

## Hey everyone, it's Ana!

- **When I took STEP and Why:**
  - I was originally scheduled May 27<sup>th</sup> but pushed it back to June 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - I was able to do this since I had neuro first, which is only a 5-week block.
  - My original plan would have allowed me to take 2-weeks off, but I didn't feel ready to take the exam and I was fortunate to have some additional time at my disposal to study so I pushed it back.
- **My studying style:**
  - I use a variety of different resources to supplement my learning. I stay up to date with the SOM coursework and supplement with Sketchy, Pathoma, and B&B. However, I didn't start B&B diligently until Step 1 dedicated.
  - I study for the blocks at home, but couldn't focus on Step studying at home.

## 1) Resources I Used and How I Used Them

- First Aid (FA)
  - I used both the **pdf version** and **print copy** of First Aid
    - PDF → used search function to find the given pages and information before flipping to it in my print copy
    - Print copy → wrote my notes directly in my FA because I liked having a physical copy especially since most of my other resources were online
  - My print copy became **my consolidated resource** with all my notes in it from B&B, Sketchy, Pathoma, and UWorld
  - I never read First Aid cover to cover
- Boards & Beyond (B&B)
  - I shared access with some of my classmates, so I didn't pay full price for B&B
  - I worked through **B&B by system** and watched the videos and then **took notes** in my print FA
    - Ideally, **complete the given systems in the block** that are being discussed.
    - Don't be like me and wait to do that until your dedicated because it's real stressful.
  - If it was a concept I struggled with, then I would **unsuspend those Anki cards**
- Sketchy
  - Start incorporating Sketchy **over the summer/block 5** until the end of the year
    - The earlier you start, the more times you will see the concepts before you take your Step exam
  - **SketchyPharm** and **SketchyMicro** are PURE GOLD
  - I did end up buying the subscription, so I had the updated videos, questions, and ability to look at what each of the images stood for
  - I screenshot the "scene" for a drug or bug and then put it into OneNote where I can use my iPad to take notes on the information
- Pathoma
  - Pathoma is amazing!
  - I recommend using Pathoma **beginning in block 5**
  - I took **notes in the book**, this can be helpful but also slows you down
  - I would recommend **multiple passes**. For instance, 1<sup>st</sup> pass could be watching the chapter week 1 to create a mental framework before you get class lectures/cases and then you could rewatch and take notes on it during a 2<sup>nd</sup> pass midway through the block to review once you've done more learning.
- UWorld Qbank
  - Start this **much earlier** than you think
    - Trust me you won't remember the questions (there are a TON)
    - It's nice to complete the system questions when you are in each block and then you could always go back through them in your dedicated

- It's **not about how many you get right**, but about how well you **review the explanation** and **why you were incorrect**
  - When reviewing the block of questions, I start with those I got wrong, then move to those that I got right but flagged, and then lastly those I got right
  - This method helped save me time because I didn't take as many notes or read the whole thing on the questions I got right due to correct logic
  - **Figure out why you missed a question**, was it not knowing the material, misreading the question, or something else.
  - I took notes on a **word document** on those I got wrong and high yield concepts. I also saved a lot of the beautiful **tables and diagrams UWorld** has because they are super helpful for understanding and organizing information in your mind
- I didn't finish the Qbank. I only got **40% completed** and I still **passed**.
- Practice Tests
  - I took UWorld 1 and 3 different NBME exams.
  - I used the practice exams to **gauge where I was** during my studying relative to passing.
  - My real exam was very different compared to these exams, so don't let these exams derail you.
- Anki
  - I'm not a huge Anki person, but I did use it **consistently for Sketchy Micro and Pharm**
  - The content that I did unsuspend on Anki after B&B, Pathoma, or Sketchy videos did stick with me more than other stuff that I didn't have unsuspended, I just didn't have enough hours in the day to use it for everything and that's okay!
- Divine Intervention Podcasts
  - I love his podcasts, I would listen to them on my drive into studying during dedicated for **high yield topics** like teratogens, vitamins, changes with the elderly, pharm, etc.
  - He also has a **website** with all his older sessions, but you can find the newer ones on **Spotify**

## 2) Plan/Study Day

- Think about **how strong you feel on the material after your first year** because this will impact how you will need to structure your studying over the M2 to make sure you have a solid foundation for Step 1 and clinical years
  - If you feel solid, then you can wait to really ramp up until later
  - If you feel weaker, then I would recommend incorporating some things earlier in the year (even in block 5). It doesn't have to be full throttle, but the more you incorporate early, the more time you give yourself to review material and feel confident in your preparation. This can greatly reduce stress.
- Take a **practice test early**, just to see where you are landing and how much you need to adjust to get a passing score.
- Have a **plan for your dedicated period** and **stick to the resources** you have committed to. Try your best to refrain from constantly switching resources (even though you may want to depending on what you see others doing).
- I created an **excel document** of all the resources I wanted to use/accomplish and then had a **word document calendar** that stated what topic I wanted to cover for the given days. That way I could see it visually and begin to set it up my plan. The earlier you do this the more you can space it out and not make it as overwhelming.
  - You can also use Cramfighter but I had a tendency to just hit "rebalance," which reschedules everything when I didn't want to do anything additional (which was often).
- Dedicated period (May-June)
  - 6:00am – wake up
  - 6:30am – drive to school
  - 7:00am-12:00pm – 3 question blocks of 40 questions
  - 12:00pm-9:00pm – content review and review questions
  - 9:30pm-10:00pm – relax and get ready for bed

### 3) Staying Sane

- I used a **2-list system** → 1) Must do today, 2) Like to get done
- Set **clear endpoints for the day**, so when you are done you are done
- I took a lot of **walks** around Stankowski field while studying at school and it helped immensely to get away from it for a bit.
- Make time for something you love **each day** and a larger something **each week**
- I signed up for **Hot Yoga** and did that 3x a week with friends. It was an amazing way to reset during M2 year which is extremely stressful!

### 4) Things I Wish I Did Differently

I wish I had **incorporated more board resources earlier** in my 2<sup>nd</sup> year. I had heard most people started in January and took the exam May-June of the summer between their M2 and M3 year, so that was my thinking when I was thinking about utilizing board review resources. Start incorporating B&B, Pathoma, and SketchyMicro and SketchyPharm early. You will thank yourself later.

In hindsight, I wish I committed to completing **SketchyMicro over the summer** or in block 5/6 and **started SketchyPharm in block 5** and worked through the modules by system instead of flipping around and only doing the pharm from the cases.

I wish I had made myself finish all the **B&B videos for a system while in the block** so I could unsuspend those Anki cards and not have ginormous unmanageable numbers of cards later in the studying period.

I wish I had an **accountability partner**, because I feel like that would have forced me not to push things off, even when I was tired.