

Hello! It's Pranav, and here's how I did STEP!

- **How I studied:**
 - Lots of **Anki** – mostly premade cards but some of my own
 - I studied with the goal of getting a 260 or above on my final UWorld practice test, so bear in mind that my study habits and plan were focused on that! This is *overkill* and not necessary. But, it was my goal because:
 1. I really enjoyed the preclinical material and wanted to learn the details
 2. I'd heard STEP 1 scores have a high positive correlation with STEP 2 scores, and thought STEP 1 material would help with STEP 2.
 3. I got a lot of help from senior students, so I wanted to pass it forward by giving the best advice I could to all of you :)
 - By the end, I had done four total practice tests: NBME 25, AMBOSS free test, and UWorld 1 & 2
 - I am a **home studier!**
- **When I took STEP and why:**
 - I took STEP on April 1st.
 - I did this mostly so that I'd have more free time afterward! I wanted to do research, cook, exercise, and relax before starting rotations.

1) Resources I Used and How I Used Them

- First Aid (FA)
 - **Ew - hardly touched it heheh**
 - Used it for a little hematology (porphyrias and lead poisoning were tough for me) and micro but that's it!
- Boards and Beyond
 - Only used to review **genetics**. Didn't touch the questions
 - I had watched many of these during first year and used Anki to review the content
- SketchyMicro
 - Watched all videos and added all cards into my main deck (except for parasites) over M1 summer
 - **The earlier you start, the more times you will see the concepts before you take your exam**
 - Finished parasites during block 7
- SketchyPharm
 - Began doing the videos and cards during block 3, but I hadn't finished all of the videos and added the cards until early March before my exam
 - Otherwise, I **watched the videos and added the cards as the drug classes came up in PBL and lecture**
- Pathoma
 - Used this for blocks, but I didn't really use it during the bulk of my STEP studying. I **watched all of the videos and did the corresponding Anki cards** (more on Anki below)
 - **NOTE:** the Pathoma videos **do not cover** all of the pathologies for any system/topic
 - To make sure I was covering everything, I would also add all of the pathology cards under the First Aid tag for that system/topic as well
- AMBOSS
 - This was my primary question bank when studying for the block KBEs! **It didn't help too much for the KBEs (style is different), but it prepared me well to answer UWorld and NBME questions later**
 - Some questions can be too specific or out-of-scope for STEP material, but most have very good testing points.
 - Did questions pertinent just to the block topics from blocks 5-8.
 - Did the free STEP 1 practice test that was offered at the beginning of February – this was really helpful!

- I made cards on most of the questions I missed here, and that helped a lot throughout M2 year.
- UWorld Qbank and Exams
 - I only completed 50% (!) of the question bank by the time I took STEP
 - Que pasa pran
 - Towards the end of my studying after taking my last practice exam, I didn't feel like answering more questions would change whether or not I passed
 - I did one block of UWorld almost every day since early January
 - During the second-to-last week before STEP, I was doing 2-3 blocks per day.
 - I stopped doing UWorld during the week before my exam.
 - **I took the UWorld 1 & 2 practice exams 3 weeks and 1 week, respectively, before my actual test.** I felt that my actual exam was quite a bit different from these, but I got a really bizarre STEP exam and would call it an outlier.
 - **The biggest take-aways from UWorld for me were:**
 - The questions I got wrong and why I got them wrong.
 - When I got a question wrong, I would try to identify why I missed it (did I just not know something, did I miss something that ruled an answer out, or did I misread something), and then I would address that point by making an Anki card
 - Missed question breakdowns by subject
 - to check this, I would go to create a question set, select only missed questions, and then see what subject had the most missed.
 - It helped me realize that I really sucked at repro and derm.
- ★ Anki
 - This was my bread and butter! I did it every day since the beginning week of med school, and I truly believe it is why I was able to meet my score goal.
 - ***The key for me was to really take time to learn each card, and take notes from lecture, online sources, and books in the lecture notes and extra fields
 - Whenever I'd see a card with my notes, I could re-read them and re-learn old concepts
 - This was so so important for my retention and made Anki an invaluable tool
 - **I matured ~90% of the AnKing STEP 1 deck** (cards found under the STEP 1 tag), leaving out a lot of MSK and anatomy cards that seemed out of scope.
 - I did most of this during M2 year – as we covered a pathology subject in lecture or PBL, I would re-cover the physiology cards in Anki to make sure I had it down.
 - To focus my review more, I used a lot of **filtered decks** to pull cards from a certain topic, tag, etc. These helped tremendously.
 - I did not keep old blocks' cards in my deck for STEP studying!
 - I did all of the sketchy and pathoma cards, adding them as I watched the videos.
 - After I **missed a UWorld question**, I would:
 1. Look up the question ID under the UWorld tag in the AnKing deck
 2. Paste a screenshot of the missed question in the missed question field
 3. Flag and tag the card
 4. Add it to my main deck.
 - This way, when I'd encounter a missed question card, I'd take some extra time to review the question I missed.
 - If there wasn't already a card corresponding to my missed question, I would make a card based on why I missed the question.
 - In hindsight, I should have done this for all missed questions in addition to looking at the corresponding premade cards in AnKing.
 - While I did Anki everyday, the most I'd let myself do is 1200. I was rescheduling a lot of cards frequently and it's not realistic to push yourself to do thousands every day.
- NBME practice tests

- I did one of these on January 22nd (we got one of these free from the OME!) to get my baseline
- I didn't review this one $\backslash_(_)_/$
 - oops
 - probably not the best choice but it didn't end up hurting too bad in the end
- I didn't do any more than this because I didn't want to spend money and I figured that taking one more test would not affect whether I passed or not

2) Plan/Study Day

- I used **Cramfighter**, but I did not follow the plan strictly at all and rescheduled maybe a dozen times
 - Early on, for most days, I studied what I wanted to and focused on block content
 - I started following the plan strictly after the block 7 KBE – roughly one month before my exam
- But! I kept a running list of topics organized by priority – subjects that I really needed to study were at the top!
- A typical day during block 7 looked like this:
 - Morning (5:30 AM) - Anki and UWorld
 - Before going to PBL – lecture notes
 - After PBL – break and workout
 - Evening before bed – PBL objective, pathoma videos, Anki if not done, miscellaneous work
- A typical day during the month before my exam:
 - Morning (5 AM) – UWorld blocks (2-3)
 - Before PBL – complete cramfighter topic review and tasks and start Anki
 - After PBL and evenings – finish Anki, watch remaining videos (if any)

3) Staying Sane

- I highly suggest **doing study intervals with breaks!**
 - I set a timer on my computer for 25 minutes, threw my phone away, and would do nothing but my task at hand
 - After the 25 minutes, I would take a 5 minute break
 - After 3-5 such intervals, I would take an extended break
 - The trick is to **really use your breaks**, and do nothing STEP related during them
 - I would usually go outside (if it was nice), do chores, refill my water, Wordle, and/or get a snack
 - Aka slump on my bed and get on my phone
- I did my best to **maintain my exercise schedule**, but this naturally fell apart towards the end of my studying.
 - But! Doing some quick stretches or exercises during the 5 minute breaks really helped me, even if I couldn't schedule in a full workout
- I **took nearly every Friday evening off** to hang out with my girlfriend, and this really helped reset for the next week.
- I made time to hang out with friends and annoyed my mother with plenty of phone calls :D

4) Things I Wish I Did Differently

- Even though I used Anki to review questions, I wish **I had taken more time to go back through all of the questions I missed** to make sure I had the concept down. I did not do this as much I needed to. Additionally, I wish I had made more personal cards that better addressed exactly *why* I missed a question!
- I wish I had done more **AMBOSS** for each block. By the end, I had done ~250-300 AMBOSS questions for each block, and there were lots more that I hadn't done! It is an amazing Qbank with a lot of tools that even UWorld doesn't have.
- Lastly, I wish I'd addressed weak topics more earlier. I studied my weak topics heavily towards the end, but it should have been a more continuous process