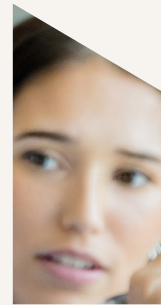


Master your first year at med school

A beginners guide



ELSEVIER

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Dear Student

Congratulations! Your calling, enthusiasm and hard work have got you this far. Now you are about to embark on your next exciting journey, filled with new challenges, friends, experiences and lots of learning!

We can't guarantee that it will be easy, but you won't be alone, we will be here to support your learning as we have for generations of students. The reward will be worth it, because there is nothing more important than helping to improve the health and lives of others.



Contents

- Page 4** Everyone's smart at med school, so chill out
- Page 5** Think like a junior Doctor
- Page 6** Join in!
- Page 7** Maintaining relationships helps you get through your degree and your career
- Page 8** Good Doctors have good listening skills
- Page 9** Its not about knowing the answers to every problem its knowing how to solve them
- Page 12** An annotated hippocratic oath
- Page 13** See one. Do one. Teach one.
- Page 14** Teamwork makes the dream work
- Page 15** Have fun while you learn
- Page 16** All Doctors were junior Doctors once
- Page 17** Doctors save lives, not money
- Page 18** Go in with an open mind about where your path can take you
- Page 19** Self care
- Page 20** Keep your brain fuelled
- Page 21** Time spent sleeping is not time wasted
- Page 22** Librarians are a med students' best friend
- Page 23** Just for fun



#1

*Everyone's smart at med school, so **chill** out*

So, you were probably one of the smartest kids at your school. But here's the thing - that's probably true of all your classmates too. Why does this matter? Because when you're sitting in that first biology class or anatomy tutorial and someone says a 20-letter word in what seems to be a different language, it's important not to freak out. In fact, chill out. And say hi. That person is probably the one who's going to help you pass your first exam!



#2

Think like a junior Doctor

Your friends probably already think you're a doctor, and your family hope you'll become a successful one. And that's a good way to think, and act. While you shouldn't take yourself too seriously, thinking like a Junior Doctor will help you become a Junior Doctor. Here are our top three reasons why:

1

Junior Doctors are responsible for looking after others. But if you don't look after yourself first, you can't care for anyone else. Make sure you devote enough time to your own physical and mental wellbeing.

2

Junior Doctors work in teams. If there is one tip to help you succeed and not just survive at medical school, it is to find your team. Find your study team. Find your party team. And find your non-medical team.

3

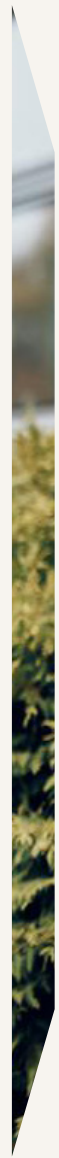
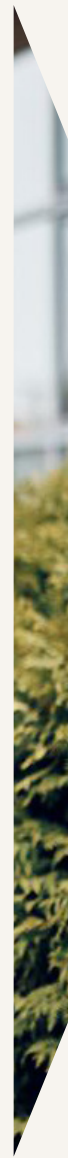
Junior Doctors know they need to keep learning. And you will too. Your learning curve will be so steep. So yes, you need to learn. But you also need to learn to keep learning.

#3

Join in!

Join societies and make friends with students in different year groups. They will help you with notes, what learning tools are available at your med school and what worked for them. It's always good to get advice from students who have been where you are!





#4

Maintaining relationships helps you get through your *degree* and your *career*

Remember that smart person from the previous page? The one that's going to get you through your first exam? Chances are they will help you get through your degree as well. And probably your career. Your cohort will become your study buddies at uni, your trusted advisors, and your network once you all specialise. And who knows? They may even become your lifelong friends! Check out university societies and sports teams to help broaden your friendship group.



#5

Good Doctors have good listening skills

Being a good doctor isn't just about how smart or how technical you are. It's much easier if you're genuinely interested in people. Communication is key.

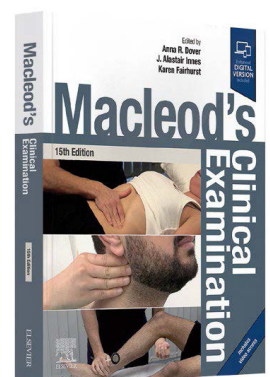
The A, B, C & D of patient interactions

Every healthcare professional involved in caring for patients can have profound influences on how patients experience illness and their sense of dignity. When you are dealing with patients, always consider your:

- A = ATTITUDE** – How would I feel in this patient's situation?
- B = BEHAVIOUR** – Always treat patients with kindness and respect.
- C = COMPASSION** – Recognise the human story that accompanies each illness.
- D = DIALOGUE** – Listen to and acknowledge the patient.

 **ClinicalKey**
Student

Macleod's
Clinical Examination
15th Edition
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Available in print & on ClinicalKey Student

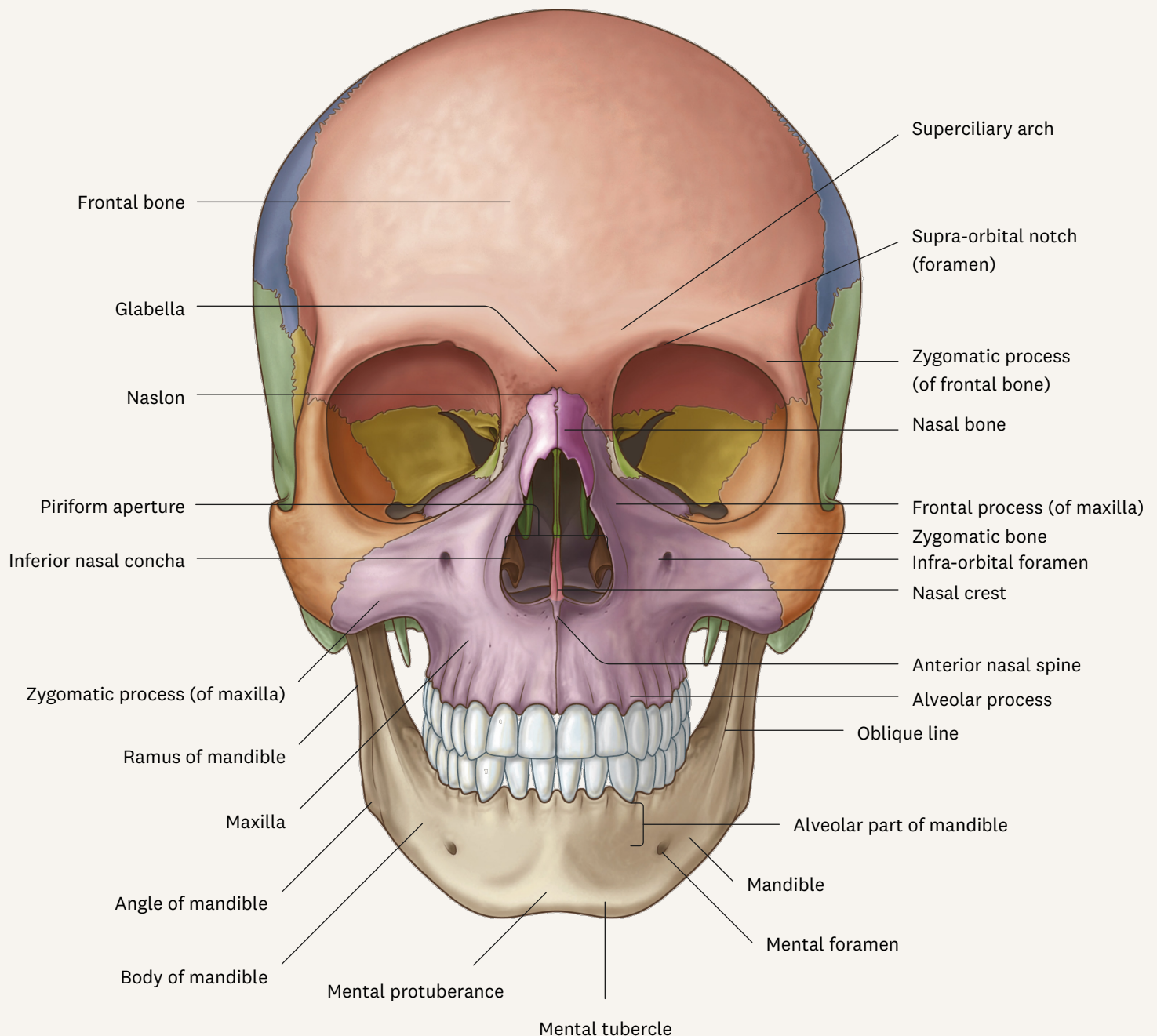


#6

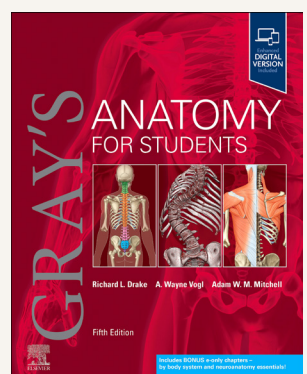
Its not about knowing the answers to *every* problem its knowing how to *solve* them

You don't have to be a walking medical dictionary (there's Dorland's for that), or a diagnostic savant (there's Dr. House for that) to do well in medical school. But you do need to know how to think, and how to problem solve. Whether it is learning the Krebs Cycle, deciphering chest X-rays or learning the action, origin, insertion, and innervation of the brachioradialis, you need to find a system that will work for you. There's no right or wrong way.

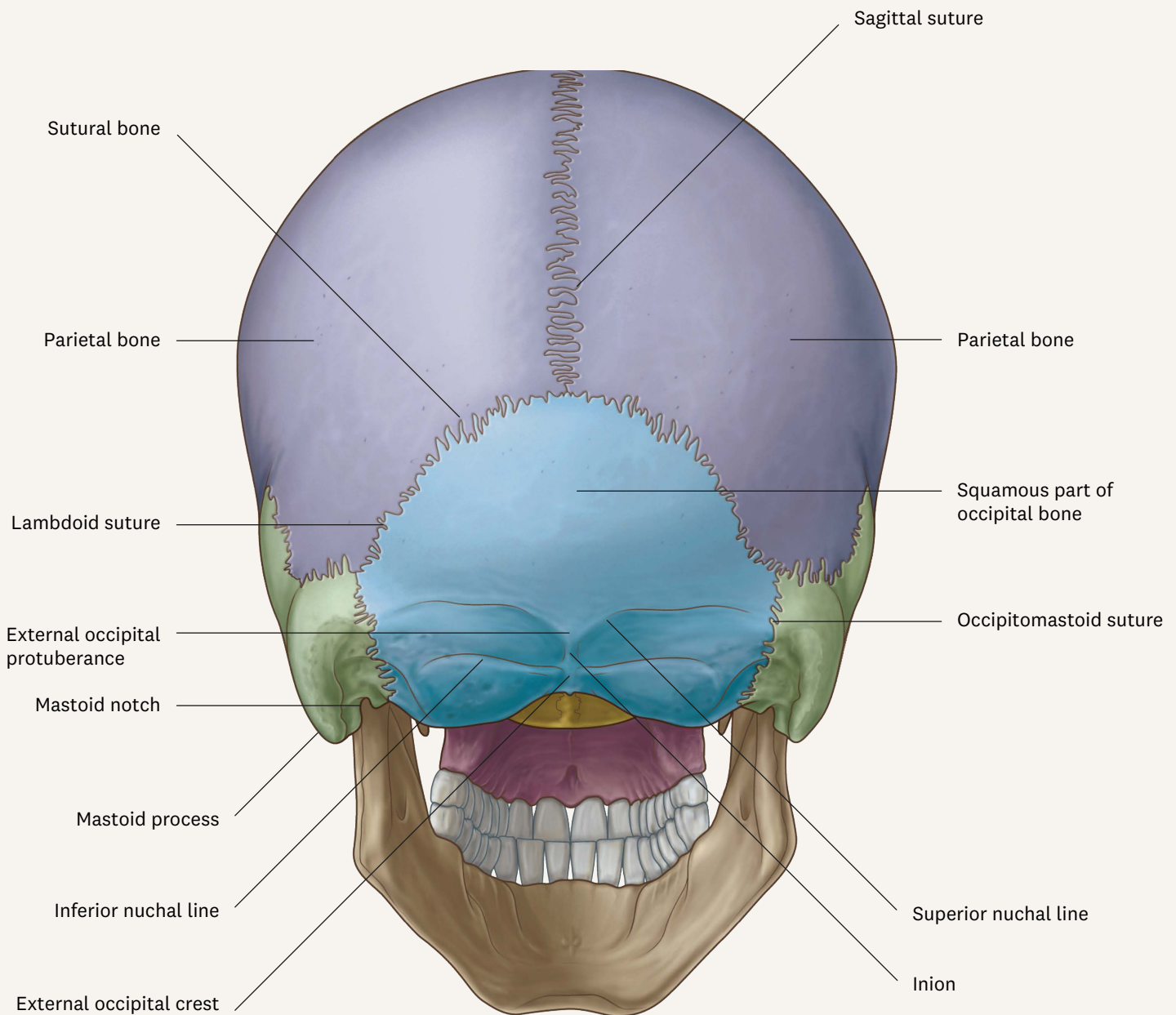
Anterior view of the Skull



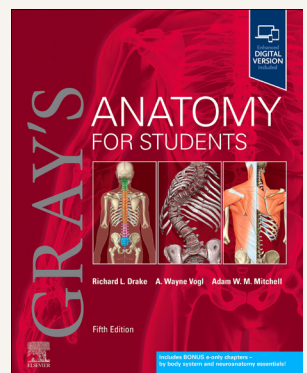
Gray's Anatomy for Students 5e
Available in print and
on ClinicalKey Student



Posterior view of the Skull



Gray's Anatomy for Students 5e
Available in print and
on ClinicalKey Student



#7

An annotated hippocratic oath

I swear to fulfil, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant:...

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.

I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know. Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. Above all, I must not play at God.

I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.

I will prevent disease whenever I can but I will always look for a path to a cure for all diseases.

I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures which are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.

I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick.

I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help.

I will not be ashamed to say "I know not," nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.

"I will share this guide with future first years"

"I will enjoy the privilege of being a doctor."

"If I don't know something, I just have to ask! Someone else will know."

"I will hone my social skills - they will be as important as my medical knowledge."

"Discretion is the better part of valour."

"Prevention is better than cure."

#8

See one. Do one. Teach one.

Surgeons are known to say: “See one. Do one. Teach one.” What this means is, after seeing a surgery performed, trainees are expected to be able to perform one themselves, and after doing a surgery, they have to be able to teach a junior doctor how to do the surgery, and so on. In study, as in your career, no one expects you to know everything. But people expect you to be able to learn quickly and to share your knowledge with others.





#9

Teamwork makes the dream work

You arrive at the hospital on your first day, feeling fresh, eager, and maybe a little bit proud of yourself. You're wearing a crisp shirt, a stethoscope around your neck, armed with a patient list and a coffee. During ward round, you'll see multiple patients, review their charts, vitals and notes. Likely quickly speaking with the nurse to hand over the treatment plan.

But remember nurses are not support staff, they also bring their knowledge and experience to patient care. Nurses are the ones who spend hours every day caring for patients, often on the front lines. They have a deep understanding of patient needs and a wealth of knowledge and skills that complement yours.

Building a respectful and collaborative relationship with nurses not only makes for a better team but ultimately benefits the patients we all want to help. Working collaboratively can go a long way in creating a positive, effective healthcare environment.

#10

Have *fun* while you learn

At med school, you are like a sponge, learning and absorbing new things all the time. It can be tough, but there are many interesting ways to learn

Get creative & interact with the content

- Why not trace and colour your stress away, while strengthening your understanding of the human body at the same time. Check out the Netter Anatomy colour book for inspiration
- Use pens, eyeliner, body paint and clay and pipe cleaners to draw and model anatomical structures
- Create visual representation using strawberry laces to map out bloody supply. Also, you can eat them when you have finished!
- Flashcards are a great way of learning alone or with friends, they boost your retention and are fun. Gray's Anatomy for Students and Netter's Anatomy have great sets or why not make your own on ClinicalKey Student; ask your librarian if you have access.





#11

All Doctors were *junior* Doctors once

Remember, every senior doctor and consultant you meet was once a junior doctor too. They didn't start out as experts—they learned, made mistakes, and grew into the professionals they are today. No one expects you to be perfect or to have all the answers right away.

What they do want is to see is that you are committed to your role and someone who works well as part of a healthcare team. When it comes to being part of a team it's not just about technical skills it's about you, how you communicate, work with others and the role that you play.

#12

Doctors save *lives, not money*

In your final year of uni, you will look back and realise just how much you've learned – from anatomy to physiology, embryology to paediatrics, ethics to communication. You'll realise that you spent hundreds of hours observing other doctors and learning (hopefully) how to save lives. But one thing you won't have been taught to save is money.

Whatever currency you're earning in, chances are you're not saving much money. With that in mind, here are some tips about how you can save money during med school, without missing out on all the fun!

1

Invest in a coffee machine, and use it. Economists believe that for the average medical student, a coffee machine has a return on investment of 683% and a payback period of two months.

2

Get free stuff from student fairs; these places are great for getting free pens, bags, and notepads. Some stalls will even offer really cool prizes. One thing is for sure, there's Elsevier freebies including books. So come say hi to us whenever you can!

3

Speaking of books... We know that there are lots to choose from, and it can be tough to figure out which ones you really need. Look at your reading list and ask the students in the years above for guidance. They're always a great source of advice; they'll tell you which books you just can't live without – for example, Gray's Anatomy for Students, Kumar & Clark's Clinical Medicine – and the ones that you can.

4

Also do check in with your librarian to ask what digital resources are available. It's likely that your school will have [ClinicalKey Student](#), [Osmosis](#) or [Complete Anatomy](#) access.



#13

Go in with an *open* mind about where your *path* can take you

If you ask your cohort, in the first week, what type of medicine they want to do, half will say surgery, another third will say general medicine, and the rest might be split between not knowing at all or perhaps they have medic parents or family friends and will opt for what they do.

But the reality is, many will end up in specialties that they would never have considered (or even knew existed) at the start of the degree. You could be in the 50% who want to be a surgeon and actually become a paediatrician.

The moral of the story? Keep an open mind, talk to consultants and ask lots of questions. You never know what specialty or career path may interest you!

“While it is essential to stay on top of things, medicine is a course that is 10x busier than any other, so you can’t get bogged down if you have missed a lecture or have not studied something. Sometimes, you just have to draw a line in the sand and come back to things later so that you can fully focus on the content being taught now!”

- Medical student



#14

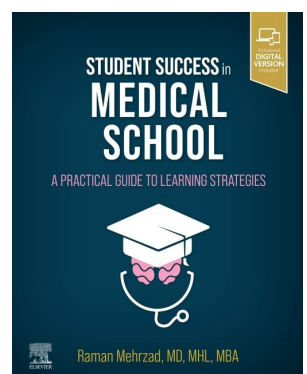
Self Care

In medical school, studying is a lifestyle. However, this lifestyle doesn't just involve reading books, attending lectures, and sitting exams. You also need to ensure that all the other aspects of your life work for you, too.

...You will need to take care of all aspects of your health, which means:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Get regular physical activity
- Sleep at least 6 to 7 hours every night
- Do things you enjoy, socialising and hobbies or just relax!

Source: adapted from Mehrzad, Raman, MD, MHL, MBA
Student Success in Medical School
Available in print and on [ClinicalKey Student](#)



#15

Keep your brain *fuelled*

Remember, sitting at your laptop, doing long shifts, being away from your usual support networks and eating unhealthy food will add up over your time as a student. Eat well and look after yourself, time invest in weekly meal planning will be worth it. Remember food is fuel and taking care of your self is always a priority.



No bake brain balls

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 | cup oatmeal | 1/2 | cup ground flaxseed |
| 1/2 | cup peanut butter | 1/2 | cup mini chocolate chips |
| 1/3 | cup honey | 1 tsp | vanilla |
| 1 | cup unsweetened coconut flakes | | |

Directions: Mix everything! Chill for 1/2 hour. Roll into balls and cover.

Green Hornet Smoothie

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 1 | tablespoon yoghurt | 1 | handful loose spinach |
| 4 | kale leaves, stems removed | 1 | cup coconut water |
| 1/2 | apple | 4-5 | fresh mint leaves |
| | | | lemon or lime! |

Directions: Mix everything in a blender and enjoy.

#16

Time spent *sleeping* is not time wasted

Looking after yourself is important in life but especially so at med school when you are devoting so much time to learning. Key to this is ensuring that you have enough sleep. Here are some important points about why sleep is so important, courtesy of Dr Raman Mehrzad;



- **Memory and learning** People who get more sleep learn and remember tasks better. Sleep helps the brain store memories more effectively



- **General health** Sleep deprivation has been linked to many chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart arrhythmias, and increased stress hormone levels



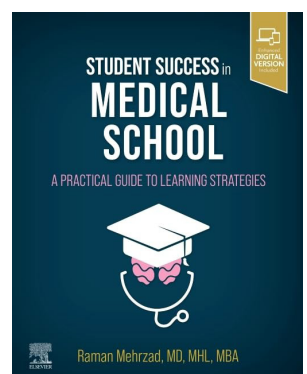
- **Mood** Sleep deprivation can lead to impatience, poor focus, irritability, and moodiness



- **Immune system** A lack of sleep affects your immune system and can make you more susceptible to colds and infections

So make sure that you get in plenty of Z's your body and mind will thank you for it.

Source: adapted from Mehrzad, Raman, MD, MHL, MBA
Student Success in Medical School
Available in print and on [ClinicalKey Student](#)



#17

Librarians are a med students' best friend

Whilst at university you will likely want to supplement your lecture notes with other learning materials like books, 3D anatomy tools, question banks and video's.

As well as reaching out to older students and your tutors for the best learning tools & materials, the librarian at your university will know all of the learning tools that you have access to digitally or physically. They can share registration and log in details which will save you time as well as money.

Why not stop by the library and spark up a conversation with them. You may have access to some of following tools:

- ClinicalKey Student <https://www.clinicalkey.com/student>
- Osmosis <https://www.osmosis.org>
- Complete Anatomy <https://3d4medical.com>

If you don't have access to Osmosis and Complete Anatomy via your med school there are some offers at the start of term that you can take advantage of:



Osmosis; providing the right study techniques to help you retain, understand and study more efficiently. Exclusive 25% off your subscription here



Complete Anatomy; Master human anatomy and boost patient understanding with the most accurate 3D models, extensive courses, and interactive tools. Up to 50% off your subscription here

*offers valid until 30th November 2025

#18

Just for *fun*



Study songs

Remember there is always time to have some fun, it's not all work, work, work!

Check out our 'great' playlist on [Spotify](#) for some excellent medical related tunes

- Comfortably Numb - **Scissor Sisters**
- Every Breath You Take - **The Police**
- Stayin' Alive - **Bee Gees**
- The Drugs Dont Work - **The Verve**
- Bad Medicine - **Bon Jovi**
- Another One Bites The Dust - **Queen**
- The First Cut Is The Deepest - **Sheryl Crow**
- Doctor! Doctor! - **Thompson Twins**
- Dr. Beat - **Miami Sound Machine**
- Sister Morphine - **The Rolling Stones**
- Love Is The Drug - **Roxy Music**
- Dizzy - **Vic Reeves**
- Night Nurse - **Gregory Isaacs**
- Medicine Man - **Zero 7, Eska**
- Girl, You Have No Faith In Medicine - **The White Stripes**
- Lithium - **Nirvana**
- The Bitterest Pill (I Ever Had To Swallow) - **The Jam**
- I Wanna Be Sedated - **Ramones**

Quick Quiz

Do you know the actual medical names for these common terms? Answers are below, don't peak!



1. Tennis Elbow
 2. Goosebumps
 3. Housemaid's knee
 4. Sneezing
 5. Shin Splints
- A. prepatellar bursitis
 - B. tibial stress syndrome
 - C. lateral epicondylitis
 - D. sternutation
 - E. horripilation

Good luck *future* doctors!

We hope that you have found our guide informative and fun. Our mission is to prepare you for the road ahead.

Find out more about us and how we can help you, visit:
<https://studenthub.elsevier.com/en/medical-student>



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