Tame the Tiger:

Time Management and Wellness in prepping for Step One

Presented by
Drs. Naquin & Weissbecker

Wednesday, February 7, 2018
Passing Score = 194
Preparing for

Step 1
The major factors with positive correlation to Step 1 scores are

• 1) MCAT score - particularly Biological and Physical Sciences scores (p < 0.01)
• 2) Honoring courses in the first two years of medical school (p < 0.01)
• 3) Doing more practice questions (from Qbank, Usmleworld, etc) (p = 0.04)
• 4) Listening to Goljan audio files (p = 0.04)
• 5) Attending lectures in the 2nd year of medical school (p = 0.07)
What does the research say?

- A study by Kumar and colleagues (2015) found students who scored higher on Step 1
- Studied 8-11 hours per day in the intensive study period
- Studied less than 40 days in their intensive preparation (bootcamp).
- Completed more than 2000 board style practice questions
- Read the article to learn more: Preparing to take the USMLE Step 1: a survey on medical students’ self-reported study habits

- Deng, Gluckstein, and Larsen (2015) found the following variables to be significant predictors of Step 1 score
  - The number of board style multiple-choice questions completed
    - An additional 445 questions seen was associated with an additional point on Step 1 when controlling for other factors
  - The number of Anki (individually generated) flashcards seen
    - An additional 1700 Anki flashcards was associated with an additional point on Step 1 when controlling for other factors
  - Second-year honors
  - MCAT score
  - Test anxiety- test anxiety was a significant negative predictor of Step 1 score
  - Read the article to learn more: Student-directed retrieval practice is a predictor of medical licensing examination performance
Most score reporting of Step 1 results occurs within four weeks of testing. However, because of necessary modifications to the test item pool, there will be a delay in reporting for some examinees who test beginning the week of May 7, 2018. The target date for reporting Step 1 scores for most examinees testing the week of May 7 through early June will be Wednesday, July 11, 2018. For examinees whose circumstances require that they receive Step 1 scores before July 11, 2018, it is recommended that they take Step 1 no later than May 4, 2018.

Although the transition will occur quickly at many test centers, there may be some locations where the changes take slightly longer to complete. The overall transition period will likely last approximately 6 weeks. Please note that scores on new and old exam forms will be comparable.
Step One Exam

• One day, 8 Hours Includes breaks
• 60 Min Blocks
• No more than 280 multiple choice questions
• 40 or less questions per block
• 1.5 minutes to answer each question
• Random questions; Only One Best Answer
• Guess
• **ONCE EXITED A BLOCK OR TIME EXPIRES, CAN NO LONGER REVIEW OR CHANGE QUESTIONS**
• Results back within 8 weeks
Step I: A great opportunity to learn

Develop a realistic study calendar. It gradually builds in volume and makes room for decompression.

Scheduled breaks and days off

Physical activity may be helpful to charge up stamina for studying.

Build in “me time” to step away from studying and recharge. Plans may need to include:

- “special days off” – Weddings, birthdays, poster presentations, etc

- Scheduled days for practice tests/question based review

- The two most important times to take practice exams are the midpoint period and several days before the actual test. Taking a practice test at the midpoint period gives you a sense of where you are in terms of preparation. And the practice test several days before the real thing will give you an accurate prediction of what your score will be.

- The UWorld practice tests are more indicative of what it feels like to take the actual Step 1 exam compared to the NBME exams, so I would highly recommend doing those practice exams.

- Scheduled days for final review

- Go to the test site and doing the practice exam. Even though the practice questions there may not be entirely useful, knowing where everything is and how everything works is essential to decreasing the stress level.
Create a To Do List

• Write down everything you need to do.
• Get out a piece of notebook paper or open a new document on your computer and unleash your brain’s to-do list.
• Write everything down from classes, work, events, and extracurriculars to your work outs, meals, showers, and sleep. Nothing is too small to be written on the list, so if you need to remember to shave your legs, write that down!!
“Eisenhower Decision Principle”

• **Urgent** means that a task requires immediate attention. These are the to-do’s that shout “Now!” Urgent tasks put us in a *reactive* mode, one marked by a defensive, negative, hurried, and narrowly-focused mindset.

• **Important** tasks are things that contribute to our long-term mission, values, and goals. Sometimes important tasks are also urgent, but typically they’re not. When we focus on important activities we operate in a *responsive* mode, which helps us remain calm, rational, and open to new opportunities.
## The Time Management Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urgent</th>
<th>Not Urgent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important</strong></td>
<td>I Crises, Pressing Problems, Deadline Driven Projects</td>
<td>II Prevention, Relationship Building, Planning, New Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Important</strong></td>
<td>III Interruptions, Mail, Meetings, Popular activities</td>
<td>IV Trivia, Busy work, Pleasant activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of Living in anything other than Quadrant II

- Quadrant I
  - Stress
  - Burnout
  - Crisis management
  - Always putting out fires

- Quadrant III
  - Short term focus
  - Crises management
  - Reputation - chameleon character
  - See goals and plans as worthless
  - Feel victimized and out of control
  - Shallow or broken relationships

- Quadrant IV
  - Total irresponsibility
  - Fired from jobs
  - Dependent on others
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SPINNING COUNTERCLOCKWISE

EACH TURN ROBS THE PLANET
OF ANGULAR MOMENTUM
SLOWING ITS SPIN
THE TINIEST BIT

LENGTHENING THE NIGHT,
pushing back the dawn

GIVING ME A LITTLE
MORE TIME HERE

WITH YOU
Quadrant 1: Urgent and Important Tasks

• Quadrant 1 tasks are both urgent and important. They’re tasks that require our immediate attention and also work towards fulfilling our long-term goals and missions in life.

• Quadrant 1 tasks typically consist of crises, problems, or deadlines.
Quadrant 2

The Magic Quadrant is like surfing the wave, staying on top of your important things, making progress, and not allowing things to become urgent through lack of focus.
Quadrant 2 Continued

The day I realized I could cook bacon whenever I wanted.
Quadrant 2

• Your overall health is something you may take for granted today, and may not see urgency in dealing with it – but long term, we know it’s of supreme importance.

• There are some other important, yet not urgent, things that fall into this quadrant as well:
  
  • Exercise
  • Reviewing your career path
  • Maintaining relationships with family/friends
Quadrant 2: Not Urgent but Important Tasks

• Quadrant 2 tasks are the activities that don’t have a pressing deadline, but nonetheless help you achieve your important personal, school, and work goals as well as help you fulfill your overall mission as a man.

• Q2 tasks are typically centered around strengthening relationships, planning for the future, and improving yourself.
Quadrant 3: Urgent and Not Important Tasks

• Quadrant 3 tasks are activities that require our attention now (urgent), but don’t help us achieve our goals or fulfill our mission (not important). Most Q3 tasks are interruptions from other people and often involve helping them meet their own goals and fulfill their own priorities.
Quadrant 4: Not Urgent and Not Important Tasks

- Quadrant 4 activities aren’t urgent and aren’t important. Q4 activities aren’t pressing nor do they help you achieve long-term goals or fulfill your mission. They’re primarily distractions.
USMLE Step 1
General Study Plan
One day clocks will be smaller...

Bruce Woodcock
THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE MAKING YOUR STEP 1 STUDY SCHEDULE:

• Break up your goals into achievable pieces. To-Do lists, schedules, task lists,

• you need to have a test date.

• you need to decide which resources you’re going to use UWORLD, FistAid for the USMLE, and Pathoma.

• You need to decide on how many NBME practice tests you are planning on taking. It is recommended to take 3 over the course of your study.
HOW TO MAKE YOUR STEP 1 STUDY SCHEDULE: 6 weeks dedicated study

• **FIGURE OUT HOW MANY DAYS YOU HAVE UNTIL THE EXAM.** minimum of 4 weeks of hardcore study. After five weeks of 8-12 hours of daily review, you start to plateau. You want enough to time to just reach your plateau without backsliding. Count the number of days you will have to study and number the rows in your spreadsheet accordingly.

• **BLOCK OFF SPECIAL DAYS:** Completely block off the day before your exam. Locking off one other full day off 5-7 days prior to your exam. You will be reaching your burn-out threshold and will need a mental health day.
Create a Study Schedule

- Divide the day up into three separate study sessions.
- Compute how many days you were planning on studying for the boards
- Multiply that by 3 = total # of study sessions.
- Divide up all the subjects covered by the boards,
- Rank each subject on how well you know the subject like the subject on a scale of 1-3.
- Using those rankings, determine how many study sessions you will spend on a given subject.
- Rule: you must spend at least 3 study sessions for each subject.
ASSIGN YOUR PRACTICE TESTS TO SPECIFIC DAYS

• You are taking 3 practice tests, we recommend taking one after your first week of review to get a baseline. Take your second after week 4, and take your last test 3-5 days before the real exam. Don’t plan anything else on those days, as it will take 6-7 hours at a minimum to take the exam and review the wrong answers. It doesn’t really matter what tests you take, but we recommend taking the most recent one (NBME 17 when I was a wee second year) just before the real deal.
Structuring a Study Plan: Example

• 50 min intervals: 10 min breaks

• Intersperse content review with practice questions by completing a block of questions after reviewing a subject or organ system.

• Start with content areas of weakness identified from Phase 1 and use practice questions to simultaneously become comfortable with the test format and identify difficult subjects.

• Resources like UWorld and other question banks offer questions most representative of the Step 1 exam and should be used throughout the study period.

• Some studies have shown that exposure to new questions is more productive than repeating questions. In general, identifying areas of weakness early on and often allows for efficient studying throughout dedicated.

• Take some time off!
Resources

• Study Resources • First Aid for the USMLE Step 1 • Plus one additional reference per discipline as needed • Anatomy/Histology • Biochemistry • Physiology • Immunology/Microbiology • Pathology • Pharmacology • Embryology

• Question Bank(s) • Practice for real exam • Learning about your testing skills, problem areas • How does the question writer want me to use this information? Get into the head of the question writer • Use in mixed mode (no hints at answer) and timed tests during last 1-2 months of intensive studying
First Aid for Step I

This book is absolutely a necessity
Some prefer to have it unbound and put into a three ring binder for more note taking space
Excellent for review and focusing on core topics

- Anatomy: High Yield Anatomy, Roadmaps
- Embryo: High Yield Embryo with First Aid
- Histology: High Yield Histology if you must
- Physiology: BRS Physiology
- Biochemistry: First Aid is enough, High Yield Biochem
- Human Behavior: High Yield Human Behavior
- Pathology: Goljan Rapid Review w/ audio, BRS Path
- Micro: First Aid, Micro Made Simple, MicroCards
- Immuno: First Aid more than enough, Lange text
- Pharm: First Aid is excellent, Kaplan Pharm Cards
Resources

• USMLERx • 2300 questions • From authors of First Aid • Helps drill in “high-yield” First Aid info Criticism: • No critical thinking, only similar to “easy” questions on exam

• Kaplan USMLE Step 1 Qbank • 2100 questions • Has good explanations for answers • Helpful if studying over longer period of time Criticism: • Questions aren’t that similar to Step 1 exam

• USMLE World • 2400 questions • Closest to real thing • May be more useful as intensive prep right before exam (1-2 months before)
Resources

• UWorld question bank during designated study period and pay very close attention to the answer explanations.

• First Aid – I’ve been using this all along to supplement my class studying.

• Pathoma – These videos have been so helpful with my classes as well, but will likely rewatch all the videos a few times as I restudy each topic.

• Sketchy Medical – Good videos to study micro and pharm, review them with an Anki flashcard deck. Use some micro and pharm flashcards as well that I’ll likely flip through at night or during breaks.
Resources

- **Doctors in Training** - very well laid out with great review sessions; good for those that otherwise will not make a schedule and stick to it/those that like to be taught

- **Cram Fighter** - APP that allows you to plug in everything you need to make a very good study schedule; for those that like to make their own schedule and know they will stick to it

- **USMLE World**
  - Nearly perfect simulation of the real thing
  - Difficult questions, but VERY good teaching points. *(READ the explanations!)*

- **Kaplan Q-Bank**
  - Also a great question source More low-yield questions
  - Again, READ the explanations
Example Session Schedules

• Dedicated Session time (3 hour session max)
• Question Time
• 8-11 Session
• 11-1 Lunch
• 1-4 Session
• 4-6 Random Questions (60)
• 6-6:30 dinner
• 7:30-10:30 Study session
• Recommended taking 3 sessions off each week.
Sample Schedule

• **8 am-12pm:** 1-40 block questions and review/teach the questions you got wrong.

• Spend a few hours watching videos on Osmosis, as well as using other resources to re-teach yourself topics that you missed.

• **12-1pm:** Lunch and flashcards. Very low yield so it requires very little attention.

• **1-5pm:** Review specific content for the day. This isn’t based on Q-Banks, but it’s based on a combination of First Aid, Sketchy Medical, and Pathoma.

• **5-7pm:** Dinner and flashcards.

• **8-10pm:** Gym, and low yield flashcards.

• P.S. These 4-hour blocks are ripe with small 10-min do nothing breaks. No computer, no medicine breaks that require a simple reset.
Designate a color for each of your scheduled categories. Example

- Purple: Anatomy
- Pink: Genetics
- Blue: Bio Chemistry
- Orange: Physiology
- Red: Microbiology
- Green: Pharmacology
- Black: Personal (showers, meals, sleep, relaxation, etc.)
- Yellow: Extracurricular
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4/1/15

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<td>Fill in notes from Summer A&amp;P</td>
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<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology: Exam 1 Study Guide</td>
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4/2/15

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<td>A&amp;P: Reproductive Study Guide</td>
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**Note:** The schedule includes dates, days of the week, days in and days left, subjects, and their respective sections. The schedule also includes breaks and catch-up sessions with specific dates for reviews and rotations.
# USMLE STEP 1 Study Schedule

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**NBME**

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- **15**
The USMLE Content Outline organizes content according to general principles and individual organ systems. Test questions are classified in one of 18 major areas, depending on whether they focus on concepts and principles that are important across organ systems or within individual organ systems. Sections focusing on individual organ systems are subdivided according to normal and abnormal processes, including principles of therapy. Exam Content: Systems and Process

**Traditional**
- anatomy
- behavioral sciences
- biochemistry
- biostatistics and epidemiology
- microbiology
- pathology
- pharmacology
- physiology

**Interdisciplinary areas**
- genetics
- aging
- immunology
- nutrition
- molecular and cell biology
Step 1 classifies test items along two dimensions, system and process

- While not all topics listed in the content outline are included in every USMLE examination, overall content coverage is comparable in the various examination forms that will be taken by different examinees for each Step.

- Most organ systems are partitioned into Normal Processes and Abnormal Processes, and include subcategories of specific disease processes. In most instances, knowledge of normal processes is evaluated in the context of a disease process or specific pathology.

- The content outline is not intended as a curriculum development or study guide. It provides a flexible structure for test construction that can readily accommodate new topics, emerging content domains, and shifts in emphasis. The categorizations and content coverage are subject to change. Broadly based learning that establishes a strong general understanding of concepts and principles in the basic sciences is the best preparation for the examination.
Step 1 Test Specifications

• The general principles category includes test items concerning those normal and abnormal processes that are not limited to specific organ systems. Categories for individual organ systems include test items concerning those normal and abnormal processes that are system-specific.

*** The Step 1 examination includes management questions in only the categories listed in this table. It does not include questions related to clinical interventions, mixed management, or surveillance for disease recurrence. † This category includes questions about normal structure and function that may appear in the context of an abnormal clinical presentation.

‡ Approximately 10%-15% of questions are not classified in the normal processes, abnormal processes, or principles of therapeutics categories. These questions are likely to be classified in the general principles, biostatistics/evidence-based medicine, or social sciences categories in the USMLE Content Outline.
Study Suggestions

• Identify the important information
• Organize the information in a way that makes sense to you and study from that
• Memorize the information
• Redraw charts/figures
• Flash cards
• Practice using the information
• Practice questions
Practice Test

• Take a 4 hour practice test each week, (either a USMLERx practice test, a USMLE World Test, or a NBME test) which gives you a breakdown on how well you did on each subject.

• The practice tests, are great opportunities for reviewing material and finding out what your weak areas might be, and provide practice in timing and test taking skills
It is better to study smarter than to study harder

• 1) Try to complete as many practice questions as possible before you take Step 1

• focusing solely on questions for the last two weeks before you take Step 1. (2,000 to 2,500 questions)

• Keep in mind that your average score on the practice tests will likely not improve as you progress through a single question bank since you will be constantly exposed to new material. The important thing to do is to learn from the questions you get wrong as well as the ones you get right.
Tackling the Plan: 8-10 hours Max per Day

• Study Tough Subjects First, then questions
• U World Q Bank: Review 2x
• Take Practice Tests (USMILE) Same time of day and day of week as actual exam: 2 blocks of 40 questions
NBME Questions

• NBMEQs is an evaluation tool, not a learning tool. There are no answer explanations and thus are not counted in our total questions completed analysis

• Benefits of Questions
  • Increased familiarity with the vignette-style format
  • Each question is similar to those seen on the USMLE Step 1 exam
    • Active learning - Requires users to be engaging and thinking
  • Endurance Exam is 8 hours long and a total of about 280 questions
RELAX

• It's just another hurdle to becoming a doctor
Test-taking Guidelines

• #1 You Must Prepare
• #2 Know What is on the Test
• #3 Know Your Test Makers
• #4 Get Every Question Correct That You Can
• #5 Never Leave a Question Blank
• #6 Learn to Guess
Know What’s on the Test!

- www.usmle.org
- Content and Format
- They tell you SPECIFICALLY what you need to know
USMLE I – Format   Passing Score 194

• Step 1 is a **one-day** examination. It is divided into seven 60-minute blocks and administered in one 8-hour testing session The number of questions per block on a given examination form will vary, but will not exceed 40. The total number of items on the overall examination form will not exceed 280 questions
Get Every Question Correct that You Can

• Every question is worth the same point
• Don’t get bogged down on difficult questions
  • Look at the answers first – if unfamiliar, mark and move on
  • Difficult may be experimental
• You may get 1 in 3 questions wrong
  • DON’T DWELL ON IT!!
Never Leave a Question Blank

- Answer and Move on
- Mark it if unsure
Learn to Guess

• Wrong answers are chosen for a reason
• Think about what the test maker wants
• Eliminate then guess
• If you cannot eliminate then guess all the same
Where to Go From Here

• Download the USMLE Tutorial and Sample Test Materials
• Download the USMLE 1 Content Description
• http://www.usmle.org/step1/default.htm

• As You Study, Check off Each Item
• This is the Most Important List to Make Sure You Have the Content Covered
Final Rule

Since you will miss up to 1 in 3 questions, don’t let the test frustrate you.

2 out of 3 questions gets you a pass, residency at the school of your choice, a new car, school loans paid off. Well, maybe just the first one.
Balance

- You need to relax
- Take personal time every day
- Work out
- Catch up with friends
- Socialize
- Go to dinner
- Vent

- Start a blog
- Yoga/meditation
- Don't make any drastic life changes
- Don't move
- Relax
- This was the best part of 2\textsuperscript{nd} year
Words of Wisdom

- EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT and to stick to what style has worked for you the past two years (ie- learning from questions, etc).
- Leave days for review the final week before your test. Review your WEAK subjects, don’t try to re-read all of First Aid again
- **Do NOT push back your date unless a catastrophe occurs**
- Watch a movie, hang out, have a beer, but DO NOT study the day before your test
WE'VE BEEN OUT CELEBRATING THE FINAL PAYMENT ON OUR STUDENT LOANS.