materials, such as First Aid® or Lecturio videos. Remember, using Lecturio's Book-matcher helps you to find videos that correlate to what you read in First Aid® and other medical reference books.

3

### Plan to complete at least 80 Qbank questions per day

You should be able to read and answer one block of 40 questions in one hour. Also, you should also be able to read each question's answer explanations and review the content in an additional three hours. Total time expended should be 4 hours, thus the expected time required to complete 80 Qbank questions should be 8 hours. Use a two-block study schedule to avoid mentally overloading yourself during those 8 hours of study.

4

### Make studying fun

Don't always study alone. A partner helps you stay enthused about studying. If you must study alone, pick a study location where others will be present, such as a public library.



#### TRUE STORY

When I studied for USMLE® Step 1, I made the mistake of studying alone. I had a miserable time. However, when I studied for USMLE® Step 2, I studied with one of my good friends. We met every single day in the library. This made studying so much better. We were able to reinforce one another and avoid burning out.

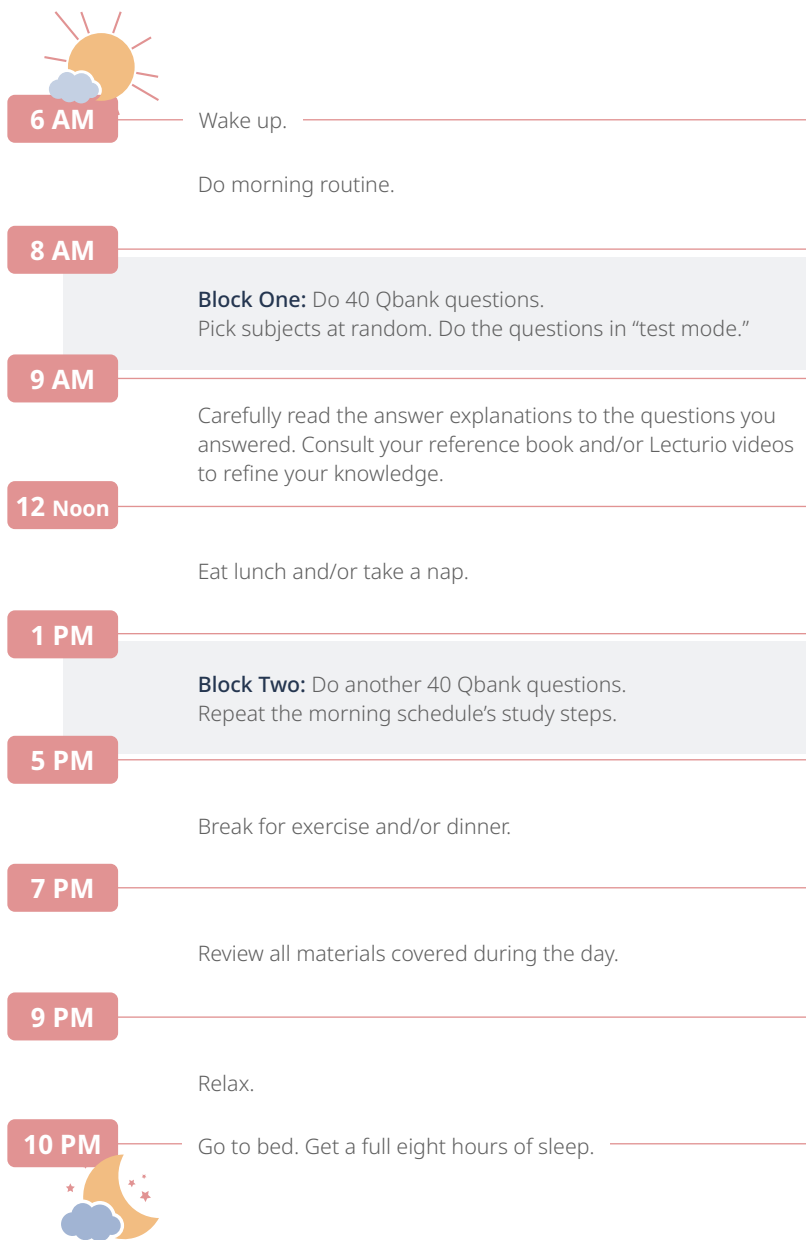
5

### Use NBME practice tests to see how well you are progressing

Take one 50-question NBME test each week for six weeks. Take each test in its entirety and under timed conditions. This gets you conditioned to taking long and fatiguing tests.

Take the first practice test one day before you begin your dedicated USMLE® study. This test will serve as a baseline to show you where you need to improve. Devote more time to studying the subjects for which no NBME score improvements are seen.

# Two-block study schedule example



## USMLE® Step 1 prep: 60-day schedule



Please note: Lecturio provides two unique study schedules in the form of learning paths depending on how much time you have dedicated to prepare for the USMLE® Step 1 examination.

This Learning Path was built to provide medical students preparing for the USMLE® Step

1 with a high-yield, straightforward, succinct, and simplified tool to prepare for the exam.

The study schedule comprises two key study components: a video lesson component and a Qbank component. Leveraging the learning science concepts of active recall, interleaving, and the testing effect, you will be continuously assessed on your comprehension of every topic reviewed.

### Over the course of the 60-day study schedule, you will:

- Encounter an initial self-assessment to test your capabilities going into the learning path
- Actively watch 188 hours of high-yield video lectures
- Test your knowledge with almost 7000 recall questions
- Complete 1,300 challenging USMLE® questions using the Lecturio Qbank
- Study 3–5 hours every day
- Take on a final assessment to fully appreciate your development in relation to your initial assessment.

## USMLE® Step 1 prep: 21-day intensive Qbank training

This Qbank training has been meticulously crafted to provide you with intense, realistic, and comprehensive exam practice for the USMLE Step 1 exam. It assumes you have already begun revising the key concepts for the Step 1 exam and want to apply your knowledge to clinical case scenarios to enhance your test-taking skills and truly get Step 1-ready.

Each day of the schedule plans for you to work through a carefully curated set of Qbank questions that cover all the topics tested on the exam, categorized by their respective subjects. The exam-simulating environment will ensure you are not just prepared for the content of the questions, but practice your test-taking skills under realistic conditions.

# How to Focus for Final Exams and USMLE® Studying

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>As test day nears, devote yourself fully to studying for that exam</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Design, implement, and adhere to a plan to study for finals and USMLE®</li><li>Let no one and nothing interfere with your studies</li></ul>

## Four steps to be confident of passing your final exams and USMLE® Step 1

1

### **Tune-out people who negatively impact your mood and mental state**

Your mental state is vitally important. Pay no attention to those who say or do things with the potential to take you out of your game.

2

### **Associate with people who uplift you**

The enthusiasm of others is infectious. People who keep your spirits high are essential to your ability to perform well on exam day.

3

### **Create study plans**

Plan 1: Second-year finals

Plan 2: Transition period into USMLE®

Plan 3: Dedicated USMLE®

Create all three plans prior to the middle of your second year.

4

### **Make sure your study plan includes use of high-yield resources**

Make a list of the high-yield resources you want to use, including new resources and those you used previously. Then narrow the list. To do so, also consult upperclassmen for recommendations.

# How to Take USMLE® Step 1

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Properly prepare yourself mentally and physically for the exam</li><li>• Maintain focus and energy during the entire exam</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Become familiar with the testing environment before test day</li><li>• Maximize your use of break time</li><li>• Take steps to promote focus and energy</li></ul>

## Follow this routine to crush USMLE® Step 1 (and not be crushed by it)

1

### **Make test day worry-free and trouble-free**

Familiarize yourself before test day with all the steps required to be admitted into the Prometric testing center. One way to do this is to schedule a practice test at a Prometric testing center before test day – it simulates the things you'll encounter on test day.

On test day, wake up early. Bring multiple copies of your scheduling permit as a precaution. Store one of the extras in your car's glove box, one in your wallet, etc. Skip the test-day 15-minute tutorial – you can and should see a more in-depth tutorial online before test day on Prometric's website. Add that saved time to your break allotment.

**Always click “pause”** before starting a break. Plan to lose 5 minutes of break each time you pass through the security checkpoint to get back inside the testing room.

Do nothing suspicious during the test – your every movement is captured by video and audio surveillance devices.





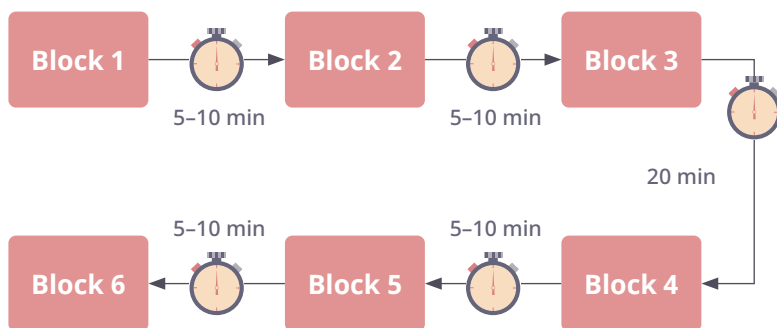
### TIP

Wear layered clothing to the test center because it's usually cold inside the building, but it can suddenly warm up. Stay comfortable by removing layers as interior temperatures rise.

## 2

### To maintain focus and energy, take a break after completing each block

Use the bathroom every time you break – even if you don't feel like you need to use it. During the Block 1, 2, 4, and 5 breaks, eat a few bites of an apple and one-quarter of a sandwich, then drink a few sips of water, coffee, or tea. During the Block 3 break, eat one whole sandwich. Also, treat yourself to a few minutes of full-body tense-and-release exercise.



### TIP

Avoid energy drinks and sugary foods/drinks.



05

# MED SCHOOL: 3rd YEAR

Throw on your white coat and start learning from patients.

# MS3:

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|---|---|

# How Hospital Teams are Composed and How to be a Star Member of Yours



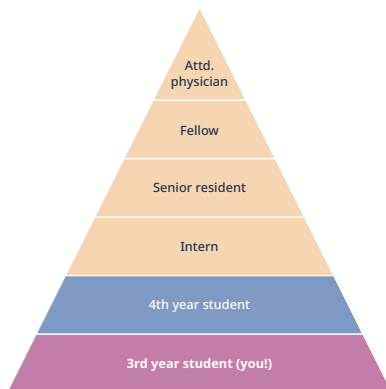
Patients at last! You are finally out of the classroom and in the clinics and on the wards. You are wearing a crisp white coat and are ready to palpate every abdomen and auscultate every heart you can find. Don't get ahead of yourself: focus this energy you have on clinical medicine. As much as you need to have a dedication and passion for treating your patients, you

are still a student and you are working to obtain excellent grades as they will be scrutinized in your residency application. In the modern day of medicine, the top students are not the ones that know the most. In fact, the top students are those who have access to the information and are organized and have a plan.

We are going to focus on the strategy that you need to excel in the clinical years. You will learn how hospital teams operate, how to make yourself shine as a student, and also how to get the most out of your clinical training. Grab your stethoscope and reflex hammer, it's time to start treating patients!

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand how a hospital team functions</li><li>• Become familiar with each member's role</li><li>• Be a cohesive member of the team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know what's expected of you as a member of that team</li><li>• Make yourself indispensable to the team</li><li>• Show leadership</li></ul>

# Eleven steps to help you earn praise from your teammates



1

## Understand the hierarchy of the team

2

## Treat the attending physician with utmost respect

The attending is the most senior member of the team. He or she teaches all other members of the team and supervises the medical care they deliver. The attending conducts daily rounds (usually in the morning) with the team in tow and asks you questions to test your medical knowledge.

3

## Develop a close relationship with the fellow

The fellow has completed residency. He or she supervises the team when the attending physician is unavailable. The fellow is a highly accessible resource that you should draw upon to the fullest extent possible.

4

## Treat the senior resident respectfully

The senior resident is the backbone of the team. He or she does most of the work.

5

## Rely on the intern for help getting ready to participate in daily rounds

The intern is actually a first-year resident – he or she does the grunt work, like taking notes on each patient. This will be you soon!

6

## Seek advice from the fourth-year med student

The fourth-year med student is on the team to either complete a sub-internship or to complete rotations needed to graduate. He or she will have the clearest memories of the demands placed on third-year students and will be most sympathetic to the challenges you face.

7

## **Be ready to perform the three main tasks third-year med students are typically assigned**

1. Co-carry a few patients with the intern
2. Present those patients to the attending physician
3. Give presentations to the team on designated topics

**TIP**

Take advantage of every opportunity that arises to see a patient or help out the team.

8

## **Be an actively engaged member of the team**

The team members senior to you want to see that you are hungry to learn and eager to contribute. Being passive or otherwise disengaged will damage your chances of rising to the top of your class.

9

## **Know your assigned patient better than anyone else on the team**

You'll likely have between one and five patients assigned to you. Be able to recite each patient's most recent lab values and scheduled procedures plus their exact time and date.

10

## **Practice presenting**

Read as much as you can about the patient's illness so that you can talk about it competently. Before delivering your presentation, go over it with the intern and adjust your presentation as he or she suggests.

11

## **Try doing some of the work the fourth-year students do**

Start by carefully observing how the fourth-year students work and act.

# How To Be an Amazing MS3

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Become an indispensable asset to your assigned team</li><li>• Maximize the opportunities to learn from the hands-on clinical experiences provided by rotations</li><li>• Reinforce the hands-on learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help the residents and interns increase their productivity while lightening their workload</li><li>• Help the other members of the team to be successful</li><li>• Use proper etiquette while participating in rounds</li><li>• Budget your time to permit beneficial activities</li></ul>

## Follow these 12 steps when starting a new rotation

- 1 Keep in mind residents and interns on your team were once themselves students.**
- 2 Be a team player!**

Arrive at hospital 10-15 minutes before your rotation begins to introduce yourself. **Be friendly!** **Be excited** about being on the team. **Be engaged.** Be someone people want to interact with. Don't be a quiet lump in the corner. There are two types of med student no one wants to work with – the student who never talks and the student who is annoying.
- 3 Request the phone numbers of everyone on your team**

The team is your family, so make it possible for them to stay in contact. Recognize that teams hate it when they can't find you. The worst thing someone can ever write on your evaluation is 'medical student was difficult to find; always gone'.

4

**Ask the team what work needs to get done – then actually get it done!**

This distinguishes you as a hard worker and helps you fit into the team – so it is **very** important. Pay attention to the work the team is doing and try to figure out how you can assist.

Before leaving your home to go to the hospital, see if the hospital allows sign-in from off-site. Yes? Then peek at patients on your service for a heads up on how many came in overnight. Good to know before arriving whether you should expect being slammed with cases or if the workload will be light. The more you can do for the resident means the less work the resident has to do. The less work the resident has to do, the better the resident's life – and the more you'll look like an asset to the team.

5

**Utilize the people above you – your intern or the resident. Learn the routine from them**

Seeing patients is new to you. Utilize the people above you for guidance. Don't be shy! When you have questions, ask!

6

**Know the routine and stick to it**

Attend sign-out and pay attention to what the team whose shift is ending tells you about each old and new patient. Key to success: don't rely on your memory. Write it down.

**TRUE STORY**

I've been at sign-out in the morning, the night team is tired and wants to go home, they're telling us the new patients, and my 3rd year medical student is passively listening. No, no. That's not how you're going to do it. You're going to be actively listening to the night team. And, when they're done talking, you're going to turn to resident and say, 'Hey, can I take that stroke patient? Can I take that G.I. colitis patient?' Or whatever the patient is. You want to be actively engaged. The resident is going to be impressed. He or she needs to feel your energy.



7

## Be focused in the workroom

Read about the newly accepted patients. Review old patients' overnight events, vitals and lab values, new imaging – figure out changes that need to be made to plan.

**Old patients:** visit patient (ask resident if he/she wants to accompany you). Do quick history/physical, assess status/progress.

**New patients:** read the admission note (H&P note, prepared by overnight team). Become familiar with the patient's problem/status/treatment regimen. Then visit and examine.



TIP

The majority of questions you receive from your attending will be about your new patient. Be ready to be quizzed about why the patient is here and why this particular treatment has been ordered. Prepare for the quizzing by reading up on the basics of this condition. Don't be clueless.

8

## Be professional when you and your team round to see patients at bedside

- No horseplay
- Blend in, don't stand out – but pay attention and be engaged
- No playing on your phone
- Follow the lead of the attending or the residents to know when it's appropriate to be more casual
- Don't interrupt other students during their presentations

9

## Know your attending's preferences

Ask your resident to tell you well ahead of time what your attending expects of you during rounds (a co-examination) so that you can accommodate the attending and get the most teaching in return.



The majority of questions you receive from your attending will be about your new patient. Be ready to be quizzed about why the patient is here and why this particular treatment has been ordered. Prepare for the quizzing by reading up on the basics of this condition. Don't be clueless.

10

### **After rounds, return to the workroom and complete your assigned tasks**

When you write notes, make them as compete and comprehensible as possible. If not assigned to write notes, ask the team what you can do to be most helpful. Put in orders and conduct consults.

Don't sit there like a bump on a log – your goal is to be constantly giving to the team so that you can receive in return the best teaching.

11

### **Attend lunchtime lectures or academic sessions**

Be professional during the lectures. Do not play with your phone or engage in other rude activities that demonstrate you're not paying attention to the lecturer.

12

### **Fill out the remainder of your shift by performing any work required by your team**

If the workload lightens and you find yourself with time on your hands, fill it by reading up on conditions and diseases you saw earlier in the day. Or watch related Lecturio videos.

At the close of your shift, talk to your residents and interns about the work that needs to be done to prepare the sign-out for the arriving team. Show that you can be counted on daily to do a good job preparing sign-out and the residents will probably teach you how to also present it to the night team residents.

Upon arrival home, spend 30–60 minutes reading more about your patients' conditions and diseases. Go to sleep early to wake up fresh for the demands of the day ahead.

# How to Effectively Present a Patient

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Master using the SOAP format for presenting patients to the attending physician and/or residents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strive to always use the SOAP format when presenting patients in order to make your presentations stronger and more impressive</li><li>Be flexible in how you use SOAP; it is meant to be a guideline, not a rigid rule. Adapt it as required to satisfy the needs or preferences of the attending physician and/or residents to whom you are presenting.</li></ul>

## SOAP Note

SOAP Note	
Definition	SOAP is the internationally accepted format used by physicians to present patients' information to one another in a well-organized and understandable manner.
Meaning	<div>SOAP is an <b>acronym</b>:</div> <div><div><div>S</div><div>O</div><div>A</div><div>P</div></div><div><div>Subjective</div><div>Objective</div><div>Assessment</div><div>Plan</div></div></div> <div></div>

# 1

## Use the “subjective” section of the SOAP format to report patient-supplied information

- Chief complaint
  - » • Why is the patient here?
- HPI – history of present illness
  - » When did it start? Where is it located?
  - » Is this an acute, sub-acute, sub-chronic, or chronic condition?
  - » How is the character of the chief complaint described? What is the quality and severity of it?
  - » What are the factors that appear to aggravate or lessen severity?
  - » What prompted today's visit to the hospital?
- Past medical and surgical history
- Medications and allergies
- Family and social history
- Review of symptoms



### TIP

Write or type what the patient says about his or her health complaint in the patient's own words, not yours. For example, if the patient tells you 'It burns when I pee,' don't state 'Patient complains of symptoms of a urinary tract infection.' Instead, state 'Patient says it burns when she pees'

# 2

## Use the “objective” section of the SOAP format to report clinical data

- Vitals
- Lab values
- Imaging results
- Procedure results

# 3

## Use the “assessment” section of the SOAP format to state your opinion about the patient's problems

Base your opinion on the subjective and objective inputs you have acquired. Convey your opinion in a short but complete and accurate statement.

4

#### **Use the “plan” section of the SOAP format to recommend how the patient’s problems should be addressed**

Consult medical literature or watch Lecturio videos pertaining to the patient’s complaints in order to better understand the problem and its customary treatments before making your plan recommendations.

5

#### **Thoroughly prepare for each presentation**

Tell your audience everything they must know about the patient’s problems with a well-prepared presentation.

6

#### **Present calmly and with confidence**

This bolsters your reputation for being a successful student.

7

#### **Adapt your presentation in accordance with verbal or non-verbal cues supplied by your audience**

To speed up or condense the presentation, offer only the most important points from each SOAP section. If you are unsure about how detailed your presentation should be, listen to your instincts and/or seek advice from your team.

8

#### **Take presenting seriously**

Do not blow it off – you are graded on the organization and delivery quality of each presentation you make. This is why mastery of the SOAP presentation format is so important!



The worst thing that can happen during rounds is to give a disorganized presentation, even if it was accurate. To your attending and residents, it’s the equivalent of nails scratching across a chalkboard. This is why you should follow the SOAP format and do a thorough job preparing for the presentation.

## Example of what a SOAP note should look like

SOAP Note			
	Princeton Plainsboro Hospital	12/12/2017	11:47 AM
Patient	Name: Smith, John	MRN# 123456	DOB: 01/01/1971
Subjective	<p>46 yo M c/o retrosternal chest pain. The pain started 30 minutes before the patient presented to the ED. The pain woke the patient from sleep at 7:00 A.M. with a steady 9/10 pressure sensation in the middle of his chest that radiated to the left arm, upper back, and neck. Nothing makes it worse or better. Nausea, sweating, and dyspnea are also present. Similar episodes have occurred during the past 3 months, 2-3 times/ week. These episodes were precipitated by walking up the stairs, strenuous work, sexual intercourse, and heavy meals. Pain during these episodes was less severe, lasted for 5-10 minutes, and disappeared spontaneously or after taking antacids.</p> <p><b>ROS:</b> Negative except as above. <b>Allergies:</b> NKDA. Medications: Maalox, ramipril. <b>PMH:</b> Hypertension for 5 years, treated with a ramipril. High cholesterol, managed with diet. GERD 10 years ago, treated with antacids. <b>SH:</b> 1 PPD for 25 years; stopped 3 months ago. Occasional EtOH, occasional cocaine for 10 years (last used yesterday afternoon). No regular exercise; poorly adherent to diet. <b>FH:</b> Father died of lung cancer at age 72. Mother has peptic ulcers. No early coronary disease.</p>		
Objective	<p>Patient is in severe pain.</p> <p><b>VS:</b> BP 165/85 mm Hg (both arms) <b>RR:</b> 22/minute.</p> <p><b>Neck:</b> No JVD, no bruits.</p> <p><b>Chest:</b> No tenderness, clear symmetric breath sounds bilaterally.</p> <p><b>Heart:</b> Apical impulse not displaced; <b>RRR:</b> normal S1/S2; no murmurs, rubs, or gallops.</p> <p><b>Abdomen:</b> Soft, nondistended, nontender, + BS, no HSM.</p> <p><b>Extremities:</b> No edema, peripheral pulses 2+ and symmetric.</p>		
Assessment	<p>46 y/o M with severe chest pain. DDx included myocardial infarction based on the character and location of pain, GERD based on history and pain site, and cocaine induced ischemia based on the history.</p>		
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain EKG</li> <li>• Cardiac enzymes (CKMB, Troponin)</li> <li>• LFTs, RFTs, electrolytes</li> <li>• TTE</li> </ul>		

# How to Prepare to See Patients

and super-impress your hospital team

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be able to thoroughly and competently evaluate each patient admitted</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a mental framework to permit an immediate and proper response to each request from the team to admit a new patient</li><li>• Learn to think like a physician</li></ul>

## Seven steps to succeed on your journey to hospital team rockstardom

1

**Inform the team you're en route to the patient as soon you receive a request for help**

If the request comes via text or other electronic means, confirm receipt immediately.

2

**Get instructions if none are given**

Ask where the patient is located, i.e., emergency department, assigned room, procedure area. Find out if the patient needs to be seen immediately or if there is time to first review the patient's records in order to gain useful insights.

3

**Get basic information about the patient**

Age. Sex. Chief complaint.

4

### **Look up the differential diagnosis for the chief complaint**

Your objective is to come up with a list of possible explanations for the patient's problem. The list will be narrowed as you gather history from the patient. Before looking up the differential diagnosis, draw on what you've been taught thus far to speculate on what it might be.

5

### **Think about very specific questions to ask the patient**

The answers will help you narrow down the differential diagnosis. Begin by reviewing any available notes and diagnostic information. This exercise will spark your thinking about questions to ask.

6

### **Think about which specific physical exam techniques and diagnostic tests would be most helpful to further narrow the differential diagnosis**

Having thought these through will help you to be more dynamic in your engagement with the patient. The senior members of the team will be impressed.

7

### **Be ready to answer questions about the patient's condition.**

Exude confidence when answering the resident's questions. If you get an answer wrong, don't let it shake your confidence. Make a note of the right answer and review the information later and use this as a learning opportunity.



# How to Develop Good Relationships and Solid Professionalism Skills

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fully integrate with the team</li><li>• Earn superior marks on your third-year evaluations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be active and engaged with the team</li><li>• Make friends with the team's individual members</li></ul>

## Five steps to become a valued and important member of your rotation teams

1

### **Send an introductory email to the team point-person**

Because first impressions are lasting impressions, explain you're sending the email to find out what you can do to get a head-start on helping the team.

2

### **Provide your contact information to each member of the team and ask for their information**

Remember that you were told to do this a couple of pages ago? So in case you haven't done it yet, now is the time. Being connected is key! This will allow your team members to find you the moment they need you and not to have to look for you, and vice versa.

3

### **Do as the team does**

You and the team are a unit, so act like it. For example, go to lunch when the team goes to lunch or work on notes when the team works on notes. If the team is working on notes and you have none of your own, ask if anyone would like your help with theirs.



Don't make this guy's mistake. It was the first day, and a third-year strolls in at 8 a.m. Rounds don't begin until 9, so he thinks he's an hour early. He was actually two hours late. We all got there at 6, and by 8 had already discussed and assigned the patients. So, when we did rounds, this guy had no patient to present to the attending. The third-year student looked bad as a result. And the rest of us looked bad because the attending thought we screwed up managerially by not assigning the student a patient.

4

#### **Be professional at all times**

You have read this before, but this is such a crucial point that it needs to be repeated: Your school will note on your transcript if you engaged in unprofessional conduct – your viability for residency will be negatively impacted by such a notation.

Show respect to your superiors – disrespectfulness is a potential career-killer.

5

#### **Identify the boundaries set by your team**

If your team is formalistic, conduct yourself in accordance with its conventions. If your team is informal, know how much casual behavior will be tolerated.



**TIP**

Think of yourself as a guest of the team, and abide by its rules.

# How to Lay the Groundwork for **Crushing Your Required Exams**

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition successfully from classroom learning to learning in the clinical setting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop the ability to learn from each patient's medical problems</li><li>• Identify, acquire, and utilize essential high-yield study resources</li></ul>

## Three tips to study for shelf exams and the USMLE® Step 2

1

### **Develop new study skills that permit you to learn while in a clinical setting**

Read daily about each patient's complaints. This requires you to look up each complaint in relevant high-yield resources.

2

### **Select resourcesn**

- Acquire high-yield resources specific to each rotation
- At least one question bank should be among your resources
- A single-reference textbook is critically important
- Consult residents and others on your clinical team for specific resource recommendations

3

### **Have your resources planned, acquired, and at your fingertips by the time you need them**

Create a convenient context for you to start learning. Get rid of all potential distractions that could make you procrastinate – sit down and learn.

06

# MED SCHOOL: 4th YEAR

Strategically plan your residency application and match into your top choice program.

# MS4:

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# Conquering the Biggest Challenge on Your Journey to Becoming an MD

“

The final year of medical school. You have made it through the basic science years, shown your clinical skills during your core rotations of third year. Now it is time to take all that hard work and organize it into the resident application. Also, you will need to take USMLE® Step 2, complete your sub-internships in your specialty of choice, and obtain letters of recommendation for your residency application. The fourth year of medical school has the most number of simultaneous moving parts. But have no fear, we are here to clearly lay out the necessary tasks you have to perform and also the strategy to follow to have a fun fourth year of medical school and match into your top choice residency program.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Successfully complete all sub-internships</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn everything you can about what will be expected of you in each sub-internship</li><li>• Fully satisfy those expectations</li></ul>

## Four steps will help you rock all your sub-internships

1

### **Aim to perform one level higher**

Strive to impress the residents and attending physician by preparing like you're already a full intern. Try always to provide at least basic treatment-plan recommendations for the patients you see.

2

### **Acquire recommendation letters**

The recommendation letters you need most will come from the residents and attending physicians you truly impressed in your sub-internships. The more powerful the letter, the better your chances of matching into the residency program you want.

3

### **Make sure you complete all required sub-internships**

Until you complete them, you won't be allowed to graduate from medical school. Strive for excellence during each required sub-internship, even if it's in a specialty different from the one you've chosen for residency.

4

### **Consider performing an "away rotation"**

Do this if you are keen to get into a specific residency program offered by an institution elsewhere in the country or world.

# How to Become a Part of the Medical Team

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinguish yourself in the eyes of the team's leaders</li><li>• Gain acceptance into the residency pool</li><li>• Equip yourself with strategic resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show you are an active worker</li><li>• Understand how presenting patients as a third-year student is different from presenting them as a fourth-year student</li><li>• Develop good rapport with the resident</li></ul>

Follow these four steps to become a super-impressive team member

- 1

**Focus on managing patients**

When you see patients, make sure you ask relevant, well-conceived questions.
- 2

**Share with the resident your ideas for managing the patient**

Use the resident as a sounding board. Be receptive to his or her suggestions for improving your management plan. Solicit suggestions if none are offered. Be sure to ask the resident to explain the medical rationale underlying his or her suggestions and incorporate the suggestions into your revised plan.
- 3

**Present the patient by using the SOAP format you learned in 3rd year**

The SOAP format will help ensure your presentation is logically organized and smooth-flowing. Emphasize the “assessment” and “plan” elements of the SOAP format. Avoid making fundamental errors on simple presentations at all costs.
- 4

**Include relevant research findings in your presentation that will help justify the treatment plan you’ve chosen**

Read the full paper or journal article from which the research findings come. Your objective is to adequately justify to the attending physician your treatment plan’s components.



# When and How to Request a Strong Letter of Recommendation

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain feedback about your performance as a sub-intern</li><li>• Obtain letters of recommendation that will help you match into your desired residency program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the right people to ask for letters of recommendation</li><li>• Ask for letters at the right time and in the proper way</li></ul>

## Five tips that help you secure recommendation letters that will go a long way toward getting you into your dream residency

1

### **Request performance feedback from attending physicians and residents**

Do this in the middle of each rotation. Make your request at a time when the attending and residents appear to be least busy. The feedback helps you understand how to improve your performance.

2

### **Act upon whatever feedback you receive**

Acting upon feedback demonstrates to the senior members of the team that you are interested in improving.

3

### **Request performance feedback a second time**

Do this one week prior to the end of your sub-internship. This shows your continued interest in personal and professional growth.

4

### **Ask the attending physician to write a strong letter of recommendation on your behalf**

Do this when he or she finishes giving you the end-of-rotation feedback. Make your request at a time when the attending physician appears to be least busy. State your request like this: “Can I ask you for a strong letter of recommendation to support my residency application?” – **actually use the word “strong”**.



**TIP**

The strongest letters of recommendation will be those in which the writer mentions that you solicited feedback and then acted on it to improve your performance on the team.

5

### **Express your gratitude before the attending physician agrees to write the letter**

Make clear when you ask for the letter that you would be grateful and honored to have his or her recommendation.

# How to Set Yourself Up for Success on USMLE® Step 2



## TIP

Lecturio provides two unique study schedules in the form of learning paths depending on how much time you have dedicated to prepare for the USMLE® Step 2 examination.

## USMLE® Step 2 prep: 49-day schedule

This Learning Path was built to provide medical students preparing for the USMLE® Step 2 with a high-yield, straightforward, succinct, and simplified tool to prepare for the exam.

The study schedule comprises two key study components: a video lesson component and a Qbank component. Leveraging the learning science concepts of active recall, interleaving, and the testing effect, you will be continuously assessed on your comprehension of every topic reviewed.

### Over the course of the 49-day study schedule, you will:

- Encounter an initial self-assessment to test your capabilities going into the learning path.
- Actively watch 154 hours of high-yield video lectures
- Test your knowledge with over 5500 recall questions
- Complete 1,388 challenging USMLE® questions using the Lecturio Qbank
- Study 4–6 hours every day
- Take on a final assessment to fully appreciate your development in relation to your initial assessment.

# USMLE® Step 2 prep: 21-day intensive Qbank training

This Qbank training has been meticulously crafted to provide you with intense, realistic, and comprehensive exam practice for the USMLE® Step 2 exam. It assumes you have already begun revising the key concepts for the Step 2 exam and want to apply your knowledge to clinical case scenarios to enhance your test-taking skills and truly get Step 2-ready.

Each day of the schedule plans for you to work through a carefully curated set of Qbank questions that cover all the topics tested on the exam, categorized by their respective subjects. The exam-simulating environment will ensure you are not just prepared for the content of the questions, but practice your test-taking skills under realistic conditions.



Watch our tutorials for

[Qbank Walkthrough USMLE® Step 2](#)

### Question Review

A previously healthy 25-year-old woman is brought to the emergency department by her boyfriend for progressive blurred vision. Examination of the eyes reveals loss of horizontal gaze, intact convergence, and nystagmus. A clinical diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) is made, and the patient is started on a course of corticosteroids.

What is the most likely etiology for her eye examination findings?

- A Loss of reticular formation
- B Loss of frontal eye fields
- C Loss of bilateral medial longitudinal fasciculus (MLF)
- D Loss of cranial nerve (CN) III
- E Loss of cranial nerve (CN) VI

### Characteristics

Neurology question  
2-step approach  
Stem is required

### Walkthrough

**Step 1**  
Determine the type of eye disorder

- Abnormal eye findings are **blurred gaze**, and **nystagmus**.
- Blurred vision combined with loss of **misalignment of the eyes** at certain angles.
- Intact **convergence** – **adduction** – confirms that the medical rectus and not paralyzed (no CN III palsy).
- A combination of intact convergence suggests that the disorder is related to **convergence movement of the eyes**, with **internuclear ophthalmoplegia** as the most likely diagnosis.

### Walkthrough

**Step 2**  
Determine the anatomical structure affected in this eye disorder

As MS causes generalized demyelination of white matter tracts, internuclear ophthalmoplegia is **usually bilateral** in patients with MS.

### Question Review

**C**  
Loss of bilateral medial longitudinal fasciculus (MLF)

### High-yield Facts

MS  
Internuclear ophthalmoplegia  
MLF

07

# MED SCHOOL: INTERNATIONAL

Learn how to successfully apply and match into U.S. residency programs as an IMG.

# Graduation is Only the Beginning



You have likely completed medical school, residency, or even worked as an attending abroad and you wish to start practicing in the United States. Making such a transition is honorable and your dedication to humanity is unquestionable. The process of matching into a U.S. residency program is more complex for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and the process

is rattled with specific deadlines, applications to complete, and a unique strategy to follow to ensure that you will match into a U.S. program. Coming in as an IMG is a challenge and many hurdles will be in your way. However, we will provide you with a clear road map of the steps to take logistically and strategically to make the road from IMG to U.S. physician as seamless as possible.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Become eligible to sit for each of the three USMLE® exams</li><li>• Become eligible to match into a U.S.-based residency program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know and satisfy the requirements for USMLE® eligibility and Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification</li></ul>

## Follow these four steps to take your medical training to the next level

1

### Comply with USMLE® eligibility requirements

If your medical school is outside the U.S. or Canada, verify that it's listed in the World Directory. Produce proof of completion of two years of instruction from your medical school. Alternatively, produce proof of graduation (a diploma plus certification by an official of your school).

2

### **Apply to take USMLE® via ECFMG**

Use the ECFMG Interactive Web Applications system at <http://lectur.io/ecfmf>. Do not apply to USMLE® via NBME – only students attending school inside the U.S. and Canada may apply through NBME.

3

### **Find the country nearest you where the USMLE® is offered**

Figure out how you will get there, where you will stay, and how you will get to the testing and evaluation center.

4

### **Apply for a U.S.-based residency program**

Acceptance into the program you choose requires ECFMG certification – you'll receive it after USMLE® relays your results for all three exams and you supply proof of graduation. Complete all USMLE® exams in the August prior to the year you want to begin residency. Obtain an H1-B temporary worker visa via the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service. Alternatively, obtain via the U.S. embassy or consulate in your country a J-1 exchange visitor visa.

# Medical School Survival Guide – Epilogue

**Congratulations! You are going to become a great physician and excel in the field of medicine.**

How do we know this? You have already shown significant dedication by reading this e-book and by making it to the end (or maybe you are just skipping ahead for a sneak peak). Your interest in self-growth and your future is a sign that you will do marvelous things in your medical career. Regardless of where you are in your medical training, remember that the hard work will eventually pay off. A patient with Anton Syndrome (look it up – it's an interesting neurological condition) once said: "all days are good, some are better than others." This patient was right, being in the field of medicine is a luxury. You have the honor of being able to help people when they need help the most. Continue to work hard, take on the hurdles that will arise in the future, and battle the days where all you want to do is sleep and stop studying or working.

Remind yourself that many have come before you and they have accomplished the rigorous task of becoming an attending physician. You will soon be there. We wish you the best of luck, and as always, enjoy your studies!



# Achieve Mastery of Medical Concepts

with an AI-powered platform built for medical students (incl. MDs, DOs, PAs, MBBS) and NPs.

