



6 tips you haven't heard as a pre-med

RICHARD NGO [MED 1]

1. Figure out how to organize your classes early:

There is a certain art to how you organize your classes which can ultimately make or break you. Ask upper years on which classes you should avoid and which you should take. Try to make sure you sprinkle in a couple of electives per term instead of having entire terms of upper year science classes. It would also be beneficial to take a summer course or two so that your last year has a lighter load of 3 or 4 classes. That way you can prepare more for medical school applications and interviews which can take a lot of work.

2. Don't do this alone:

You may think that learning how to network is something you learn once you finish school and start to look for jobs. However, being able and open to making new friends is a skillset that will carry you far in school as well. For example, when it came time for me to practice for the multiple-mini interview, I ran into the problem of not being able to find people to practice with. But through a friend of a friend I met up with a practice group and joined them for their weekly sessions. When people come together, you can accomplish great things.

3. Invest your money wisely:

Everyone comes from a different background and some people need to work part time or even full time to make rent, groceries, tuition, etc. But one thing you should pay top dollar for is your education. Think of it as an investment, when you are buying MCAT practice tests you are investing in your career as a physician. Many people often fail to realize the huge cost of not getting into medical school for one year. It is not just the application fees or test prep material you paid but rather the opportunity cost you lose for not working as a physician for a year. Therefore, it is important to spend on things that will create more fortune for you in the future.



4. Online resources are your best friends:

Technology has decentralized a lot of the control on the spread of knowledge in this last decade. Almost everyone can now easily access information for a low cost or free from almost anywhere. As a result, you no longer need to solely depend on the textbooks or lectures as your main learning source. One learning tool I used in undergrad were videos that help explained difficult concepts. Youtube is a platform where anyone can upload videos that can help explain difficult concepts such as Khan Academy, Osmosis, Anatomy Zone etc. The downside is that you must check the credibility of your source via the comment section, likes/dislikes, comparison to more established source material like textbooks, etc.

5. Develop a stoic mindset:

There will be good times and bad times throughout your time as an undergrad, but it is important to remain objective when assessing the situation. Focus on what you can control and try to let go of the things you cannot control. When things do go bad, try to take the optimistic approach and focus on the idea of how the future is unpredictable and that this single event cannot predict the long-term outcome. Nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so. If you want to explore these ideas further, a great book I read was "The Obstacle is the Way" by Ryan Holiday. Also, be sure to check out the podcast the Daily Stoic (also hosted by Ryan Holiday) for a daily 3 minute piece of stoicism.

6. Be creative and take initiative:

When we think of applying to medical school, we tend to think that everyone must follow the standard pre-med build in order to stand a chance for admission. For academics and MCAT this may be necessarily true, there is a lot of variability when it comes to your extra-curricular. During medical school there were many diverse student groups, but I felt there was a lack of organizations that addressed medical technology. I decided to start my own club called Technology in Medicine. In retrospect, I realize that many people in my class had a similar idea but I was the only one who took the initiative to bring the idea into existence. Don't wait for someone to give you permission to start something, give yourself this permission.

