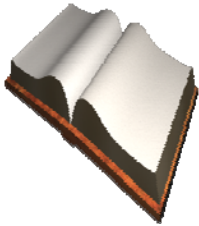


Surviving and Thriving as a Medical Student

When you get to medical school, you will find that certain techniques you used in undergrad (cramming, rote memorization – you know what we’re talking about!) **DON’T** cut it. Students who want to not only survive but also thrive in medical school must master five study-skill areas. Learning to master them now can help you adjust to medical school more easily. They are:



- Active listening
- Involvement in class discussions
- Good note-taking
- Getting the most out of reading
- Effective exam preparation

Be an Active Listener in Class

- Sit close to the front of the room
- Focus your attention on what the instructor is saying
- Evaluate what you hear and relate it to other things you already know. Note it on paper
- Ask questions to clarify anything you don’t understand

Get Involved in Class Discussions

- Be prepared for each class session
- Participate, but don’t dominate
- Ask questions
- Verbally summarize what you think you’ve heard
- Respect the opinions of others

Take Good Notes

- Use a binder and write in ink
- Date each session
- Record the lecturer’s main points in your own words instead of simply writing everything the speaker says verbatim
- Listen for key words
- Make sure to have a copy of any visual materials presented
- Use as few words as possible- devise symbols and abbreviations
- Leave extra space so that you can add notes and questions
- Take notes in outline form if possible
- After class, highlight points in your notes that seem especially important ASAP

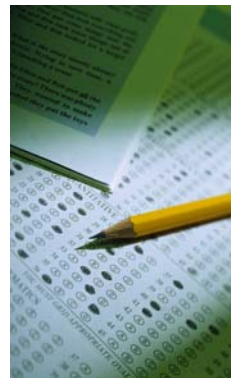
- Go over your notes before you go to bed and all of your notes at least once a week to keep the information fresh in your mind

Get the Most Out of Reading

- Before you read, preview the material so you know what to expect
- As you read, pay attention to main ideas and how they are supported by details
- After you’ve read, think (and discuss) what you have learned, and note any points about which you have questions
- Don’t move your lips or point at the words with your fingers as this tends to slow down your reading
- Try to avoid backtracking
- Skim material when you are looking for a particular answer
- Slow down when reading technical material
- Whenever possible, find ways to expand your vocabulary and reading skills

Prepare Effectively for Exams

- Underline or highlight important ideas in notes or reading materials
- Develop an outline of major ideas that can help give structure and form to the material, and then write a brief summary of each major point
- Review your notes regularly
- Ask the instructor what to expect on the exam
- Try to predict major test questions and prepare for them
- Look up copies of old exams if they are available
- For an exam that will require the memorization of specific facts, it may be helpful to use flashcards, develop acronyms, or memorize by segments



2007. Adapted from “Surviving and Thriving as a Student”, *Health Pathways*, vol. 19 #4, p. 12