

AOA Pre-Clinical Pearls Fall 2011

2nd Year Pearls

Practice questions are the best way to study. Use USMLE World Q-bank to help with your classes AND get you prepared for step 2, all in one fell swoop!

I highly recommend the Lange Pathology cards. I bought them at the beginning of the year and used them for all the organ systems classes (not just Path). They also contain a lot of board info so you will be well prepared for boards.

Take advantage of as many clinical opportunities you can during this time. You'll find that the information in lecture will stick if you have a patient experience to match it with. Get involved with Casa Latina Clinic, Derm Clinic, etc where you can practice your exam skills in a stress free environment with a lot of support.

If you are interested in what one of the docs is teaching in a systems course, you should approach them and ask if you can do a preceptorship or shadow them in clinic or on wards. It's a great way to make connections in a field you're interested in and also makes the classroom material more meaningful.

Renal/pulmonary/acid-base physiology is not only highly testable but incredibly useful in clinical practice and on the boards.

Get an old copy of First Aid and start studying from it early. Write notes in and use it as a reference to what will matter for Step 1. Don't sweat it, you won't remember every detail but it'll work out!

Especially in Year 2, start the year with First Aid in hand (you can switch to the new version when it comes out in January), and be mindful of Step 1 as you learn and study.

If you go to class, try really hard to pay attention to what the lecturers are saying, rather than spending time on the internet. A lot of what they say is tested on class exams. That which is not tested on becomes really handy in 3rd year when you are being asked questions on the wards.

Also, if you want to do well on boards, study the material taught during 1st and 2nd year. It will help. But in addition to that, I wish I would have started using the USMLE Q-bank earlier on in 2nd year, rather than waiting till 4 weeks before the test!

Step 1 study advise: Do lots of questions. I used USMLE World and spent >50% of my study time on questions and that worked really well for me. Also for Step 1 don't be afraid to skip some sections for example I knew that I wouldn't be able to remember all the Genetic conditions and all the lisosomal disorders (Tay Sachs etc.). I didn't spend too much time trying to memorize the details of those disorders because they are low yield, I focused on bigger broader areas that I knew I would be able to remember later.