Tips for Success in Veterinary School
You are professional students now

Expectations are higher!
Professional school is different

• Consequences of failing to learn
  – Impacts your patients
  – *Learning for your career, not the test!*

• Details are important
  – Mistakes can kill patients

• **You** are responsible for your learning
Professional school is challenging

- All science courses
- Learning a new language
- Large amount of information
- Lots of details
- Busy schedule
“Most students of medicine discover that, although they made good grades in college, they haven’t developed adequate study skills for the volume and pace of material in medical school.”

Study Without Stress: Mastering Medical Sciences
By Eugenia G. Kelman, Kathleen C. Straker
You may find:

• Previously effective study skills are not effective in vet school
• You receive the lowest grades of your educational career in the first semester of veterinary school

Avoid these problems by being proactive
Cramming is not effective for the type of learning you need to do.
What skills will be important for you to be successful in vet school?
Skills you need to develop

- Critical thinking
- Application of information
- Independent, lifelong learning
  - Student-centered learning
- Self-discipline
- Efficient time management
- Flexible study skills
Asking for help is a sign of maturity, strength and good judgment.
Keys to Memory

• Organization of facts into logical patterns
• Distributed practice results in more learning and retention than massed practice
• Repetition increases learning and retention and retards forgetting
• Amount of time between learning and recall
• Intent to remember
• Varied input modality strengthens learning—uses more brain power
Time is one of your most valuable assets

Use it wisely
How many hours per week do successful medical and veterinary students study?

60-65 hours per week in learning activities
Optimize the use of your time

• Take breaks to maintain your concentration
  – If you are reading the same section over and over and it isn’t sinking in, take a break
• Don’t keep trying to study when you are really tired—unproductive
• Exercise
• Use “wasted” time to practice recall
  – Flashcards
  – Quizlet
More hours studying ≠ More learning
Reading and highlighting

Highlighting can help you focus
Too much text may be highlighted to be able to review
Re-reading

Minimal increase in retention
Not worth your time!
Alter your study strategies to suit the course and material

Detailed facts—memorization

Understanding concepts
Reading every word versus
Reading to get the general concept
How to get the most out of lectures

• Pre-reading
• Attend to lecture
• Think and take notes
• Eliminate distractions—email, Facebook, etc.
• Review lecture *that* day
  – Confirm understanding
  – Fill in gaps
  – Identify questions
Pre-reading

• Promotes active learning
• Do the night before a lecture
• Spend 10-15 minutes for one hour of lecture
• Rapid skimming
• Look for the “big picture” or main points
• Familiarize yourself with terminology
• Spot patterns or relationships
Pre-reading

• Preview the section
• Study questions (read first)
• First paragraph
• Subtitles
• Special print—bold, colored, italicized, shaded print
• First sentence of paragraphs
• Diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, lists, pictures
• Summary
• Objectives
Pre-reading

• Don’t take notes
• Don’t re-read anything
• Move your eyes down the page as quickly as you can
Re-writing notes

• Time-consuming
• Does not result in much learning unless thought and analysis occur (your brain must attend to it)
• Re-organizing and condensing notes for use in recall is more effective—requires thought
  – Tables
  – Flow charts
  – Comparisons
• You have to do it yourself for the greatest effect
Note-taking

• Make lecture time productive study time
• Don’t rely on re-listening to every lecture on Boilercast—you will run out of time
• Boilercast is very helpful to review portions of lectures that were unclear
• Use the method that works for you (but try new methods)
Practice Recall

Self-testing
Studying only one course for several days before an exam
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DON’T get behind
If you are sick on the day of an exam, tell your instructor and ask to postpone the exam
Study Groups

• Helpful for clarification and practicing recall
• Study on your own first
• Pick the right group
• Don’t be afraid to change groups
• Be kind if someone does not want to study with you
Teamwork

- No need to compete
You are not alone

- Ask for help early
- You are not the only one who is struggling
- Feelings of inadequacy are common
- Have realistic expectations
Look out for each other
Have fun!
Tips for Success

• Study daily—develop a routine
• Attend class
• Keep up with all your classes
• Don’t cram—increases stress
• Take breaks—physical activity improves learning
• Schedule time for review
• Be careful not to over-commit to extracurricular activities
• Ask for help
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