



Tips from Peer Learning Partners

CUSOM Academic Center of Excellence

How to Make a Successful Transition into Medical School

Want to hear directly from a peer who just recently completed their first year successfully?

See tips and strategies shared by our **Peer Learning Partners**—second-year students who were just where you are now, a year ago.

Self-care is ESSENTIAL

- “Develop a sustainable routine early, incorporating things that are good for you as a human being and a student, such as exercise, sleep, some human interaction, etc.”
- “*Try to limit procrastination but also practice self-care!*”
- “*I believe that achieving academic excellence goes hand in hand with maintaining a firm work-life balance. Balancing work and leisure not only enhances overall well-being but also fosters a more sustainable approach to learning and growth.*”
- “*Make sure you have a day off and do something fun!*”
- “*Prioritize sleep and eating a balanced meal for memory consolidation.*”

It's okay to feel overwhelmed at times (in fact, it's normal)! Just remind yourself & each other that you can do this hard thing called medical school! YOU'VE GOT THIS!!!

- “*The first few weeks can seem overwhelming, and that's ok. It's important to know that you're not alone in feeling overwhelmed, and it's imperative to recognize that CUSOM chose you for a reason and we're here to support them too!*”
- “*Don't freak out by the amount material at first. It can feel so overwhelming, but constantly telling yourself you don't know if you can do it, makes it so much harder. So just believe that you are here for a reason and are capable.*”
- “*At first, I often got frustrated when concepts would not click right away after a lecture. I realized eventually that it usually takes me 2-3 (sometimes more!) overviews of lecture materials before concepts click—and that's okay!*”
- “*One tip I would share with an incoming first year student is not to panic. Although I am still working on this myself, I think it is important to take a moment and not overwork yourself.*”
- “*Be adaptable and take setbacks as a spring forward. Since the first weeks of medical school is completely different than undergraduate, as well as the expectations, it takes time to adapt to this new life.*”

- *“It is very important to reach out for help, and ask as many questions as you need in order to understand a topic. The foundational information learned early in medical school is so important and pays dividends as time goes on. So ask for help—we all need it!”*

Practical Study Strategies and Time Management Tips:

- *“In the first few weeks of coming into school, don't be afraid to try different study methods and change what you've always done. There are a large number of resources available, and finding which one works for you is key to success!”*
- *“To succeed the first couple of weeks of classes, focus on the learning objectives at the beginning of each PowerPoint. They highlight exactly what you are expected to know and where the professors will be pulling their questions from!”*
- *“Take advantage of shorter class weeks/breaks to get ahead and stay on top of the material.”*
- *“Create a schedule early on that helps you manage your study time, so it's not so much on the weekends right before the quiz or exam.”*
- *“Break up the content into manageable pieces to do spaced repetition of the material. Study for the exam a little everyday.”*
- *“Answer the learning objectives to understand big ticket items.”*
- *“Pace yourself, and find exactly what works for you.”*
- *“Focus on the learning objectives for each lecture, and get as much repetition with the content as possible. Additionally, using resources from previous classes is a great way to save time.”*
- *“Don't neglect the lectures that feel easier, still review those.”*
- *“Adopt a method of study that allows you to begin the "review" process as quickly as possible, i.e. spend less time making/acquiring resources and get straight to quizzing and recall.”*
- *“I think my biggest tip would be to work on finding a good pace for getting through the material. It is very easy to spend half a day on a single lecture, but not always feasible. And most importantly, celebrate the little victories and progress!”*
- *“Time is wasted in minutes, not hours, and can really add up. Having a routine (albeit flexible) is vital. This might include implementing specific study strategies, doing harder work earlier in the day, and picking optimal study environments.”*
- *“I recommend an incoming first year come in with a study plan in mind but to also be flexible in changing it because studying for medical school will likely be different than undergrad.”*
- *“Be comfortable changing everything about your approach, sometimes more than once. It takes time to find a study tactic that works for you and even when you do it may change every block.”*
- *“Find the best way to study that works for them, because it is not going to be the same for everyone.”*
- *“Review each lecture the day it's presented. The first time reviewing a lecture you won't always understand it perfectly, but each additional time you review it, you'll understand it more.”*