

## 1. Develop a 4.0 GPA Routine

1. **PREPARATION:** Read lecture material prior, print out notes and come with a list of 5 QUESTIONS for your professor after class.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Attend ALL lectures: Actively learn & sit in the front 1/3 of all lecture halls.
3. **MENTORSHIP:** Surround yourself with driven peers who you aspire to become. NO anchors.
4. **STUDY PARTNERS:** Study with others with respect to accountability BUT do not use them to study with directly until the last 20-25% of your preparation & both of you are relatively at the same level of readiness as one another.
5. **2 MINUTE RULE:** If it takes less than 2 minutes, do it now. Do NOT procrastinate.
6. **CONSISTENCY:** Study consistently. Use class notes, condense those notes in half, and then condense those in half. Keep the 2x condensed notes for midterms/final examinations.
7. **MENTAL FRAMEWORK:** Every THREE days compare & contrast the last three days of notes. Where do they overlap? Where do they differ? Take note.
8. **PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING:** Homework questions are important but practice midterms/final examinations are gold. Understand HOW they are testing you, WHY the answer is the way it is, and how the other 3 options (assuming multiple choice) could be correct IF the question was worded differently.
9. **MOTIVATION:** Dig deep. Why do you want that 4.0 GPA? What is success in the classroom going to get you? What is your driving force? Do whatever it takes to reach your end goal and EMBRACE the process.

## 2. Time Management

Two Types - Academic and Life Time Management Skills.

### ACADEMIC: Pomodoro Technique:

1. Choose a task to be accomplished.
2. Set the Pomodoro to 25 minutes (modify time block as need be)
3. Work on the task until the Pomodoro rings, then put a check on your sheet of paper.
4. Take a short break (5 minutes is OK).
5. Every 4 Pomodoros take a longer break (15 minutes is ideal).

### Study Hacks:

1. Turn phone on airplane mode or download Flora/Forest App to hold yourself accountable to the Pomodoro goals.
2. Speak out loud to yourself instead of just simply reading.
3. Listen to correct types of music - I use 10 Hours Alpha Waves Studying White Noise. Very helpful.
4. Reward yourself daily with a treat -- working out, cooking, nature, spending time with loved ones, etc.

**Example:** Let your best friend know that you will be meeting them at 7PM for Sushi. Holding yourself even more accountable to your daily goals to get started at the time YOU set out for yourself. Don't let the days just start blending together.

## **LIFE: CREATE A SCHEDULE THAT REALLY WORKS FOR YOU**

**STEP #1: CHOOSE YOUR SCHEDULING TOOL:** Google Calendar is a good option. Apple has their own calendar too. You can go the BulletJournal route, which will let you be a bit more creative.

**STEP #2: PICK YOUR TIME BLOCK INCREMENT:** Elon Musk uses 5 minute increments. For those of us not running two companies, this is a bit excessive. I recommend starting with 60 minute increments and adjusting from there. When you set aside an hour for everything, it's hard to over schedule and, consequently, overwhelm yourself.

**STEP #3: ADD YOUR UNCHANGEABLES:** Add the tasks you can't change. They don't have to occur everyday, but if you can't skip it, add it first.

**STEP #4: ADD YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TASKS:** Now that you've added everything you have to do, you can start adding the tasks required to meet your personal goals. Start with the same increment you chose at the beginning, but then you need to ask yourself some questions.

*First, how long will this task take?*

Overestimate all of your tasks, you'll see why in step five.

*Second, will I feel up to it at this time/after doing whatever tasks comes before it?*

If you eat a whole pizza, and then try to read an entire acid-base chemistry chapter in one sitting, you'll be asleep in 20 minutes.

**STEP #5: USING YOUR SCHEDULE:** The biggest rule is to make your schedule work, which means two things:

Adjust every detail of this process, until it's easy for you. Schedule things you enjoy.

The key to this system is the time increment you chose in step one. By scheduling everything for 60 minutes, you can easily move the blocks of time around as needed.

If you scheduled 60 minutes to workout at 6 am, but wake up late, you can switch it with the 60 minutes of TV you scheduled at 6 pm. The same goes for your energy levels.

#### **4. Long-Term Content Retention:**

1. Mechanistic Flow Charts
2. YouTube & KA Videos - There is no ONE best source. Find the lecturer that works for YOU. Stick to them. Subscribe.
3. Create Daily Summary Charts.
4. Explain content to yourself. As stated before, speak out loud to yourself. Record the main objectives from the daily lectures in two minutes or less. If you can synthesize a summary and teach it to yourself, you've mastered the material.
5. Less textbooks. More practice questions, practice tests, Anki spaced repetition flashcards, and less textbooks and passive forms of content retention.

## **5. Exam Strategies:**

### **How do you get good at taking tests?**

- You take MORE practice tests.
- This works for any of your courses, MCAT, LSAT, GAMSAT, etc.,

**Please do not** wait a few days prior to the test day to take the practice tests that your professor provided for you at the beginning of the semester.

The earlier you complete, the more beneficial it will be to you for your performance.

### **Simulate Test Day:**

1. Take the practice tests in a library cubicle.
2. Sit in an uncomfortable chair.
3. Take the same allocated amount of time.
4. Turn your phone off.
5. Allow yourself to feel anxious. Feel those feelings now. Overcome them now so on test day they are minimized or non-existent.

## 6. MCAT

- MCAT Overview
- When to start studying for MCAT?
- Creating a plan that works for YOU.
- Content vs Questions/Practice Tests (Passive vs Active Retention)
- CARS. No right answer, just a BEST answer. 4 Step Strategy.
- Research Design/Analysis Passages.
- Psych/Soc (86 Page Doc & Anki & P/S Audio Podcast)
- How to review your MCAT Practice Tests
- When do you take the MCAT?

## 7. Networking: Professors and Physicians

Reach out. Remember it is not who YOU know. It is WHO they know.

**Research:** Make sure to do your best to tailor each email to each professor's research aims. Explain who you are and how your passions align with what their research is assessing. Send out 20, 50, 100 emails. Don't take ONE no as your FINAL answer. Follow-up with professors a few months later, show them you are hungry, and seriously committed to their project. Not just superficially sending the same template to all researchers. **Be different. Stand out.**

**Clinical Shadowing:** The same goes with shadowing as did research. Please do not take ONE no as face value. Ask your family doctor, family friend, any specialists you have seen before, and then cold call/cold email all the physicians within a 25 km/25 mi radius to you. Be hungry. Get one. Much easier to gain access to shadowing more specialists once you are 'in'. The physician you are shadowing has been in your shoes.

1. Do your research on the physician you are shadowing.
2. Be early and dress professionally.
3. Ask thought-provoking questions.
4. Come prepared with a pen and notepad.
5. Send a hand-written thank you letter afterwards.
6. **Be different. Stand out.**

## 8. Mindset & Motivation

1. **ONE GOAL:** Whenever I've been in a slump, I've discovered that it's often because I have too much going on in my life. You have to choose one goal, for now, and focus on it completely.
2. **FIND INSPIRATION:** Inspiration, for me, comes from others who have achieved what I want to achieve what I want to achieve, or who are currently doing it.
3. **BUILD ANTICIPATION:** If you find inspiration and want to do a goal, don't start right away. Many of us will get excited and want to start today. That's a mistake. Set a date in the future – a week or two, or even a month – and make that your Start Date. Get excited about that date.
4. **POST YOUR GOAL:** Print out your goal in big words. Post it up on your wall, frame it by your bedside, bring it to work, etc., You want to have big reminders about your goal, to keep your focus and keep your excitement going.
5. **COMMIT PUBLICLY:** None of us likes to look bad in front of others. We will go the extra mile to do something we've said publicly. Hold yourself accountable. Don't just commit once, but commit to giving progress updates to everyone every week or so.
6. **GET SUPPORT:** It's hard to accomplish something alone. Find your support network, either in the real world or online, or both. This platform is a great way to start.
7. **BUILD ON SMALL SUCCESSES:** If you start small for a week, you're going to be successful. You can't fail if you start with something ridiculously easy. After a couple months, your tiny steps will add up to a lot of progress and a lot of success.
8. **SQUASH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS; REPLACE THEM WITH POSITIVE ONES:** Start monitoring your thoughts. Recognize negative self-talk, which is really what's causing your slump. Just spend a few days becoming aware of every negative thought. Then, after a few days, try squashing those negative thoughts like a bug, and then replacing them with a corresponding positive thought.

## **9. Mental Health & Study-Life Balance:**

1. Create a flexible study plan that allows ONE break day from school per week. No excuses. 100% no study.
2. You are not alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help: family, friends, advisors, TA's, professors, etc.,
3. Take time for yourself. As stated prior, schedule daily 'treats' to focus on your life outside of your 'school objectives'. Work out, paint, meditate, yoga, cooking, watching Tiger King with your best friend or significant other -- make time. Don't EVER say there is not enough time in the day.

### **Simplistic Hacks:**

1. 9 Hour Sleep Reset
2. Drink 2-3 L of water daily.
3. 60 Second cold shower.
4. Call family and loved ones. Support systems are everything, especially during these difficult times.