

Academic Counselor Office

General Tips for Step 1

Planning Your Time

- How many days do you have to study?
- How much time per day can you realistically devote to studying?
- Leave 2---3 days at the end of your study period time at the end of each week for catch up and review. Plan a block time each week for catch up and review
- Plan days that have combination of subject that are harder/easier, as well as days that have a combination of reading review books, doing questions preparing outline/diagrams for future study.
- If you start to experience burnout take a whole day off to do something fun and/or all about you.
- Think about how you want to take time off. For example, would you rather have one full day or two half-days or evenings off?
- Don't forget to planning maintenance activities, such as shopping, doing laundry, etc.

What to study and when

- Write a list of subject that are covered. Rank how well you know each subject, perhaps on scale of 1-3. Base on those rankings, decide how many blocks of time you need to spend on subject.
- Take a practice exam at least three in the beginning, middle and 10 days before your exam

How to spend your time?

- A combination is best, but figure out if you're learning style is more question---heavy or reading---heavy, and plan accordingly.
- Consider the sandwich method: Look over some questions, review the material, then do more questions. If you feel you learn better from reading, then reverse the sandwich.

- Run flashcards as a break when reading or doing question feels less productive

Logistics of Studying

- Think about where you will study. Do you need to be in a classroom/study room, library, coffee shop, etc.? Does varying where you study help, or is consistency better for you?

- Consider finding study buddies to help keep each other accountable. You may not actually study the same thing at the same time, but making plans to meet at a certain time and stay until a certain time may help. Make rules for the study group, such as only talking to each other every hour on the hour to report progress or ask questions.

Lifestyle

- Build daily exercise into schedule, even if it just a short walk. Think about what time it a best for you exercise

- Consider whether you want your exercise time to be a true break or time to multi-task (e.g. run flashcards or listen to lecture)

- Include nutrition. What you need to avoid to be a your best or include. Plan shopping and food preparation in your schedule

- Get fresh air even if just a few minutes

- Let people in your life know ahead what your need from them

- Put social interaction into your schedule so you can enjoy them without feeling guilty

Other Tips

- Select one review book as your base. Annotate review book with more detailed information as you come across it in other sources.
- Start with subject---specific question blocks at the beginning of your study period, then transition to mixed questions as you get closer to the exam.
- As you study, distinguish between factoids and knowledge that has multiple discipline connections that are worth more time and effort.
- Write down very brief explanations for questions you get wrong. Randomly review a few of these explanations every day.
- Create your own condensed summaries of key material for review right before the test.
- Try to not worry about what other are doing.

The Weak Before the Exam

- Review content areas that require more rote memorization.
- Take more mixed subject Question Bank.
- Review subjects where you feel you have more familiarity (“Oh, right, I recognize that”) than recall (“I can state the answer without looking.”).
- If you have been studying late at night and sleeping late, start getting yourself on the right time schedule for going to bed and getting up early to take the exam. Getting at least 6---7 hours of sleep.
- Make sure you know what your break schedule for the day of the exam will be.

The Day Before Exam

- Take some time off. Relax. Take a walk, get a massage, spend time with friends And family who are comforting and supportive, see a movie etc.
- Make sure everything is ready for you leave the next morning.

- Prepared yourself for how you will deal with nervousness.

Taking the exam

- Put each question in your own words so you are clear about what is being asked.
- Do not look at the answers until you have thought of your own answer; then look for your answer in the list.
- Be caution about changing answers-do not change unless you have a good reason to do so.
- For long questions:
 - Read the last online first, and then question from the beginning
 - Paraphrase after each sentence in the question

Student Recommended Sources

- First Aid for USMLE Step 1
- Coljan Audio Lecture and Rapid Review
- USMLE Word Question Bank, Kaplan Question Bank (some recommended using Kaplan for subject –specific practice questions).
- High Yield Series
- Underground Clinical Vignettes, First Aid Cases for the USMLE Step 1

Other Sites with Useful Information:

1. http://blog.myalbert.einstein.yu.edu/step1s2s/files/2011/04/Creating_Step_1_Schedule.pdf
2. <http://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2012/04/scored-257-usmle-step-1.html>
3. <http://tulane.edu/som/ome/upload/USMLE-Step-1-Guide--7-31-2012.pdf>
4. <http://usmlestep1secrets.blogspot.com>
5. <http://zone.medschool.pitt.edu?Announcement%20attachments/step1%202010011%20Plan.pdf>
6. <http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/education/current---students/academic-resources/academic-counseling/preparation-resources/what-worked-best.html>

7. <http://medicalmindmaps.com>
8. <http://picmonic.com>
9. <http://ankisrs.net>
10. <https://www.firecracker.me>